

## David LePage

"If we're going to have any chance of creating a healthy community, it will be built on partnerships and relationships between the community-based efforts and the business community. Increasing local business activity and creating employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed are both dependent upon using a demand-based model. The Social Purchasing Portal is one of the tools that can help in this overall process" according to David LePage, Fast Track to Employment's CEO, and the person behind the design of the SPP.

David has been involved in community economic development for more than 20 years, including inner-city housing development, social enterprise, and community media. He has served as CEO of FTE since its inception in 2001.

"The most successful projects I've been involved in, whether major housing project purchases, community media projects, or social enterprise investment – it has been private sector partnerships and a business model that have been an essential part of the success. The community is full of ideas, passion, and knowledge of the social avenues for success, and the business sector has access to the economic leverage, business skills and resources. Together, the blending of the two makes it possible to achieve what separately would be impossible."

David has been involved in projects and as a consultant across the United States and internationally, in major markets and in remote Native American reserves. From 1987 to 1996 he served as Vice-President of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. He has worked with the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation to revitalize their radio station, WWOZ; with Native American Public Telecommunications

and the Indigenous Communications Association to develop AIROS (American Indian radio on satellite) a 24/7 internet and satellite programming service; successful

social enterprise developments of a print shop and a restaurant; and in South Africa in the development of community radio in townships after the end of Apartheid.

A theme flows through his work – community issues and a business framework. This is evident in the development and structure of the Social Purchasing Portal, which integrates corporate social responsibility, supply chain economics, and social impact.

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