

# Memorandum of Understanding Between the Somerset County Business Partnership and the Township of \_\_\_\_\_ Concerning Business Retention Outreach Using the Synchronist® Business Retention Tool

This Memorandum of Understanding is made on \_\_\_\_\_ by and between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and shall remain in effect until a Final Report is issued by the Somerset County Business Partnership to the Township of \_\_\_\_\_.

## I. General

This Memorandum of Understanding is designed to reflect the understandings between the Somerset County Business Partnership (hereinafter the SCBP) and the Township of \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter the Municipality) related to implementation of a Business Retention Outreach project (hereinafter the Project) using the Synchronist® business retention tool.

The Project is undertaken jointly by the Municipality and the SCBP as an economic and community development effort, and is designed to provide both parties with relevant and useful information on the Municipality and the County from a business perspective.

Through personal interviews with representatives of individual businesses in the Municipality, the Synchronist® business retention tool allows for the collection and reporting of empirical data and general observations related to business considerations and conditions.

The Project will focus on businesses in the Municipality that occupy commercial office space and industrial type space and which have between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ employees.

Businesses in the Municipality are solicited for interviews and interested businesses are interviewed by a two person team that utilizes interview forms designed as part of the Synchronist® program.

The results (data) of interviews are maintained within Synchronist's Internet based online service, and the Municipality has been supplied copies of all relevant license, confidentiality, and operating guidelines for the Synchronist® program.

Both Parties understand that Synchronist® is proprietary software licensed by JCP&L/First Energy from Blane Canada Limited and sub-licensed by JCP&L/First Energy Corporation to the SCBP. As a sub-licensee the SCBP owns all present and future rights to data and information collected throughout the Project.

## II. Common Objectives

The Municipality and the SCBP have the following common objectives:

- 1) To gain a better understanding of municipal challenges facing the local business community,
- 2) To have available, for use with elected and appointed officials, empirical and perceptual information from the business community's perspective,

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**II. Common Objectives (cont.)**

- 3) To proactively engage the local business community in the identification and implementation of initiatives to that seek to overcome local and regional business challenges.
- 4) To promote the economic and community development activities of the respective organizations.

**III. Project Staffing and Staff Responsibilities**

The Municipality and the SCBP will each make available economic development or business advocacy staff who will work cooperatively to accomplish the following:

- 1) Finalize an interview request letter/communication to be sent to identified, targeted businesses.
- 2) Finalize a list of businesses based on agreed to criteria.
- 3) Exchange letterhead, graphics, and other materials necessary to expedite the interview request mailing.
- 4) Participate jointly and cooperatively in marketing and public relations efforts that will contribute to the success of the Project.
- 5) Work cooperatively to schedule individual business interviews at mutually agreeable times.
- 6) Conduct individual business interviews as a team.

Municipally assigned staff agrees to:

- 1) Secure all necessary approvals from the Municipality's administrative, elected, and appointed representatives.
- 2) Be responsible for all internal communications with the Municipality's administrative, elected, and appointed representatives who may have an interest in this project.
- 3) Contribute to the identification of businesses and the development of lists of businesses for Project purposes.

SCBP staff agrees to:

- 1) Facilitate mailings and/or electronic communications to businesses.
- 2) Manage all data recording, input, and reporting as it relates to the Synchronist® database.
- 3) Provide summary and individual business interview information to the municipality in a timely manner.

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**IV. Business Interview Outreach and Scheduling**

- 1.) Consistent with staff responsibilities the municipality will contribute in the identification of business and the development of list and the SCBP staff will facilitate mailings and/or electronic communications to businesses
- 2.) The Municipality will be given the opportunity to participate in the interviewing process as part of the two person interviewing team.
- 3.) The SCBP may choose to pursue a broader list of businesses if the municipality's efforts are too narrowly focused. We reserve the right to withhold information, obtained for final reporting, about the companies the municipality did not participate with.

**V. Implementation**

As soon as is practical following execution of this Memorandum of Understanding the Municipality and the SCBP agree to:

- 1) Finalize an interview request letter/communication which will be sent to targeted businesses.
- 2) Finalize a list of businesses, which both the SCBP and the Municipality will have contributed to, to which the interview request letter will be sent.
- 3) Exchange letterhead, graphics, and other materials necessary to expedite the interview request mailing.
- 4) Schedule and conduct individual business interviews.

**VI. Data Ownership, Release, and Sharing**

- 1) It is understood that all data and information collected through individual business interviews is owned by the SCBP consistent with the sub-license agreement granted to the SCBP by JCP&L/First Energy Corporation.
- 2) The SCBP agrees to share all data and information collected through individual business interviews with assigned Municipal staff.
- 3) The SCBP agrees to share, among participating municipalities, summary Synchronist® reports as may be requested by a municipality.
- 4) Participating municipalities agree to not publicly release Synchronist® reports from other municipalities.
- 5) Assigned SCBP staff anticipates sharing summary municipal data and information with the SCBP's Board of Directors and Executive Committee.
- 6) The SCBP agrees to not release publicly either individual interview data and information or summary data and information without the express prior consent of the Municipality.
- 7) The Municipality agrees to provide the SCBP with an opportunity to participate in a prominent way in any Municipal release of any Project related data and information.