



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **The first regional economic development conference for women starts today**

**Thunder Bay, ON (April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008)** – The Northern Ontario Women's Economic Development Conference (NOWEDC) officially starts today and will engage hundreds of women from around the region in developing innovative solutions to build strong and sustainable Northern Ontario communities. NOWEDC is the first regional economic development conference specifically focused on advancing the contributions and impacts of women in business and community development in the North.

Two days of keynote speakers and workshop sessions aim to build upon the themes of: **Building a Business in Northern Ontario; Creating Sustainable Livelihoods and Growing Our Northern Communities.** Female role models who are involved in leading-edge business and community economic development initiatives will work with delegates to provide their experiences and perspectives. **Catherine Ann**, an award-winning entrepreneur with a rags to riches story is one of the conference highlights. Other keynote speakers include: **Diane Redsky**, Director of Programs, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Winnipeg, and **Melanie Conn**, past director of Simon Fraser University's Certificate program for CED Professionals, director of the Canadian Women's CED Council, and co-founder of the WomenFutures CED Society.

*Rosalind Lockyer, Executive Director of PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise says...“This conference is about providing women in our region with the skills, networks and confidence to get involved in community economic development. We know that many women feel ready to participate in community building, whether it's by starting their own business or volunteering their time to a local organization. Our goal is to work with women to realize their full potential*

*and to return to their businesses, jobs, and communities with new ideas about how they can help promote economic progress within their own circles of influence.”*

Conference workshops include a wide variety of topics from writing business plans, sourcing angel investment and selling with technology, to reducing stress, creating economic diversification strategies and greening a business.

*“We have been overwhelmed by the number of delegates, workshop presenters and sponsors for this conference,” continued Lockyer. “The conference partners are incredibly optimistic about the potential social and economic outcomes of this meeting and the ripple effect that will be created in businesses, workplaces and communities across Northern Ontario.”*

The conference partners of the Northern Ontario Women’s Economic Development Conference are: PARO Centre for Women’s Enterprise, Algoma University College, The Canadian Women’s Community Economic Development Council and North Superior Training Board.

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