



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PARO to host the Northern Ontario Women's Economic Development Conference

The first regional economic development conference devoted to women announced

Thunder Bay, ON (February 4, 2008) – The PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise will host the first Northern Ontario Women's Economic Development Conference (NOWEDC) on April 29-30, 2008 in Thunder Bay, it was announced today. The NOWEDC is the first regional economic development conference devoted to advancing business development opportunities for women.

Keynote speakers and sessions for the conference will focus on the themes of: **Building a Business in Northern Ontario; Creating Sustainable Livelihoods** and **Growing Our Northern Communities**. It will showcase eminent female role models who are involved in business and community economic development. The keynote speakers include: **Catherine Ann**, award-winning rags to riches Entrepreneur, **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.

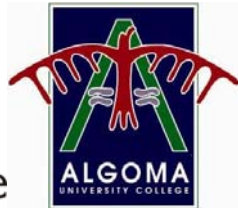
Says Rosalind Lockyer, Executive Director of PARO; *"At PARO, we recognize the enormous contributions that women in business provide in driving our Northern economies. This conference will have speakers, panels and workshops that will help women to start and grow their businesses. The goal of NOWEDC is to engage regional communities in discussions to seek out new opportunities for women to grow their areas of influence in promoting economic and social progress for the North."*

Although the conference is aimed at enhancing the economic role of women in Northern Ontario, the conference is also seeking male delegates. Lockyer continues, “NOWEDC is open to both women and men who share a vision for developing innovative, women-centred solutions to help build strong and sustainable Northern Ontario communities. The conference will open doors to future business and community partnerships by creating networks between all stakeholders who recognize the value of women in local and regional economic development.”

Delegates will have the opportunity to listen to keynote presenters and participate in panels and a variety of session workshops during the two-day conference. Registration is now open with Early Bird rates priced at \$129.00 until the end of the month. Subsidies are also being offered on a first come, first served basis based on need.

To register or for more information on the complete conference program visit: www.nowedc.ca or contact Kirsti Tasala at: 807-625-0328.

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