

# Our Economy

**How resilient is our economy?** The signs are promising. Yet, improvements can be made. The recent recession affected residents differently according to their industry and the adaptability of their skills. At the start of the recession in 2008, 33% of respondents to HCIA's survey said their ability to sustain their personal economic situation was a key priority. They also noted the area's lack of diverse employment opportunities and the shortage of above-average-income jobs. In focus groups, residents identified three priorities for action: economic planning on a regional level, keeping family farms viable, and more support for small businesses.

Such concerns lead to the notion of economic resiliency. After an economic downturn, economic resiliency is the ability of a community to "bounce back" or adapt to a new economic reality.

The Shelburne E-Learning Center just made it easier to achieve a post secondary education. Headwaters citizens can access over 10,000 online College and University courses, improve literacy and upgrade their academic skills without ever leaving the community. In addition to providing computers and other technology at the site, elearnnetwork.ca helps students navigate through the entire e-learning experience. Find out more by calling 519-925-8830, or emailing shelburne@elearnnetwork.ca

## Education & Training

Job diversity in Headwaters, in part, depends upon a highly skilled and educated local workforce as employers across Ontario increasingly expect a post-secondary education for new jobs. This is an area of concern in Dufferin where the proportion of people with post-secondary education is 11% below that of the province. The community would benefit from an expansion of post-secondary programming through Humber College and Georgian College satellite campuses located in Orangeville.

**Education Level Achieved**  
 High school: Dufferin: 33%; Caledon: 28%; Ontario: 25%  
 Post secondary: Dufferin: 42%; Caledon: 52%; Ontario: 53%  
 Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Canada Census



**Only those who live in a community can truly know their own strengths and weaknesses, challenges and opportunities.** Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that solutions to economic resiliency can not come only from government sources, they must come from the community itself.

>>Economic resiliency is influenced by social, cultural, environmental and economic factors as well as the history and habits of the community.<<

Similar to the province, unemployment rates rose across Headwaters during the recession. Current unemployment rates specific to Caledon and Dufferin are not readily available. However, data for the rural areas within the South Central Ontario Economic Region -- including most of Dufferin -- was almost 2 percentage points higher (9.3% in February 2011) than when the cities were included, suggesting that local unemployment rates may be higher than what is presented in the chart to the right.

Unemployment Rates 2006 to July 2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Till July 9, 2011
SCOER <sup>1</sup>	4.5%	4.7%	5.7%	8%	7.4%	7.5%
TER <sup>2</sup>	6.9%	6.6%	7.0%	9.5%	8.8%	8.6%
Ontario	6.3%	6.0%	6.1%	8.3%	8.4%	8.4%
Canada	6.3%	6.0%	6.1%	8.3%	8.4%	7.9%

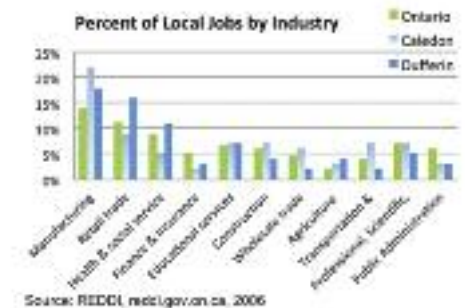
1. SCOER South Central Ontario Economic Region (includes: East Garafraxa, East Luther Grand Valley, Amaranth, Mulmur, Shelburne, Melancthon)  
 2. TER Toronto Economic Region (includes Mono, Orangeville, Caledon)

### Personal bankruptcies between 2007 and 2009

Caledon: 515% increase (from 20 to 123)  
 Dufferin : 91.5% increase (from 118 to 226)  
 Ontario: 48% increase

**Diversity of Local Jobs** The leading number of local jobs in Headwaters are concentrated in manufacturing, a sector that experienced significant job losses in the recession. Striving for a better balance between manufacturing, stable (e.g. public sector) and growing (e.g. professional, science and technical) industries would broaden the employment opportunities and provide additional buffering against the impacts of future economic downturns.

Communities in Headwaters compete with surrounding regions to attract new businesses. A competitive advantage could be gained if municipalities and organizations across Headwaters worked together to profile regional assets strategically and co-ordinate efforts to attract new business. The success of the Region of Waterloo as Canada's Technology Triangle is a nearby example of what is possible through regional cooperation (techtriangle.com).



Percentage of working population commuting to work outside their community

Dufferin	47%
Caledon	75%
Ontario	24%

2006 Census Profile, Statistics Canada

**Commuting** Given the significant population increases anticipated over the next 20 years, diversifying and growing local job options will be an important consideration, especially with regard to commuting. Commuting is already an issue in Headwaters. Commuters tend not to shop locally, be less involved in the community, and have poorer personal health. The rising cost of oil also puts economic pressure on commuters.

**Resiliency in Small Business** Economic resiliency and entrepreneurship go hand in hand. This is an area of strength in Headwaters where the vast majority of businesses are small to medium-sized enterprises. Small businesses benefit from active Small Business Enterprise Centres, and Chambers of Commerce in both Caledon and Dufferin.

>>Between 2008 to 2010 the number of businesses with 1 to 9 employees increased by 12.5% in Dufferin and 10.4% in Caledon.<<

## What role can citizens play to improve economic resiliency in the Headwaters area?