



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Enterprise Saint John Launches Strategic Planning Process

*--Working Together to Develop the Economic Plan for the Saint John Community--*

March 31, 2010

**Saint John, NB** – The Board of Directors of Enterprise Saint John officially launched its strategic planning process today from the Mary Oland Theatre at the New Brunswick Museum. Every three years, the Board reviews and updates Enterprise Saint John’s strategic plan, and this year, the process was formally launched with a series of presentations from key members from the Saint John Community.

Board Member, Tony Gogan, is excited to be spearheading the strategic planning process. He started the presentation by reinforcing the philosophy behind our community’s growth strategy, saying, “Regional cooperation is fundamental to having a balanced approach to achieving social, cultural, environmental and economic goals. Today is yet another example of how through collaboration we are building a community to attract and retain people.”

The leadership of the regional Mayors and Council was acknowledged as instrumental. The model is innovative and unique; no where else in Canada are five municipalities are working together to “grow the pie” rather than fight over the pieces. Currently, the consensus-building process our community has undertaken over the past decade is the subject of a University of Southern Maine research project as part of the Governors Quality of Place Commission.

Presentations were made from two groups of panelists. The first group provided key highlights and challenges in achieving social, cultural and environmental priorities.

**Peter Buckland**, owner of Buckland Gallery, spoke to the significance of Saint John’s 2010 Cultural Capital of Canada designation and explained how culture helps our community develop our workforce and grow our economy.

**Tim Vickers**, Executive Director of ACAP, described how Harbour Passage has become an excellent example of how different groups worked together to fulfill environmental priorities. This, he explained, also led to advancing economic, social and cultural goals.

**Wendy McDermott**, Executive Director of Vibrant Communities addressed how through innovation and creativity, we were able to work together to turn traditional liabilities into assets, and used this approach to develop our much-needed workforce.

The second group of panelists represented our community’s priority sectors. The sector-approach was developed to capitalize on the strength of the people, ideas and assets in our own community. The approach is working. Gogan explained, “Our community has risen to the next level – we have more people working and a stronger, more diversified economy.”

As demonstrated by the panelists, success is happening more regularly and across each of our priority sectors.

**Tim Curry**, President of Atlantica Centre for Energy, explained that our significant energy sector knowledge, experience and assets continue to provide exciting opportunities for the Saint John region.

**Jeff Roach**, Executive Director of *propellCT*, described how Saint John's pedigree of ICT thought-leaders have built the foundation of a knowledge based economy; and the opportunities have only begun to be explored.

**Beth Kelly-Hatt**, founder and owner of Aquila Tours, and internationally recognized expert in the cruise industry, illustrated how through creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation, Saint John was able to position itself as a world class tourism destination.

**Bob Manning**, current Enterprise Saint John Board Chair and Chair of the Saint John Health Sciences Sector, spoke about the significant advances in our region's Health Sciences sector; and how together, additional opportunities are being explored.

**Shelley Rinehart**, Enterprise Saint John Board member explained the importance of accurate and timely labour market information, as well as forming partnerships between private, public, not-for-profit and organized labour groups to find long term workforce solutions. Rinehart stressed, "We used to find jobs for people, now we find people for jobs."

***Now is the time to plan for continued economic growth.***

As part of our community's broader growth strategy, Enterprise Saint John focuses on economic development for the Saint John region. The landscape of the global economy has changed dramatically, and with those changes, come challenges, but also opportunities.

Enterprise Saint John's strategic planning process was designed and timed to help inform and complement PlanSJ, the City of Saint John's comprehensive municipal planning process currently underway.

One-on-one stakeholder consultations have already begun and will continue over next few months. Community consultations will also be coordinated for Saint John, the Kennebecasis Valley and Grand Bay-Westfield. Key highlights of the 2011-2013 Strategic Plan will be presented at Enterprise Saint John's annual general meeting on June 24, 2010.

Gogan says, "It's time we stop measuring success based on the next mega project on the horizon. We have more people working and a more diversified economy; we have made it to the next level. We now need to continue harnessing the power of collaboration, creativity, and our entrepreneurial spirit to face the new set of challenges head on."

Together, through the leadership of Enterprise Saint John and its partners, the Saint John Community continues to evolve as a magnet for innovation, creativity and business investment where you can live life on your terms.

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