



Another successful Bridges to Better Business event was held at the Columbus Centre recently. Attended by over 50 people, with 26 exhibitors, the event was hosted in partnership by the Huron Small Business Enterprise Centre and the Huron Chamber of Commerce, and was sponsored by the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation, CanadaOntarioBusiness, and the OLG. The all-day event featured a business trade fair, keynote speaker and a series of round table discussions on business topics.

Rob Bundy, the keynote, opened the day asking us to participate in a variety of, often humorous, handshakes that he declared were traditional in the various provinces. The audience decided that he definitely had an imagination! Rob spoke about bringing a dream to reality, referring to the development of the Above the Falls Challenge Course near Benmiller. Emphasizing the need to move out of your comfort zone, to expand your limits, he shared many successes that the crew at the Challenge Course have experienced dealing with youth.

At lunch, Mary Balfour from the Ministry of Economic Development & innovation brought greetings from the Ministry and congratulated the Business Centre and Chamber on the event. CanadaBusinessOntario, also a sponsor, was not available but a representative from the OLG spoke of their willingness to encourage business events such as the Bridges.

Over the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to visit four of seven discussion tables. Each had a facilitator and a business related question for discussion. Michael Nephew and Pat Redshaw, from the United Communities Credit Union, led the discussion at the banking table, discussing "What is the most common reason loans are declined?" Ryan Shelton, from RJS Accounting, talked about "Business income tax saving strategies." Joan Krantz, a lawyer with Donnelly & Murphy, shared "When is incorporation advantageous for a business?" Jenna Ujlke, Tourism Marketer for the County of Huron, gave us the "must-dos of Social Media". Jim Niesen, Loans Manager with the Huron Business Development Corporation, spoke about marketing, "Putting your business on the map." Louise Hope, owner of the Learning House, spoke about "ramping up your e-commerce activities." And Judy Crawford, CEO of the Huron Chamber of Commerce, asked participants to share their experiences on how their business had been affected by the tornado.

Alison Lobb, Manager of the Huron Small Business Enterprise Centre in Seaforth, and Judy Crawford, CEO of the Huron Chamber of Commerce, thanked the facilitators and, once again, the sponsors who made this annual event possible. Watch for the Bridges event again in 2011.

