

**Ontario-Ohio Community  
Economic  
Development  
Workshop II  
June 12, 2003**



**Summary of Discussion  
August, 2003**

**Enhancing Economic Relationships for Ohio and Ontario Communities**

# Summary of Discussion

## Ontario-Ohio Community Economic Development Workshop II

### Overview

The Canadian Studies Center at Bowling Green State University has long been in the forefront of bringing professionals from diverse backgrounds and interests together for the purpose of furthering Canadian-U.S. relations.

An important service of the Center is sharing and disseminating of information by sponsoring research, gathering and analyzing data, and creating public forums.

Increasingly, economic development professionals from both sides of the border have been turning to the Center for information and technical assistance with projects involving new or expanding businesses and industries.

The 2003 Sylvania Workshop and the 2002 Windsor Workshop reflect continuing involvement between the Center and economic development professionals. The need for workshops of this nature results from the increasing complexities of border issues.

This year's workshop centers on building cross-border connections, exploring successful joint ventures and special public-private partnerships, surveying the business development climate in Ontario and Ohio, and sharing examples of "best practices."

This report provides a summary of discussion topics and an evaluation of the effectiveness by workshop participants.

### Welcoming Remarks

The Workshop opened on a strong note with the "crying" of Sylvania Town Crier, Michael Lieber, and his emphasis on the history of the region and how the War of 1812 dramatically influenced the boundary relationship, as we know it today, between Ohio and Ontario.

Special welcomes were also provided by The Honorable Craig Stough, Mayor of Sylvania, and by His Worship, John Geoghegan, Mayor of Woodstock, Ontario. The Mayors outlined the sister city relationship between Sylvania and Woodstock and the value of this connection.

## Partnerships in Place

Donald Jakeway, President, Regional Growth Partnership, Inc., Toledo

Donald Jakeway, the former Ohio Director of Development under Governor George Voinovich, has been at the helm of the Regional Growth Partnership (RGP) for the past five years. He reinforced the value collaborative arrangements between economic development agencies. He cited the Northern Ohio Regional Economic Development (NORED) group as an example of a collection of diverse interests and individuals. Members of NORED have the ability to disagree, but Jakeway stressed they also have the responsibility to give respect and support to one another. International ties become even more critical in times of economic downturn and Jakeway advised workshop participants to look for continuing opportunities for ongoing partnerships.

He noted that the featured speaker at the recent RGP annual meeting was the former Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, who talked about the global economic outlook and the implications for Canada and the U.S.

Mr. Jakeway also called for strengthening Ontario-Ohio economic bonds and praised the work of Ron Straatsma, Managing Director, State of Ohio Canadian Market Office, Toronto, and Kirk Merritt, Deputy Director, International Trade Division, Ohio Department of Development.

Robert Wheeler, Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance

Robert Wheeler discussed the details of how the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) came into existence, how it expanded, and its goals for the future. SOMA's genesis was the result of three communities: Stratford, Woodstock, and St. Thomas (Wheeler's hometown). These communities perceived themselves to be at a disadvantage vis á vis larger, better known Ontario urban areas. Once formed, SOMA set to work gathering market intelligence for the purposes of creating a brand identity and discovering the most important markets to target.

The group developed a wide array of public relations and marketing materials (brochure, website, trade show displays, etc.) and identified four sectors on which to concentrate: transportation; machining & tooling; plastics; and food production.

There are now seven communities that contribute financial and in-kind resources to SOMA. The group is currently soliciting private sector and industry association support to expand SOMA beyond the public sector.

Wheeler also shared the results of a recent SOMA survey and noted that the region lacked a strong positive image for purposes of marketing and needed to strengthen its talent pool of management and skilled trades personnel.

## Question & Answer Session

A discussion ensued regarding the balance of business expansion and retention over new investment. It was generally agreed that priority should be placed upon working with companies already in the jurisdiction. This requires expending resources by visiting companies as frequently as once per year, surveying them about the near term prospects, and identifying services and support that can be provided. Other topics included selling workforce quality over workforce cost and the transportation and logistics assets of the region.

## **Panel Discussion: “Cross-Border Issues: Balancing Trade with Security”**

**Discussion Leader:** Larry Bannon, Windsor, Retired Customs Broker, Lamb Technicon-Canada. Mr. Bannon is the founding Chairman of the Windsor & District Chamber of Commerce and is currently the Mayor’s Representative on the Windsor Downtown Revitalization and City Center Redevelopment Committee. He played a major role in transferring the Windsor Airport to a local airport authority.

**Discussants:** Drew Dilkens, Canadian Consulate General, Detroit  
Dan Tye, Sarnia-Lambton Council for Economic Renewal  
Mike Jay, Northwest Ohio Regional Economic Development  
Kirk Merritt, Ohio Department of Development, Columbus

Mr. Bannon opened his remarks by focusing on three distinct elements of trade activity: process and programs, environmental issues and opportunities, and intermodal and NAFTA components.

He praised the recent Manley-Ridge Smart Border Declaration and cautioned that despite programs such as Free and Secure Trade (FAST) problems of traffic congestion still plague border communities.

Bannon said he supports development of preprocessing centers away from the border and greater governmental commitment to staffing and infrastructure to manage the flow of people and goods across the border.

He criticized the environmental assessment (EA) step in the process of building new infrastructure as lengthy and fraught with uncertainty. The EA component introduces a level of investment risk and uncertainty causing announced plans to not come to fruition for many years—far too long to meaningfully address current problems at busy border crossings.

Intermodalism, Bannon suggested, is one solution that can add border capacity both for freight and people. He mentioned the prospects for improving trade and tourism by building a high-speed passenger rail network from Toronto-Windsor-Detroit-Chicago.

Bannon closed by admonishing the U.S. for not resolving issues of trucking and immigration on its southern border that have held down NAFTA trade growth. Discussion among the four panelists reinforced the general premise that while much progress has been made in facilitating post-September 11<sup>th</sup> trade, more needs to be done so that local and regional economies are not jeopardized.

# **“Ohio and Ontario Government Procurement Contracts as Economic Development Opportunities”**

Richard Archer, Bowling Green—Toledo Procurement Technical Assistance Center

Richard Archer provided an overview of the services offered by Ohio’s Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC). PTAC helps businesses sell goods and services to local, state, and federal governments. Using a mentoring approach, Archer works with small businesses and minority owned businesses as well as larger firms to conduct bid matching, provide product and procurement histories, counsel about military specifications, and arrange opportunities for buyers to meet with area firms. (Literature for Ontario’s Public Works and Government Services office was available for participants.)

## **Open Discussion Session**

Mark Kasoff, Moderator, Canadian Studies Center, BGSU  
Tom Dodds, Industry Canada/FEDNOR, Sault Ste Marie, ON

Tom Dodds briefly reviewed the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC). The CFDC is a business development program that focuses on providing access to capital and entrepreneurial training for small businesses, particularly those in rural communities. Dodds commented that CFDC’s strength lies in its local orientation combined with an awareness of the importance of international ties.

The open discussion session offered suggestions for the content of future workshops, best practices, and major concerns.

### Future Workshops:

- a. Schedule a workshop or create a working group to focus on examples and effectiveness of technology-based initiatives such as Ohio’s Third Frontier Program, or clusters created to support R&D on fuel cells, photovoltaics, etc.
- b. Open any future workshop to a broader private sector audience, including representation from the public policy sector.
- c. Prepare brochures at least two months in advance and direct to economic developers to distribute to their private sector constituents.

### Best Practices:

- a. The value of networking, but also sustaining contacts and following through on discussions and ideas generated at workshops such as this one.
- b. Regular communications with practitioners and firms in the region.

### Concerns about the Future:

- a. Gaining support to facilitate the seaway expansion initiative.
- b. The continuing negative tone of Canada-U.S. relations at the federal level.
- c. Resurgent localism and reduced cooperation between jurisdictions, protectionism at the national level.
- d. The rising value of the Canadian dollar.
- e. The idea of a common perimeter, how it would be defined, and whether it should be thought of as a substitute for or complement with a secure border.
- f. Great Lakes water resources and ability to protect from pollution and diversion.
- g. How tourism development can be more effectively integrated into economic development.
- h. The futures of both Canada and the U.S. over the next 10-20 years, given the increasing competitiveness of countries such as China and Mexico.

## Evaluation of Event









The following analysis reports attendee evaluation of the Ontario-Ohio Community Economic Development Workshop.

Fifty-four surveys were distributed and twenty-three were returned—a 43 percent response rate. There were thirteen questions seeking both quantitative and qualitative information. The rated questions were ranked on a five-point scale, with five being excellent and one equating poor. The responses to the qualitative questions are listed on the next page.

These data were also separated demographically. In total, fourteen surveys were returned from Ohio attendees and nine surveys were returned from Ontario attendees.

	Ohio	Ontario	Overall
1. Overall Opinion of the Event	4.50	4.00	4.30
2. Length of the Event	4.57	4.11	4.39
3. Time of Day	4.64	4.13	4.45
4. Sylvania Country Club	4.69	4.33	4.55
5. Practical Knowledge Gained	4.46	3.89	4.23
6. Usefulness of the Background Paper	4.50	4.00	4.35
7. Quality of Correspondence	4.58	4.00	4.35
8. “Partnerships in Place”	4.29	4.33	4.30
9. “Cross-Border Issues”	4.43	4.25	4.36
10. “Ohio & Ontario Government Procurement Contracts”	4.29	3.89	4.13
11. Open Discussion Session	4.36	4.25	4.32

12. How can the Canadian Studies Center help you in the future?

-  Address technology-based economic development synergies between Northern Ohio and Southern Ontario (fuel cell, environment remediation).
-  Continue to publicize events to the private sector, business entities.
-  Port authority presentation from Windsor and Toledo on what they do for economic development and trade between Ohio and Ontario.
-  Seaway expansion continuance.
-  Success stories passed out to those attending.
-  Contact us for opportunities to provide similar study programs related to trade in U.S. in our education system.
-  NAFTA rail conference.
-  Continue networking.



## Canadian Studies Center

The mission of the Canadian Studies Center is to be a full-service Canadian information resource. A primary objective of the Center is to develop and strengthen business relationships between enterprises within the Ohio and Canadian corporate communities.





The Canadian Studies Center (CSC) was founded in 1991 at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in recognition of the multi-faceted and important relationship of Canada to the United States, the industrialized Midwest, and the state of Ohio.

Supported by the state of Ohio, the government of Canada, corporate donations, and individual gifts, the CSC educates both BGSU students and the community at large about Canadian politics, culture, and economy.

The Great Lakes border region is the economic hub of North America. About one-third of U.S. GDP is generated by the Midwest states while Québec and Ontario represent 62 percent of Canadian GDP. Approximately 30 percent of the \$1.3 billion in daily merchandise trade between Canada and the U.S. crosses the border at the nearby Ambassador Bridge gateway.

The CSC is a recognized leader across the country in private sector programming, providing a full spectrum of Canadian information for business, public economic development agencies, the media, and the public. We collaborate with firms and economic development agencies on both sides of the border to plan and sponsor various events for the public and private sectors. CSC staff regularly provides information about Canada to area businesses, briefs delegations before traveling to Canada, and responds to mass media requests for comment about developments in Canada. U.S. and Canadian media seek out the Center for expert analysis.

Each year the CSC hosts several workshops in the U.S. and Canada:

-  The Canada-Ohio Business Dinner Workshop;
-  The Ohio Canadian Studies Roundtable;
-  The Reddin Symposium; and
-  Sectoral seminars, trade missions, and workshops.

In addition to workshops and symposia, the Center maintains a comprehensive Canadian business and economics library including subscriptions to a variety of electronic Canadian databases and business directories. BGSU is a Selective Depository institution of the Government of Canada resulting in vast resources that make the CSC a leading generator of information regarding the economy shared by Ohio and Canada.

*The Canada-Ohio Cross-Border Investment Directory* is an annual publication reporting the direct corporate links between Ohio companies and Canadian companies. The Center is the home of *The American Review of Canadian Studies*—a multidisciplinary quarterly journal featuring the scholarly work of Canadianists. The CSC's busy publication schedule also includes several Canada-Ohio business related pieces regularly referenced by companies on both sides of the border—proceedings from symposia, the newsletter *AuCanada*, and studies on agriculture, energy, transportation, and other sectors.

For additional information or resources, please visit [www.cba.bgsu.edu/cast/](http://www.cba.bgsu.edu/cast/) or email [cast@cba.bgsu.edu](mailto:cast@cba.bgsu.edu).