

Report on the Newfoundland Power Trailblazer's *"Shaping our Future"* Planning Session

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is in completion of an agreement between the Newfoundland Power Trailblazers Association (hereafter referred to as “the Trailblazers” or “the Association”) and Goss Gilroy Inc., to provide a summary of proceedings from the *Shaping Our Future* planning session held on Thursday, May 5th, 2011 in St. John’s. The Trailblazers is an association of Newfoundland Power (NP) retired employees and employees with 30 or more years of service with NP. At present the association has more than 600 members.¹

During the planning session, approximately 26 participants engaged in a series of large and small group discussions designed to enable a review of the Trailblazers activities, effectiveness of its communication efforts, the strength of its membership, the provincial nature of its leadership and opportunities for monitoring its success. The agenda for the planning session is found in Appendix “A”.

The following provides a synopsis of each of the topic areas discussed during the day and, where appropriate, provides commentary on actions the Trailblazers can take as it moves forward on shaping its future. For ease of reference, those who attended the planning session are referred to as “participants.”

2.0 VISION

A vision is a statement about what an organization wants to become. It should resonate with all members of an organization and inspire pride and interest. A vision should stretch an organization’s capabilities and image of itself and provide it shape and direction for the future.² The first session of the Trailblazers planning day was devoted to discussion of the following draft vision statement which had been developed by the Facilitator in consultation with the Trailblazers President:

Trailblazers is a vibrant organization which fosters a spirit of ongoing camaraderie, fellowship and mutual helpfulness between and among its members. Trailblazers is focused on responding to its members’ needs and interests and in so doing, contributes to their opportunities to live active and purposeful lives.

Participants felt that the first sentence adequately and aptly described a vision for the organization and so the vision statement would read as follows:

Trailblazers is a vibrant organization which fosters a spirit of ongoing camaraderie, fellowship and mutual helpfulness between and among its members.

¹ NP Trailblazers – Home. Further information is available from <http://www.nptrailblazers.com/>.

² Human Resources. Build a Strategic Framework: Mission Statement, Mission, Values. Available from <http://humanresources.about.com/cs/strategicplanning1/a/strategicplan.htm>.

Of note, this vision is in line with the Trailblazers aims and objectives as cited in section 1 of Article 2 of the their Constitution:

The aims and objectives of the Association shall be to provide a means of friendly association for its members; to foster among them a continuing fellowship and a spirit of mutual helpfulness; to participate in activities that are of service to the community; to contribute to the progress of the Association; to promote the happiness, and usefulness of the membership; to represent the membership on issues that affect their well-being.³

Consideration:

It will be important to inform Trailblazers of this newly drafted vision. It would be important to first seek the agreement of all current Executive members (some of whom were not able to attend the planning session) and Area Representatives that this vision resonates with their understanding of the Trailblazers and its intent. Once this agreement has been secured it would be important to convey to Association members and potential members that arising from the planning session, the Association has drafted and adopted a vision statement.

3.0 ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

This session provided participants an opportunity to discuss, in small groups, the activities in which Trailblazers have engaged in their Areas. This included activities which:

- Are of a social/recreational nature
- Respond to Trailblazers needs (e.g. NP Retiree Emergency Trust Fund)
- Support NP's initiatives, and/or
- Enable contribution to communities (community investment)

Participants were asked to think about the activities they undertake within the context of the Association's diverse membership categories and its regional nature, attending to for example the needs of their:

- Retired members
- Retired members who are working at something different
- Not yet retired members
- Surviving spouses

And

- The unique regions in which activities are undertaken

³ NP Trailblazers Association Constitution. Available from <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:4FCrmO84O9oJ:www.nptrailblazers.com/Trailblazers%2520Constitution.rtf+NP+trailblazers&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ca&source=www.google.ca>.

- Available volunteer capacity
- Available leadership

3.1 What has been successful and why?

Participants first discussed what activities have been successful and reasons for this success. Of note, not all activities would have been offered/undertaken in each of the Areas.

In general, social activities were highlighted as those which were most successful and those cited included:

- Breakfasts
- Regular “Coffee breaks”
- BBQs
- Flipper dinners
- Annual Association dinners

Elements which were considered to contribute to the success of these activities included that these were opportunities to socialize and did not require a long term commitment from Trailblazers (as they were available at a particular moment in time). Additionally, most activities cited were of little or no cost to those who participated (with the exception of the Annual Dinners which require a higher fee due to the cost of the dinners and the associated venues). A few participants did state, however, that sometimes their members donate money in lieu of a fee for an activity and this is provided to a local charity or to a cause (such as cancer.)

Other activities deemed successful by participants included those which were focused on recognition of members’ milestones such as birthdays/anniversaries (e.g. sending cards, taking the celebrant out for a meal); annual events such as the preparation of the Christmas float in St. John’s and Corner Brook and the Annual Association dinners; and “formal” programs such as the School Safety program and Envirofest. The latter in particular were seen to be successful in both engaging members and as well supporting important social/community issues.

3.2 What has not been successful and why not?

Participants identified a few specific activities which they felt had not been successful in one or more Areas.

In general, there was agreement that hospital visitation to members and/or their spouses who are in hospital can be labour intensive and not always very efficient. Area Representatives are not always informed of who is in hospital and sometimes find out after a Trailblazer/spouse is home again. Participants felt this resulted in some members/their families being visited and others not, and this was seen to have potential to cause some disgruntlement for those who were not visited.

Consideration

Many participants felt hospital visitation is an important activity to continue. However it remains unclear as to whether or not this can be undertaken in a comprehensive manner which ensures that it equitably encompasses ALL members/spouses who are in the hospital in a given Area. Should a particular Area wish to continue this visitation, they must ensure effective and timely processes for identifying who is in hospital and have a roster of available and willing volunteers to do the visiting.

While the School Safety program is considered to be an important one, participants stated that they did not think the uptake was as high as in previous years, in part due to letters about the program not being directed to schools in a timely manner.

Consideration

Given the School Safety program is seen to be an effective one and one which does attract volunteers, it would be important to ensure the process for informing schools about the program is efficient and timely. It is suggested that the Area Representatives and the Trailblazers Executive (on behalf of the St. John's Area) communicate to their requisite Area offices/Head office that the number of requests for the program seem to have decreased and discuss ways and means of increasing the profile and awareness of the program. This could include, for example, a suggestion that schools be notified of the availability of the program in a more consistent and timely manner. Further, Area Representatives/the Executive should request a list of schools to which the information is sent and then determine a process for following up with the schools as a means to further encourage their participation.

Other specific activities which were seen to be waning/less successful included the following:

- Card games – it was felt that the members who tended to participate in this activity were aging and not as active. New members do not appear to be as interested in card games.
- One Area had tried to initiate home visits for members who were “shut-in” but were not able to get it off the ground.

Participants cited a number of possible reasons for some activities not always being successful. One issue in particular was that of lack of communication: members may not know what is available to /for them in their region. This concern is addressed in detail in section 4.0. This lack of awareness also could be contributing to difficulty recruiting participants: if members do not see their Area membership as being active, their interest and desire to participate could wane.

As noted previously, some felt that those activities which require more ongoing commitment are less likely to attract the same level of participation as the social and recreational events.

Consideration:

The value of social and recreational activities cannot be understated. It is these activities which are often the “hook” to initially engage and oftentimes sustain members. These

activities provide, for example, opportunities for maintaining contact with friends/peers; having fun; and stress reduction. Areas should remain focused on providing a range of such activities – responsive to the identified needs of their membership – both as a foundation for engaging members and as well a springboard to other activities such as those which focus on community investment. For example, an Area could have a lunch and learn which brings members together to talk about homelessness and discuss what they as a group could contribute to local efforts to address this social issue – and do it over lunch, in a relaxed environment and in the company of friends.

3.3 Responding to the continuum of membership into the future

It is important to reflect on the fact that there are differences between and among Areas in terms of numbers of available Trailblazers, their demographic, the size of the Area (with rural areas sometimes creating travel related challenges to participation) and range of available/possible activities which could be undertaken. Participants highlighted, for example, that St. John's is a hub for its club, with more members in the region, more opportunities for a variety of activities, and a shorter distance for members to travel to participate.

Further to this it was noted that what works in one Area might not work in another: the activities undertaken must be responsive to and reflective of the local memberships' unique interests. Participants identified the following strategies for increasing membership and participation in Areas across the province.

Liaise with the Employees Association

It was identified that Trailblazers should have more focus on collaborating with the Employees Association on a regional basis. Some noted that the Employees Association seems to have a fairly high attendance rate at its activities and so efforts to develop stronger relationships could positively impact Area membership. It was felt that if the current employees were more exposed to the Trailblazers while they are still working – they might be more inclined to participate in its activities once they reach a point where they can become members.

Communicating with members/potential members

See section 4.0.

Scheduling of events

As possible, and in particular in rural areas where members might need to drive long distances to participate, activities should be scheduled in the afternoon. This offsets concerns many have regarding driving in the evening/night when safety is an even more paramount issues (e.g. moose). Of note, however, this could preclude participation by those Trailblazers who are still working during the day.

New activities

It was suggested that Areas try to include a wider variety of activities designed to cater to a broader interest. One suggestion was to establish a speaker series wherein each Area could identify speakers on a range of topics and set up a regular series of information sessions. It was cautioned that the topic areas should be broad to capture a range of interests including for example nutrition, travel, photography and computers. As noted by one participant – the focus should not just be on topics traditionally associated with seniors – e.g. foot care and planning for funerals.

It was further suggested that these information sessions be coupled with a social – which in and of itself would be an enticement for some.

Ensure a continued focus on members' needs and interests

It was considered important to be able to support Trailblazers with their day to day issues – e.g. holding an information session on completing tax returns or on issues related to pensions.

It also was suggested that there should be mechanisms, such as yearly surveys, done to identify what activities would be of interest to Trailblazers in the various Areas.

Strong local leadership

It was suggested there needs to be strong leadership in each Area to be the driving force behind organizing activities. Participants felt there should be an “Assistant” Representative position established in each Area and as possible a local organizing committee should be instituted. Such a structure would take the onus off of the one Area Representative to be responsible for all aspects of his/her Area’s activities, membership growth and sustainability.

4.0 COMMUNICATION

This session provided participants an opportunity to discuss ways and means of improving communication between and among Trailblazers and other related stakeholder groups. Participants were asked to think about critical information which should be shared and those with whom they should be sharing it: e.g. current members, lapsed members, potential members, other stakeholder groups (e.g. the company/community partners).

4.1 Current modes of communication

Participants identified the following as some of the many and varied ways the Association endeavours to communicate with its members:

- E-mail (which are posted on employee Boards)
- Trailblazer website
- HighLines

- Payroll/pension stubs
- Telephone
- Association newsletters
- Home/hospital visits
- Letters to eligible/new Trailblazers

These mechanisms are used to disseminate a range of information including one or more of the following: information on the Trailblazers (e.g. Constitution/by-laws); notice of upcoming events/activities/functions; NP related information.

Other information important to share and disseminate

Participants said that while the information currently being shared is valuable, there is other information which should be disseminated to Trailblazers. This included information on EI, pension plan and health benefits and in general more communication from Human Resources on the benefits available to them on retirement and/or when they pursue other work outside of NP. Some also said they would like more information on the Retiree Emergency Trust Fund.

It also was noted that there should be more information on the activities/events/functions each Area is undertaking and on success stories, as both could spur similar activities in other areas.

Some participants identified that they would like to have the results of this session shared.

4.2 Enhancing communication

All participants agreed there was a need to better communicate to Area members/potential members about the range of activities available in their Areas. It was cautioned that simply relying on e-mail to advertise was not sufficient as, in particular, current membership are not all connected. Similarly, it was stated that while doing pension cheque/payroll stub inserts was once seen to be an effective means of conveying information to members – now with direct deposit, some members do not even bother to look at the print information which is sent to them.

Overall, there was consensus that there is a need to identify from Trailblazers how best to connect with each of them and that this would likely necessitate using a range of mechanisms including, for example, in-person contact at activities and meetings, by phone, in print (e.g. letters), e-mail (with a “catchy” subject line!), local community channels, and Area/Association websites and newsletters. It was noted in relation to newsletters that the Association could not rely solely on the NP newsletter, HighLines, as it would not sufficiently present all the information the Trailblazers would want or need. However, participants felt that Area representatives should be more diligent in submitting information on their Area activities to shore up what is currently provided to HighLines.

Consideration

The Trailblazers must always be responsive to those who choose not to communicate via technology. A number of participants did highlight the importance of having phone contact

as a primary means of communicating with those who were not as interested in/intimidated by technology and thus unlikely to work with e-mail/Facebook. A designated group of Area members could be responsible for ensuring this phone contact. While communicating in print (e.g. letters) is also a possibility, clearly a phone call is likely a more timely and definitely a more engaging process for encouraging and sustaining member participation.

It also was suggested that each Area establish a “phone tree” or identify a designated group of Trailblazers who would ensure phone contact with all members when there was a need to immediately inform them of, for example, a pressing issue or an emerging opportunity.

There was perhaps a general sense of surprise at the number of participants who identified as having Facebook pages. It was agreed that while all would not be so connected, setting up a provincial Trailblazers Facebook page – and perhaps as possible Area Facebook pages - was yet another opportunity to advertise the Association and its activities.

Consideration

While it is clear that websites and Facebook would engage a certain percentage of Trailblazers and encourage new participation, there is a caution to be noted. These technologies require monitoring and updating. If Facebook pages are to be established it will be important that someone is designated to update these pages - both provincially and on an Area basis.

In summary, it was felt that a comprehensive approach to communicating with members, as outlined above, would increase the Trailblazers membership base. Trailblazers in each Area would identify the “best” way to communicate with them and, if done successfully, this could result in them feeling more included and “in the know” about the various Areas and their offerings.

5.0 ENGAGING MEMBERS/ENABLING LEADERS

This session afforded participants time to explore opportunities for and approaches to growing the Trailblazers membership and for building its leadership capacity across the province. The Facilitator reminded participants that any Association including the Trailblazers is only as strong as its membership – the strengths they bring, and their interests, expertise and commitment. As well it was noted that membership is a challenge for many non-profit and voluntary organizations and associations – including those whose membership is comprised of retirees and older adults.

Further, it was highlighted that there are many competing interests and so the Trailblazers has to make itself relevant and visible to potential members – engaging them in what the Association does and has to offer. This is particularly critical to ensure the Trailblazers is able to capture the significant number of employees soon to be retiring from NP and as well the changing demographic (e.g. more females and younger employees).

A core element of engaging and sustaining membership – and thus in the long term the strength of the Trailblazers - is the leadership available and afforded to it.

5.1 Leadership

The Facilitator provided the following general information on leadership as a prelude to the discussion of the Trailblazers leadership structure.

As noted previously, building and sustaining membership is often challenging for organizations. Similarly, identifying and engaging leaders also can be a challenge. Many factors contribute to this challenge including, for example, that individuals may feel they are not capable of undertaking this role or they have held leadership positions in the past and feel leadership should be taken up by new and younger members.

Often, leadership can become “by default” with leadership positions constantly occupied by the same individuals, as no new leaders come forward or volunteer their time. This situation is untenable, however, as eventually individuals have to and should move on. If leadership becomes stagnant than this can stifle new ideas: those at the helm sometimes end up doing their work “the same way and in the same direction” because in their estimation this has always been successful, and if they are tiring of their position, this simplifies their work. Also if those in an organization see that the leaders have become entrenched, this can lead to disengagement as they feel their new ideas are less welcome.

One challenge to engaging individuals in leadership positions are the misconceptions which often surround the concept of “leader.”

Leadership is not about a title, a position, those who are larger than life, the loudest, the most “out there”, the youngest, the newest, and/or the most educated. Rather, extraordinary leadership comes from ordinary people who are:

- Open to new ideas and methods, new ways of doing things: they listen, observe and learn constantly.
- Adaptable, flexible and not flappable: i.e. “stuff happens” – and they are able to effectively and efficiently respond to the “stuff.”
- Creative or they recognize those who are and engage them.
- Responsive: they have a keen awareness of the needs, interests and concerns of other people.

Leaders have expectations for their organization and support those around them to meet these expectations. They put forth their best work but know they are not always the experts on issues and so seek out those with expertise to help them plan. Leaders capitalize on available knowledge and experience.

5.1.1 Trailblazers leadership structure

Given this leadership framework, the Facilitator suggested that there were many within the ranks of the Association who had these strengths and capacities. However, she further noted the Trailblazers current leadership structure does not encourage leadership outside of the St. John's Metro Region.

Since inception the Trailblazer leadership – the Executive – has been drawn from the St. John's Metro region. While in the early days of the Association, the reasons for this would have been clearer i.e. there were few inexpensive and effective methods of communication for supporting a provincial leadership structure, this is no longer an impediment. Through for example e-mail, tele-conferences, conference calls, skype, etc., there are many and varied ways of holding Executive meetings which do not involve costly face to face meetings.

Participants agreed and indeed welcomed the possibility of changing to a leadership structure - an Executive - that would include representation from all Areas. It was agreed that the current Executive would put forward a motion at their Annual General Meeting (which was to occur the day after the planning session) that the Trailblazers' Executive become truly provincial in nature. It was agreed that there should be a small committee established to oversee the transition to this structure over the next year and it would involve consideration of such issues as:

- Which Areas should be represented?
- Should the Area Representative automatically become the Executive member?
- More generally what would be the process for identifying Executive members from the Areas?
- What would the time commitment be to the Executive – e.g. one or two terms? How many hours a month?
- How often would the Executive meet? How often would there be face to face meetings?

Another critical step would be to clearly define what the role/responsibility of each of the provincial Executive members would be so that those interested to vie for a position would know what it entails and so the Executive has something to which it can hold its members accountable.

St. John's Area

Additionally, the Facilitator raised the issue that the Executive had heretofore served as both the overarching provincial body and the “St. John's Trailblazers.” It was agreed by participants that as the Executive would now be moving to a truly provincial membership, it could no longer carry both roles. It was agreed that a St. John's Area would need to be developed – to distinguish it from the Executive and to ensure a full and consistent focus on only the Area in question.

5.2 Engaging members

Following the discussion on leadership, participants took a critical look at the overall membership of the Trailblazers. They focused on whether or not they are attracting and engaging

the membership to the degree possible, challenges to building and sustaining membership as well as ways to mitigate these challenges.

5.2.1 Challenges to membership

There was general consensus that the Association is not attracting all of its potential members. It is recognized that despite all efforts, some NP retirees might simply not want to join the Association as they are not interested in such a body or its offerings. Participants identified however that there are two specific groups – women and new retirees - who are less engaged due to reasons unrelated to lack of interest.

- Over the years the Association has been male dominated. Participants felt this was due mainly to the preponderance of men working within the Corporation in the early years, in particular. This has resulted in few women with 30+ years of service and thus fewer female retirees. As a result of the historical make-up of the Association (mainly male) its activities have not always responded to the women's interests. Some also thought that this environment could be an intimidating one for some women to enter.
- Reasons for more limited interest of new retirees included that there had been a change in the corporate culture. Participants agreed that up until recently, NP employees felt more like a family – they were closer and many became friends and socialized outside of the workplace. It was a reasonable transition, therefore, for employees to want to continue to socialize in retirement and the Trailblazers provided a ready made venue.

In contrast, in recent years, this corporate culture has changed – fewer enduring friendships are created during employees' time with NP. Participants felt these employees would not necessarily be seeking an avenue or venue such as the Trailblazers for sustaining work-based relationships or more generally for socializing.

5.2.2 Building and sustaining membership

Leadership

Reflecting back on the discussion on leadership, some participants felt that moving to a truly provincial structure, would facilitate increased interest in the Trailblazers. Retirees would see that there was now more regional equality in decision making regarding the Association – with all Areas contributing to and directing its forward movement, through their membership to the Executive. This structure would allow for more regular turnover in leadership thus offsetting the likelihood that the Association would become stagnant in its ideas and energy.

There is a need however to ensure that in each Area there is strong leadership. It was suggested that each Area focus on creating a strong committee (and not just an Area Representative and Assistant) who would meet regularly to plan for their Area and to monitor their members' participation and interests – and to respond accordingly.

Activities

The Trailblazers have to diversify their activities to better respond to the range of interests of both current and new members. While there has to continue to be a focus on social and recreational activities – as these are often what first engage members – there is equally a need to provide activities which respond to, for example, members’ desire to learn (e.g. workshops/information sessions) and to contribute to their communities.

Enhance communication

As noted earlier, there also is a need to enhance communication with current and potential Trailblazers – both at the provincial and Area levels. There is a need to ensure that the Association responds to the communication needs of the members (i.e. some will want to be informed of activities via phone, via e-mail and/or via regular mail.)

Advertise

Some participants suggested that the Trailblazers need to better advertise the Association – to increase its profile and stimulate interest. Ideas included, for example, a focus on an improved profile within the Company itself (e.g. perhaps more attention to articles in HighLines); Trailblazer jackets and hats.

Increased strategic focus on “upcoming”/new retirees

It was suggested that there be an information kit which could be distributed to upcoming/new retirees on the Trailblazers – describing its structure, activities, opportunities and most importantly its value to its members. It also was suggested that a presentation could be developed which could be delivered to upcoming retirees.

It is important to note that in developing such a kit/presentation, the Association has to be cognizant of responding to the changing nature and interests of the emerging demographic - younger retirees – who might be going on to other work, those who have not formed workplace relationships which they feel a need to continue after they retire, and increasing numbers of women.

As well there should be a process instituted which allows the Trailblazers to seek information from these soon to be retirees on what might entice them to join the Association – e.g. what activities might be of interest to them.

6.0 MONITORING SUCCESS

It was identified to the Facilitator that the Trailblazers have not had a focus on monitoring the success of their efforts. However, participants agreed that it is critical for the Association to be consulting with its members on a regular basis to ensure lines of communication are open and effective, that it remains responsive to its members’ needs/interests and to simultaneously inform future directions.

Checking in with members should answer the following questions:

- Are we still meeting the needs of the members? If not, what changes are required?
- Are there emerging issues which might impact the Trailblazers? If so, what and how do we respond?
- Are there opportunities on which we could capitalize – in terms of for example increasing visibility/increasing membership? If so, what and how can we maximize these opportunities?

Through such a “check-in” process, Trailblazers should feel more engaged and involved in directing the organization and as well it would allow the Executive to have its finger on the pulse of the Association.

Consideration

It is suggested that the Executive design a process for annually checking in with its membership. A simple survey could be designed to seek answers to questions such as:

- *How often do you participate in Association events?*
- *How satisfied are you with the activities offered?*
- *What other activities would you like to see offered?*
- *Are you well informed about the Association activities – at an Area and provincial level?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for improving how the Association operates (e.g. in terms of communicating with you, activities which are offered, meeting your needs as a member)?*

This survey could be distributed via Facebook, e-mail, and/or in print. Again it would be important to distribute the survey through a number of channels in an effort to reach the broader membership.

Other opportunities for seeking feedback should also be employed on an Area basis. Members could be asked to fill out a survey after one of their activities; Area representatives could convene a focus group of active and less active members to talk about what is/is not meeting the members’ needs and to inform planning for the coming year.

7.0 “IN A YEAR FROM NOW TRAILBLAZERS WILL HAVE ACHIEVED...WILL BE...”

The following summarizes participants' vision of the Trailblazers achievements and successes a year from now.

7.1 A provincial structure

The Trailblazers would have achieved a truly provincial organization with a provincial Executive which has representation from all Areas. There would be effective communication and monitoring processes in place.

Strong Area support

Areas would have strong and active committees in place which would take the lead on communicating with Area members, as well as planning and implementing activities.

7.2 Membership

Sense of fellowship

The Trailblazers would be an Association which has a true and real sense of fellowship – in which members have a focus on helping and supporting each other.

Increased membership

The Trailblazers would have successfully recruited new members and in general there would be more activities and increased engagement in these activities.

The Trailblazers would have an increased profile which would contribute to awareness of what it does and its relevance to current and potential members.

More and varied activities

Areas would offer a wide variety of interesting activities which respond to the needs of the members. Activities would be planned on a regular basis and supported by Area committees.

7.3 Focus on community investment

Trailblazers would take pride in and enjoyment from involvement in their communities.

7.4 Overall

Perhaps the vision of what the Trailblazers would have achieved and/or where it would be a year from now is best described by the following comments:

Trailblazers will have a framework that will facilitate its mandate to get more members involved and hopefully [be] the voice of a provincial organization. In the meantime the organization has a significant task in making the rubber hit the road.

Trailblazers will be a provincial Association that is vibrant and fosters a spirit of ongoing camaraderie.

Trailblazers will be more pertinent to the lives of more of our fellow retirees.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The Trailblazers is a longstanding organization which has recognized a need to evolve to ensure it remains responsive to its current and potential members. With large numbers soon to be retiring from NP and with a changing demographic (e.g. more women retirees), the Trailblazers has to ensure it is and remains relevant to its membership.

Participants in the planning session exemplified the Trailblazers vision – demonstrating great fellowship and camaraderie. It is this spirit which must be sustained at the Area and provincial levels, as it creates the strong foundation from which success is built.

APPENDIX “A” – Agenda

Newfoundland Power Trailblazers - Shaping our Future

**Thursday, May 5, 2011
8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Royal Canadian Legion, The Boulevard**

Agenda

8:30-9:00 Coffee

9:00-9:15 Welcome and Introductions

- Environmental scan – things to consider as we plan!
- Introduction of the facilitator
- Overview of the agenda

9:15 -9:45 Visioning

In a large group discussion, participants will be tasked to create a vision for the Trailblazers. They will be provided a draft vision statement which they will shape to reflect their understanding of what the Trailblazers ultimately wish to create/do for their membership.

9:45-10:45 Association activities

This session will provide participants an opportunity to review and discuss the range of activities in which the Trailblazers have been engaged including, for example, activities which:

- ✓ facilitate social/recreational activities;
- ✓ respond to members' needs (e.g. emergency fund);
- ✓ support NP's initiatives; and/or
- ✓ contribute to communities (community investment)?

The intent is to identify which activities have been most successful and what has enabled this success, with a view to determining what current or new activities would best respond to the Association's diverse membership and how this might differ between and among regions.

10:45 - 11:00 Nutrition break

11:00-12:15 Communication

This session will focus on ways and means of improving communication between and among the Trailblazers' members. Topics for discussion would include: what information should be shared and how should it be shared; and frequency of communication.

12:15-1:15 Lunch

1:15 -2:30 Engaging members/enabling leaders

This session will explore opportunities for and approaches to growing the Trailblazers' membership and for building its leadership capacity across the province.

2:30 -2:45 Nutrition Break

2:45-3:15 Monitoring success

In this session, participants will discuss ideas and opportunities for on-going assessment of the degree to which the Association is responding to the needs and interests of its members.

3:15-3:30 Moving Forward

In this session, participants will be asked to reflect on what they would like the Trailblazers to achieve in the coming months.

3:30 Wrap-up