



enterprisingly northland

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Welcome to the Enterprise Northland quarterly newsletter

In this issue:

- **State of the Economy – Northland consolidates its position**
- **Pastoral Farming – increasing revenue through productivity**
- **Enterprise Education – we've got both quantity *and* quality**
- **Northland's tourism website an award-winner**

CEO overview – Brian Roberts

Looking back on the year, three major themes stand out:

- Firstly, Northland as a region is tracking well. Our economy has performed strongly and consistently for a number of years, and Northland has steadily notched up a series of successes which have been acknowledged on a national scale
- Secondly, we are making progress. There is an unprecedented level of co-operation between the organisations which are collectively responsible for overcoming Northland's issues. There are productive links with the business sector, and we are collecting more reliable statistical information to help guide decisions
- Thirdly, some of the challenges which stand ahead of us are familiar obstacles which have constrained Northland's progress for decades.

State of the Economy 2005

The annual benchmark report on the Northland economy, released last month, found that Northland has consolidated its ranking within the top three regional economies of its type, and is forecast to do so through to 2010.

A rising national economy has meant that in some instances, even by just maintaining our position in comparison with other regions, Northlanders are considerably better off.

However, despite continued positive news about the unemployment rate, Northland still tops this statistic on an annual basis, albeit now much closer to the other regional economies.

Northland's population is still under-qualified and has a lower level of workforce participation.

More detail on the State of the Economy report can be found in the News section of the Enterprise Northland website.

District Economic Development Partnerships

One of the most pleasing aspects of the 2005 year has been the establishment of closer partnerships with the Whangarei and Far North District Councils and Kaipara Development Agency. Staff are in place to focus on the needs of the three districts, leverage region-wide activities to benefit their respective districts, and avoid duplicating initiatives which are being carried out on a regional basis. We welcome Jude Thompson (Whangarei), Gary Gabbitas (Far North) and Melanie Sommerville (Kaipara) to their roles.

Northland Skills Strategy

Launched in August last year, the Northland Skills Strategy represents a massive, collaborative effort to address Northland's skills issues. Fifty-one recommendations were contained in *Meeting the Skills Challenge in Northland: A Regional Skills and Training Strategy*. Project manager Damien Banks was appointed in February this year to start tackling the tasks needed to alleviate skills shortages and to ensure that training programmes meet the needs of the region's key industry sectors. The Strategy Annual Report will be available on the Enterprise Northland website by Christmas. For more information, please call Damien on 09 430 1025.

Trades Training Initiative

Other highlights have included the Northland Trades Training Initiative, set up to address issues identified in the engineering, construction, marine construction, forestry and wood processing sectors. There are three pillars to this concept – promotion of the trades as a career, establishment of new trade training facilities, and promotion of Northland as an attractive place to forge a trades career.

Business and Industry

Development Groups

Enterprise Northland currently facilitates four industry development groups—pastoral farming, tourism, forestry/woodprocessing and marine construction, refit and servicing. According to StatisticsNZ there are almost 8,000 Northland businesses involved in these four sectors, representing 50% of all Northland businesses. They also note that nearly 19,000 or 40% of all Northland workers are employed in these industries and unofficially these four sectors account for around \$2 billion of goods and services, a significant amount of which is export earnings. More than 80 business owners along with key stakeholders participate in the development groups, with the over-riding purpose of contributing to the enhancement of the sectors' performance. Participation in the development groups is voluntary and on average each member contributes 50 hours of their time per year. Enterprise Northland surveys development group members annually and recent results confirm that the private sector find the groups a very effective way of progressing issues of importance.

Pastoral Farming

As many of you will have seen, Northland's pastoral farming sector now brings just over \$1 billion a year into the regional economy. Behind the headline number are some figures which are perhaps more illuminating and reflect a great deal of credit on our farmers. Northland's farming revenue has increased by 137% since 1990 – a period in which Northland's pasture area has decreased in size by almost a quarter. Sheep and beef cattle numbers have also dropped sharply, while the size of the region's dairy herd has increased only slightly. The updated statistics are based on data made available to Enterprise Northland by Meat & Wool New Zealand, an immediate demonstration of the value of Enterprise Northland's partnership with Meat & Wool and agricultural consultancy AgFirst Northland to employ Gareth Baynham as pastoral farming coordinator.

Business Mentors New Zealand

Enterprise Northland took over administration of this programme (formerly known as Business In the Community) in December 2005. Our existing team of 15 volunteer mentors, with skills across all areas of business management, have worked with 60 business owners in the first year, with good results. If you would like to discuss becoming a business mentor, please call Charlie at 09 438 5110.

Enterprise Education

Northland's young people continue to lead the country in the field of Enterprise Education (and the slightly-older people co-ordinating the programmes are pretty sharp as well!). Once again, Northland has had more teams, more students and more schools participating in YES (the Young Enterprise Scheme) than any other region of New Zealand in 2005. Students come into the programme having seen what has been achieved in previous years, and are more motivated and savvy as a result – there was widespread agreement that this year's trade fairs were the best ever.

There has also been increased uptake of the YEP (Young Enterprise Programme) leadership awards in schools.

With the programmes in such great shape, it is no surprise that our enthusiastic and hard-working co-ordinator, Dave Templeton, has been acknowledged as the best in the country.

Meanwhile, the NET (Northland Enterprising Teachers) project, developed and piloted in Northland by Frank Leadley, is likely to be extended throughout the country. The Ministry of Education is fast-tracking a review of the programme to consider making it available nationally.

Enterprise Education in Northland is made possible by the generous sponsorship of Northpower and Top Energy, and with the support of many other local agencies and businesses. The success of these programmes simply would not happen without this invaluable support.

If you would like more information on the Enterprise Education strategy, you are welcome to call David Templeton on 09 438 5110

Destination Northland

The year has come with some industry-wide challenges for tourism and the effects of these have been felt by all regions of New Zealand. Cheaper airfares and the strong Kiwi dollar have encouraged New Zealanders to travel to Australia and further afield, while the exchange rate has also made New Zealand comparatively more expensive for international visitors.

During the year, Destination Northland put in place a number of initiatives to counter these factors, including:

- The launch of Northland's first-ever conference and meeting planner at a function for 120 Auckland corporate and professional conference organisers. The nationwide conference market has an estimated value of \$1 billion a year. The busiest months are June through to September – traditionally the quietest time of year for Northland tourism businesses. The average daily spend of conference delegates is also higher than leisure travellers
- Packages are an excellent way to attract domestic visitors to the region in the low and shoulder seasons. Tourism operators were encouraged to develop their own packages for placement on www.northlandnz.com providing an excellent vehicle to further promote their business.
- New efforts to attract domestic media to the region in order to write about their experiences have resulted in a wide range of stories in publications such as NZ Herald, Taste, Essentially Food, NZ Auto Car, Sunday Star Times with others like AA Directions set to appear in the new year.

Major Regional Initiative (MRI), the Activate Northland project

Award win for Northland tourism website

Northland's visitor information website, northlandnz.com, managed by Destination Northland, outshone competition from some major corporates to win the Promotional category at the annual TUANZ (e)-vision awards, run by the Telecommunication Users Association of New Zealand and announced in October. Launched in December last year, northlandnz.com was the first of New Zealand's regional websites to be aligned with Tourism New Zealand's site – www.newzealand.com, allowing Northland to leverage off Tourism New Zealand's international marketing.

The strategy has paid off – northlandnz.com initially received about 5000 unique visitors a month but recently, the monthly totals have soared to more than 8000.

The northlandnz.com website is designed to attract more international visitors and encourage them to stay longer and spend more, by aligning with Tourism New Zealand, raising Northland's profile and showcasing a full range of options.

The Kauri Project and Festival

In June 2005, Activate Northland launched a cultural tourism project to celebrate and honour a New Zealand icon - the Kauri. A brochure has been created that includes a foldout information map and the story of the kauri told from the viewpoint a 1500 year old tree. The inaugural Kauri Festival, which ran for two weeks in late September/early October, was an outstanding success, featuring more than 30 events. The first and largest kauri celebration in New Zealand, the festival was organised by key industry stakeholders including the Kauri Museum, Direction Dargaville, Destination Northland and Enterprise Northland.

Activities included a main street kauri parade in Dargaville, a kauri photo competition, kauri art displays and kauri chainsaw carving.

More information on Northland's Kauri Project can be found at www.northlandnz.com or you can pick up a Kauri brochure at any Northland i-Site information centre.

Food and Beverage

The unique flavours of Northland are to be explored in a new initiative to help develop the region's specialty food and beverage industries. Market research has highlighted the potential of wine and food to tempt domestic visitors to Northland during the quieter winter months. Lyn Barnes, former editor of Cuisine magazine, has been appointed to identify regional strengths to help create a point of difference for Northland. Lyn will be helping to coordinate promotions around the Northland food and beverage sector, and keeping a regularly updated database of specialty growers and producers for those that are looking to source regional food. The database will be available at www.enterprisenorthland.co.nz before the end of the year.

Lyn can be contacted on phone 09 407 8281



*On behalf of all of us, have a safe and happy holiday season.
We look forward to working with you – refreshed and re-charged –
in 2006.*



The Enterprise Northland and Destination Northland teams at Matauri Bay recently.

From left to right, back row John Halse, Jordan Fraser, Vanessa Payne, Kiri Goulter, David Templeton, Jude Thompson, Tania Robson, Sheryl Davis, Tammy Fromont.

Middle row, Brian Roberts, Robyn Bolton, Charlie Hurkmans, Gary Gabbitas, Jenny Hirzel, Nineke Metz, Ria Woollams, Tara Rowe.

Front row, Melissa Irace, Carol Maxwell, Frank Leadley, Jo Douglas, Lyn Barnes.

Absent, Gareth Baynham