



# ECONOMIC STRATEGY & TOURISM BRANCH NEWS



VOLUME 3 • APRIL 2009

## RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT CAREERS

The rapidly changing global economy has impacted local jobs in York Region, and highlighted the need to broaden the traditional definition of a “job”.

Many stakeholders here in the Region consider a job as one where you are employed by a business, government service or non-profit organization. In fact, there were over 490,000 jobs identified at the end of 2008 in York Region.

According to the Webster dictionary, a job is a “regular remunerative position”. This definition originated in Britain in the 1600’s. More recently, Wikipedia’s definition is somewhat broader and refers to a job as a “regular activity performed in exchange for payment”. There are how-

ever, many jobs that fall outside of these definitions.

The most obvious of these is the entrepreneur whose remuneration is not likely to be a regular paycheck every week. As you will read later in this newsletter, we have experienced a significant increase in the number of residents connecting with the York Small Business Enterprise Centre to obtain advice on how to start their own company.

There are many other forms of employment that fall outside of the traditional definition. These can include: contract employment, having more than one part time position, consulting, acting as an agent, working as an artist, entertainer, musician or professional athlete, and the list goes on.

Many of these occupations require formal education, or specialized training, as well as extensive equipment to develop the skills necessary to succeed. I have read many times that successful professional musicians spend an average of eight hours a day practising on their instrument, in addition to their recording and performing activities.

As an indication of the magnitude of this reality, there are over 86,000 companies officially registered with Revenue Canada in York Region, however, we can only identify about 26,000 as having a physical presence (i.e. office or store).

The difference can be explained by residents who have their “business” registered with a home address and they con-



sult, design, market and manage their career from there.

In Economic Development, we need to recognize a broader definition of a job and ensure that our strategies and services are open and relevant to all forms of employment. ♦



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## ECONOMIC STRATEGY SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

In response to the Economic Development Marketing and Communications Strategy, The Guide to Greening Your Business was developed to encourage and facilitate the adoption of sustainable business practices by York Region companies.

The Guide was distributed to more than 2,000 businesses in February, and the response has been very positive.

Our next initiative is a series of Sustainable Business Workshops for business leaders in the Region. The workshops will be interactive and hands-on, and will feature operational applications for sustainable business development. There are three workshops planned for 2009.



The first workshop, **Solar Applications for Businesses** will be held on Thursday, May 14 at the East Gwillimbury Civic Centre.

Featuring Steve Eng from Enviro-Energy Technologies Inc. and Hamed Ghanbari from LumenEarth, the workshop will cover the following topics: understanding solar systems; solar assessment

and installation processes; and an overview of Provincial and Federal incentives and grants.

The second workshop, **Understanding Green Information Technology**, will be held at the Town of Richmond Hill on Tuesday, September 22. It will cover topics such as: reducing the use of hazardous materials; maximizing energy efficiency during a product's lifetime; promoting recyclability or biodegradability of defunct products.

The third workshop, **Creating an Eco-Friendly Office Environment**, will discuss methods of improving efficiencies and reducing operating costs by considering paper and energy consumption, green

purchasing, and staff issues and incentives. This workshop will be held on Tuesday, November 17 at the Town of Markham.

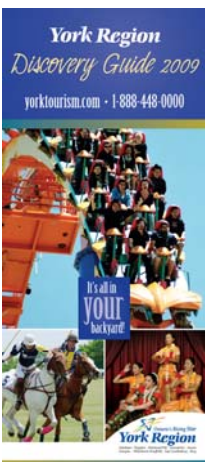
The workshops will put business leaders in contact with sustainable business service providers located right here in York Region, and will also offer the opportunity for the development of a network of environmentally-forward companies operating in York Region.

For details on the workshops, visit [www.york.ca/sed](http://www.york.ca/sed).

**Sustainable Business Workshops**

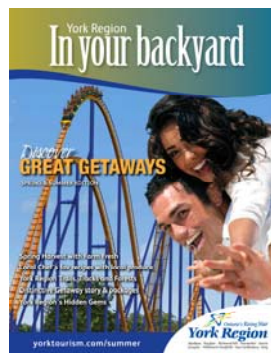
## TOURISM DISCOVER YORK REGION: SPRING PUBLICATIONS

York Region welcomes residents, visitors and businesses alike to discover what is happening here in our own backyard with three valuable spring publications.



The 82-page York Region **Discovery Guide 2009** provides information on recreation, entertainment, shopping, and artistic and cultural activities. The Guide also features a fold-out map of the Region, as well as promotional offers to a variety of York Region attractions and businesses.

If you are looking for a getaway close to home, contact us for the Spring / Summer edition of the York Region **In Your Backyard** magazine.



This 40-page magazine features articles on great things to see and do including family attractions, outdoor adventures, dining, festivals, theatre and great overnight packages.

When planning a meeting, conference or company team building event, York



Region makes a strong business case. **The KeyNote Conference and Meeting Planner** provides ideas for unique settings, sites and accommodations.

Whether you need to locate a golf course, want to visit a museum or local historic village, plan a meeting or just want to get away, visit [www.yorktourism.com](http://www.yorktourism.com).

Call York Region Tourism at 905 883-3442 or toll-free at 1-888-448-0000, to request any of our spring publications.

## YORK REGION EXPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SPRING WORKSHOPS

To supplement the York Export Development Program's advisory services and the Export Opportunity Assessments (see page 8 for details), four targeted workshops are planned for 2009.

In partnership with the Ministry of International Trade and Investment, we will deliver a workshop on export opportuni-

ties in Chile, in May (date tbc).

On May 25-26, The York Region Export Development Program will be showcased as an exhibitor at Global Business 20/20's 'Building our Vision for the Future' conference. The reception brings together Consuls and Senior Trade Commissioners from Canada's leading export markets, and

visiting foreign delegations with manufacturers, distributors and service providers from across Canada.

On June 2, we will collaborate with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on the 30th annual PROFIT Mission to Buffalo. The two-day mission for Ontario Food Exporters will focus

on York Region's 140+ food and beverage companies.

On June 10, an Export Conference & Trade Show will be hosted in partnership with the Greater Toronto Export Alliance Partners at the Toronto Congress Centre.

For more information, contact Sharon Vegh at Ext 1509. ♦

## YORK SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE A BUSY START TO 2009

In 2008, the York Small Business Enterprise Centre's services increased at an alarming rate (see chart), a trend which is continuing into the first quarter of 2009.

This increase in activity is attributable to the economic downturn, where more people are seeking self employment. Another major factor is the Centre's increased visibility since the branch moved to the 1st floor of the Administration Building and implemented an information display kiosk. ♦



**York Small Business Enterprise Centre Service Levels (at March 20, 2009)**

Activities	2007	2008	% change
General Information Enquiries	8,385	12,150	+45%
Client Start-up Consultations	240	333	+39%
Workshop Participation	90	135	+50%
Seminar Participation	170	258	+52%
Online Webinar Registration	0	210	n/a
Bridges to Better Business Conference registration	77	150	+95%
Summer Company Applications	18	31	+72%
Approved Summer Company Participants	7	10	+43%
Business Plan Challenge Participants	8	12	+50%
<b>Total outreach</b>	<b>9,077</b>	<b>13,208</b>	<b>+46%</b>

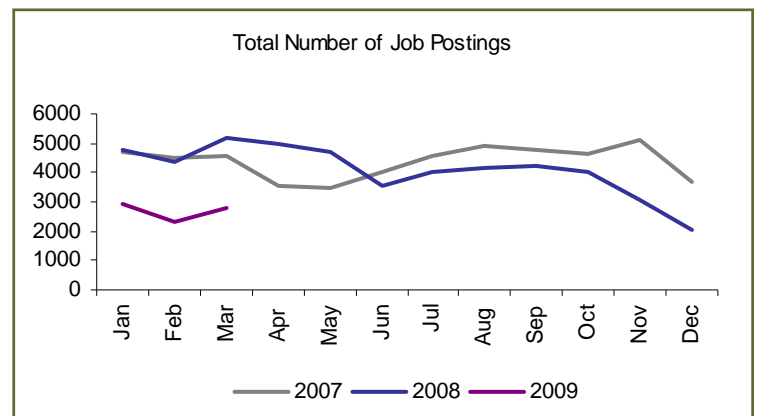
## JOB HIRING INDEX QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Q1 2009 Job Hiring Index analysis showed that with the economic downturn, job postings continued to decline vs. 2008 (-45%).

The analysis indicates declines in all sectors, however, in the month of March there was growth in the

number of jobs in four categories: Information and Cultural; Educational Services; Management of Companies; and Construction.

To receive copies of the complete report, please contact Sharon Vegh at Ext 1509. ♦



## FEATURE STORY: MANUFACTURING SECTOR COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAM

The Manufacturing Sector Competitiveness Program will build strategic partnerships with the York Region manufacturing sector to identify manufacturing business priorities and opportunities.

Strategies will be developed for 2010 to improve the performance of existing manufacturers and to generate a value proposition for global corporations to invest in manufacturing facilities in York Region.

### Ontario's Manufacturing Sector is a Major Contributor to the Economy

Excluding retail and wholesale trade at 2,678.8 million employees, manufacturing is the largest industry sector employer in Canada with 1,970.3 million employees recorded in 2008.

Ontario's diverse manufacturing sector is a major contributor to the economy, directly accounting for 900,000 jobs in 2008. In February, 2009, Ontario employed 849,400 in manufacturing, second only to trade.

### Manufacturing Remains the Primary Employer in York Region

York Region contributes over 83,300 manufacturing jobs to the Ontario economy. In York Region's diverse economy, manufacturing is the primary employer, accounting for 19% of the total employment.

### York Region's Manufacturing Sector Consists of Five Segments

The five main segments of York Region's manufacturing sector are: material manufacturing, machinery manufacturing, electronics and transportation, food and textiles, and science-based manufacturing (see chart below).

### Work Plan for 2009

In tough economic conditions, progressive manufacturers are looking for new approaches to differentiate themselves and win market share. One important step in the growth process is to assess

where York Region manufacturing sector companies stand against companies which have implemented leading-edge business strategies in Canada and in the United States.

The objective of the study is:

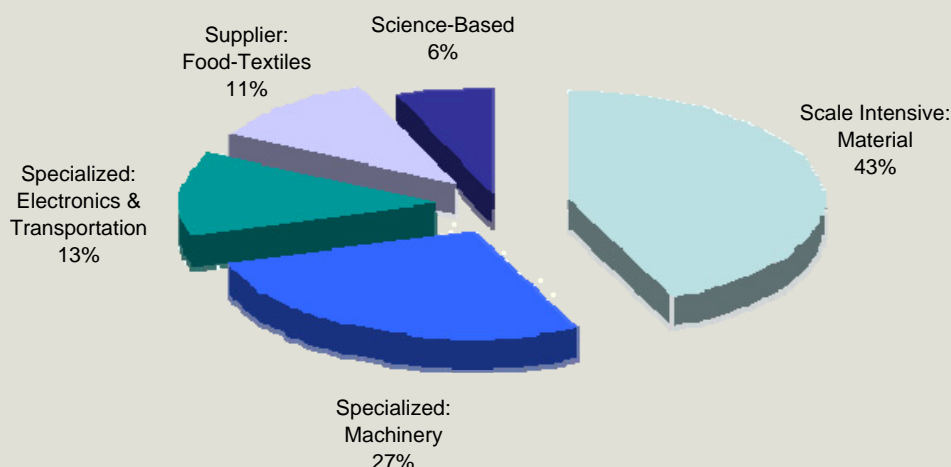
- ◆ To provide a wealth of valuable data for York Region's manufacturers, business leaders and municipalities
- ◆ To understand how manufacturers in York Region rank against world-class performance benchmarks, and target improvements where needed
- ◆ To generate a value proposition for corporations to invest in manufacturing facilities in York Region
- ◆ To develop a work plan for 2010 and beyond

The study will focus on existing businesses in the manufacturing sector in York Region. We have generated a list of over 2,000 manufacturing companies in York Region. Our goal is to interview at least 300 of these firms and compile relevant information to analyse.

The Manufacturing Sector Competitiveness Study involves a detailed work plan that has already begun. The process is:

- ◆ Apply for Invest Canada-Community Initiative (ICCI) matching funds in January 2009
- ◆ Secure interview and benchmarking software license in March 2009
- ◆ Select a research firm by Request for Proposal (RFP) process in May 2009 to implement the interviews and compile results

The 5 Main Segments of York Region's Manufacturing Sector



- ♦ Complete interviews with the manufacturing sector by October 2009
- ♦ Analyze the survey information, develop a SWOT (strengths / weaknesses / opportunities / threats) assessment and report to the Regional Planning Committee during the fourth quarter 2009
- ♦ Develop strategies based on the report outcome
- ♦ Apply for ICCI matching funds in January 2010 to continue monitoring the manufacturing sector throughout 2010

**Work Plan Progress to April 23, 2009**

A matching investment has been received from ICCI in the amount of \$31,500 . This investment by ICCI, a program under Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, is evidence of their interest and support for the program. A press release will be issued upon signing of the agreement.

Blane Canada, Ltd.'s Synchronist™ software has been purchased. Web-based training will commence in the Spring 2009 for the project manager and the successful research firm.

The RFP for a research firm will close on May 4, 2009. The firm will conduct interviews based on the questions supplied by the software. Questions of relevance to the local business community will also be added to the survey.

The research will determine the level of investment located in York Region. Upon finalization of the research and interviews, a strategy will be developed with York Region's nine local municipal economic development offices to set appropriate targets to retain and expand investments.

**Ontario Budget 2009 Recognizes Tax Relief for the Manufacturing Sector**

The Ontario government's partnerships with manufacturers — such as the Next

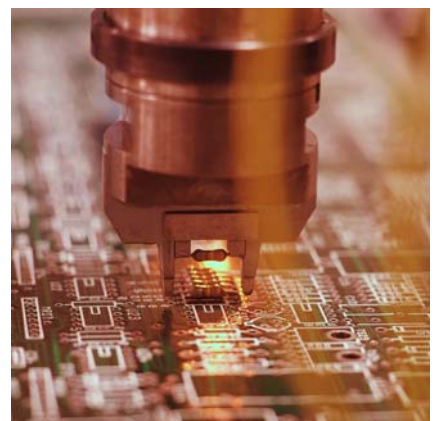
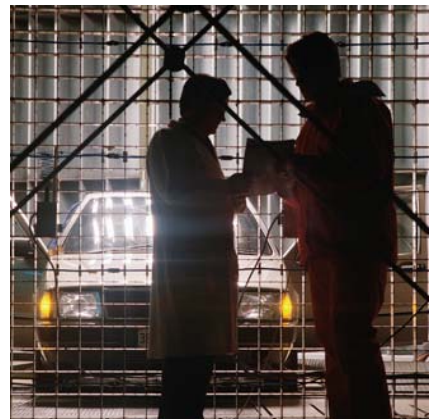
Generation of Jobs Fund and the Advanced Manufacturing Investment Strategy (AMIS) — are helping companies enhance their competitiveness, preserving jobs today and creating the jobs of tomorrow.

To date, AMIS has made loan commitments of almost \$100 million to support innovative projects. These loan commitments will generate \$890 million in new investments and support the creation or retention of about 4,000 jobs in 15 communities over a five-year period.

Ontario will provide an additional \$110 million of tax relief for manufacturers in 2011–12 by paralleling the federal extension of the 50 per cent straight line Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) rate for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment investments made in 2010 and 2011.

These initiatives reinforce the importance of the manufacturing sector in the Ontario and Canada, and coincide with the Region's efforts to better understand and protect this very important sector.

For more information on the Manufacturing Sector Competitiveness Program, please contact Sharon Vegh, Program Manager, Economic Development at Ext 1509. ♦



**In tough economic conditions, progressive manufacturers are looking for new approaches to differentiate themselves and win market share.**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### APRIL

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT / SUN
		1	2	3	4/5
6	7	8	9	10	11/12
13	14	15	16	17	18/19
20	21	22	23	24	25/26
27	28	29	30		

April 14, 9:00 am—12:00 pm

**York Small Business Workshop: *Boost Your Competitive Edge***

For information, contact: Pauline Nagelmakers ext 1572

April 28, 9:00 am—11:00 am

**York Small Business Seminar: *Cold Calling***

For information, contact: Pauline Nagelmakers ext 1572

### MAY

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT / SUN
				1	2/3
4	5	6	7	8	9/10
11	12	13	14	15	16/17
18	19	20	21	22	23/24
25	26	27	28	29	30/31

May 12, 9:00 am—12:00 pm

**York Small Business Workshop: *Expanding Your Business***

For information, contact: Pauline Nagelmakers ext 1572

May 14, 8:00 am—11:30 am

**Sustainability Workshop: *Solar Applications for Businesses***

For information, contact: Sarah Melnyk ext 1562

May 25-26

**Global Business 20/20's "Building our Vision for the Future"**

For information, contact: Sharon Vegh ext 1509

### JUNE

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT / SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6/7
8	9	10	11	12	13/14
15	16	17	18	19	20/21
22	23	24	25	26	27/28
29	30				

June 2-3

**30th Annual PROFIT Mission to Buffalo**

For information, contact: Sharon Vegh ext 1509

June 9, 9:00 am—12:00 pm

**York Small Business Workshop: *Basic HR Practices***

For information, contact: Pauline Nagelmakers ext 1572

June 10

**GTREA Export Conference & Trade Show**

For information, contact: Sharon Vegh ext 1509

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## KEY NATIONAL INDICATORS: Q4 2008

Sources: Canadian Economic Accounts (Statistic Canada), Fourth Quarter / December 2008; Consumer Price Index (Statistic Canada), December 2008

<b>Gross Domestic Product (GDP)</b>	Real gross domestic product declined 0.8% in the fourth quarter, weakening progressively each month. This was the sharpest quarterly decline since 1991. Declines in exports, capital investment and personal expenditures all contributed to the economic contraction. Final domestic demand fell 1.2%, while Government current and capital expenditure rose. GDP growth for the year was positive at 0.5%, a sharp deceleration from 2.7% in 2007.
<b>Personal Spending</b>	After decelerating since the start of the year, personal spending fell for the first time since the fourth quarter of 1995 in the fourth quarter. Both goods and services contributed to the 0.8% decline. Expenditures on new and used motor vehicles dropped 5.5% in the fourth quarter, following declines in the second and third quarter. After 15 quarterly advances, spending on furniture, furnishings and household equipment and maintenance fell 2.3% in the fourth quarter.
<b>Inflation</b>	Inflation was down to 1.9% in the fourth quarter, from 3.4% in Q3. Consumer prices rose 1.2% in the 12 months to December 2008. It was the smallest increase since January 2007 and reflected a sharp decline in the price of gasoline. The 12-month change in the CPI was also tempered by on-going price declines for purchasing and leasing passenger vehicles, women's clothing and fuel oil and other fuels. The most significant upward contributor was mortgage interest cost.
<b>Employment &amp; Unemployment</b>	Unemployment in the fourth quarter climbed 0.3 percentage points from the previous quarter to 6.4%, while the employment rate edged down 0.1% to 63.4%. Employment growth from December 2007 to December 2008 was 0.6% (+98,000), much slower than the increase of 2.2% observed over the same period in the previous year. From the record low of 5.8% in early 2008, the unemployment rate had climbed 0.8 percentage points by the end of the year, with most of the increase occurring in the last quarter.
<b>Exports</b>	Exports of goods and services were down 4.7% in Q4. This was the sixth consecutive quarterly decline; a first in Canada since quarterly estimates began over 60 years ago. Automotive products were down 19%, accounting for nearly half of the quarterly decline in total exports. Industrial goods and materials also decreased significantly in the fourth quarter.
<b>Imports</b>	Imports dropped sharply in the fourth quarter (-6.4%). Declines were registered for both goods and services imports, as domestic demand faltered and prices for imported goods and services rose. Imports of automotive products declined 16% while other consumer goods were down 9.0%, reflecting a downturn in consumer spending.

**... the Canadian economy contracted at an annualized rate of 3.4% in the fourth quarter, compared with a 6.2% decline in the US economy, a 5.9% decline in the European Union, and a 12.7% drop in Japan.**

## YORK REGION INDICATORS: YEAR-END 2008

Source: Economic & Development 2008; \*2008 Employment and Industry Report

	2007	2008	% change
<b>Population</b>	983,100	1,011,400	2.9 %
<b>Unemployment</b>	5.1%	5.7%	11.8 %
<b>Number of Jobs</b>	476,200*	484,400*	1.7%
<b>Number of Businesses</b>	29,000*	29,500*	1.7%
<b>Total Construction Value</b>	\$3,506,574	\$2,801,370	-20.1 %
Residential	\$2,392,000	\$2,031,000	- 15.1 %
Industrial	\$391,000	\$231,000	-40.9 %
Commercial	\$478,000	\$314,000	- 34.3 %
Institutional	\$246,000	\$225,000	- 8.5 %
<b>Industrial Vacancy Rates</b>	4.6 %	7.2 %	56.5 %
<b>Commercial / Office Vacancy Rates</b>	7.2 %	6.8 %	- 5.6 %
<b>Housing Resales (units)</b>	16,800	13,065	- 22.2 %
<b>Average House Price</b>	\$484,741	\$508,892	4.9 %



**ECONOMIC STRATEGY & TOURISM  
BRANCH NEWS**

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK**

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**BRANCH SERVICES**

**ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

With a goal of enhancing community prosperity and a strategic focus on sustainable business practices, we specialize in attracting new businesses and helping York Region firms expand their business. We offer assistance in location selection, access to federal and provincial funding programs, investment information services, export strategies, workforce development, and small business start-up consulting. We work in partnership with the Region's nine municipal Economic Development Offices to ensure that all Regional businesses are successful in achieving their goals.

**YORK SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE**

Offered in partnership with the Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services, we serve entrepreneurs in the Northern York Region municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket, and Whitchurch-Stouffville. Key services include delivering seminars and workshops, one-on-one business consultation and start-up advice. Annual programs offered by YRSBEC are the Summer Company Program, Business Plan Challenge, and the Bridges to Better Business Conference.

**YORK EXPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

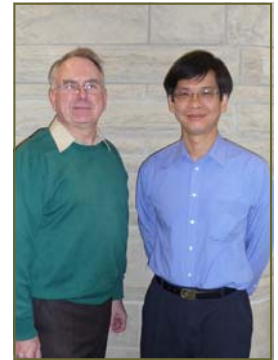
An Economic Development program providing advisory services to export-ready companies in all nine municipalities of York Region. Our goal is to enable growth of companies by increasing export sales revenue through providing international contacts and referrals.

**TOURISM**

As a department of the Economic Development Branch, we market York Region as an integrated travel destination in partnership with the tourism industry and other levels of government. We collaborate with tourism partners and colleagues to develop and deliver marketing programs that position York Region as a premier, four-season destination. We encompass a full range of services and resources, from strategic planning, marketing research and product development to media advertising, consumer information services, publications, travel trade and media relations.

**STAFF PROFILE:  
JIM HOBBS & GARY OUE**

The York Region Export Development Program is now in its ninth year. In February 2007, Jim Hobbs was contracted as Export Development Advisor. He came to the position with a wealth of experience having worked in various senior advisory and research roles for the Durham Region, the Province of Ontario, and more. Gary Oue joined the team as Export Advisor in September 2008 after 13 years with the Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation. As Development Manager, he was responsible for developing and managing a government funded incubator program to assist technology entrepreneurs in new product development, commercializing technologies, financing and building businesses.



Jim and Gary meet with small to medium sized companies to promote the Region's Export Development Program. They provide assistance on export development and business expansion by identifying and evaluating client readiness and capability. They provide assistance to clients with market selection, market entry, preparation and implementation of export plans. Jim covers the municipalities of East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville and Vaughan, and Gary covers Aurora, Markham and Richmond Hill.

In addition to meeting and consulting with companies, continuing to build York Region's network of contacts and leads, and hosting a variety of workshops, the Export Development Program team launched a project for Export Opportunity Assessments in late 2008 and invited eight select companies to participate. The Export Opportunity Assessments have proven to be of great value to York Region's exporters. They have provided, in some cases, the ammunition for firms to increase investments from their own management. In 2009 the team will continue to deliver the assessments to 10 qualified exporters. The team will also deliver four sector focused workshops in 2009.

When meeting with local businesses, Gary and Jim continuously face the challenge of dispelling the myth that a company is too small to be an exporter or that exporting is too complicated. Recognizing that 2009 has brought new challenges, they must convince companies that it may be a good time to explore the international market and set up a distribution channel during economic downturns.

They both enjoy the day to day contact with different companies in York Region. Each company has a unique set of situations and challenges, and Gary and Jim appreciate having the opportunity to offer objective advice, new perspectives, and to share information that could impact a company's bottom line. ♦

**Contact Jim or Gary:**  
[jim.hobbs2@sympatico.ca](mailto:jim.hobbs2@sympatico.ca)  
[gary.88@hotmail.com](mailto:gary.88@hotmail.com)