

# Huron Economic Development Matters

*Helping entrepreneurs make good things happen in Huron County!*

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## Huron County taking the next step in ED

An important step has been taken in an effort to water the seeds of growth in Huron County. The creation of an economic development division within the County's Planning and Development Department has seen three new positions filled in recent months. Mike Pullen has been hired as Senior Economic Development Officer, Kerri Herrfort as Downtown Revitalization Coordinator and Jenna Ujiye will be taking on the challenging task of Tourism Marketer for the County.

### Mike Pullen – Senior Economic Development Officer

Mike has returned to his roots, having previously worked for Huron County from 1990 to 1997. Following his departure from the County in 1997, he worked for the County of Essex for three years and with Haldimand County for the past seven years.

Mike's 18-year career in municipal government has been focused on marketing, economic development, tourism, policy planning, community development and management. In addition to setting-up and building a

strong profile for the Economic Development Division, Mike will be developing and implementing a series of new programs and initiatives to grow and promote the three economic pillars of the County: manufacturing, agriculture and tourism.

Mr. Pullen has identified marketing as one of the first fundamental priorities, including the development of new marketing literature, a new specific economic development website, signage and targeted advertising for all three economic pillars. Once the fundamentals are in place, he plans to develop long-term strategies that will ensure sustainability and the investment readiness of Huron County into the future.



The new face of Economic Development in Huron County (left to right): Jenna Ujiye, Mike Pullen, and Kerri Herrfort.

Having grown up on a farm in Central Huron, Mike attended both public school and high school in Clinton, eventually graduating from the

University of Western Ontario in London. Mike's wife is a registered nurse and also grew up in Huron County. They are excited to be back home and able to raise their two sons close to family and friends.

*"...Mike's 18-year career in municipal government has been focused on marketing, economic development, tourism, policy planning community development and management..."*

Huron Economic Development Matters is a partnership between:



Industry Canada



Ontario

“...her role is to provide guidance and resources for communities interested in downtown revitalization...”

**HEDM Approvals This Quarter:**

(September 2007 to December 2007)

- Willing Workers—\$8,000
- Goderich Fine & Performing Arts Centre—\$10,000
- “Noted” CD - \$5,000
- Wine Industry Feasibility Study—\$15,000
- Business Alliance for Local Living Economy Conference—\$7,200

# Downtown revitalization is Herrfort’s focus

## Kerri Herrfort – Downtown Revitalization Coordinator

Kerri has been hired for the position of Huron County’s Downtown Revitalization Coordinator through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program. Her role is to provide guidance and resources for communities interested in downtown revitalization and will focus heavily on Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) activities.



Ms. Herrfort graduated from Niagara College with a diploma in Office Administration-Executive and will graduate with a Certificate in Downtown Revitalization from Fanshawe College in June. Kerri gained a great deal of municipal, economic development and marketing experience as previous Manager of the Wingham & Area Chamber of Commerce and Economic

Development Officer for the Township of North Huron. During her time in North Huron, Kerri was involved in several community development initiatives. She played the role of Recruitment Coordinator for the Wingham & Area Health Professional Recruitment Committee, the chairperson for the 2006 Wingham Musical Muskrat Festival and a Board Director for the Huron Business Development Corporation.

Kerri says she is looking forward to developing relationships with the local municipalities, business and retail associations, Councils, Chambers of Commerce, and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). Her experience and enthusiasm in community development will aid in developing successful strategies to enhance and strengthen communities throughout the County.

# Ujiye taking on challenging task of tourism development

## Jenna Ujiye – Tourism Marketer

Jenna has always wanted to promote and help Huron County grow. As a Goderich native she has gained an abundance of knowledge about the County. As Huron’s Tourism Marketer, Ms. Ujiye will be working closely with the Huron Tourism Association (HTA) in an effort to encourage more business and design freedom. Her educational background in media, marketing, and graphic design will help to create excellent tourism marketing opportunities for Huron County.

After graduating from the Media Foundation and Advertising programs at Humber and Georgian

College respectively, Jenna went straight into the work force. Her first job out of school was as an Advertising Consultant for Signal Star Publishing where she was able to apply herself in many different aspects of the newspaper industry. While with the paper Jenna spent time writing stories, designing advertisements and completing publications. She then moved on to the print business working as a Graphic Designer for Precision Print in Goderich. This position helped this enthusiastic young woman learn

more about specific design programs and printing machines.

The initiatives of tourism for the County are not only to bring visitors to the area but also to entice locals to get more involved in their community. Jenna will be working on a wide variety of ideas that complement her abilities. Her first initiative



will be updating the Huron County Visitors Guide, and remodeling the current HTA website which she hopes to complete by April of this year.

# Youth retreat weekend keeps students engaged

It may well have been one of the last nice weekends of the season but it wasn't just the sunshine and warm weather that brought more than 20 young people to Camp Menesetung near Goderich for three days. Weather aside, it was the line-up of informative and thought provoking workshops which engaged the students.

The Youth Retreat Weekend held in late October was born from the desire to deliver 10 Steps to Community Action to youth in Huron County. In an effort to assure good attendance, the 10 Steps program was compacted into a weekend of workshops, presentations and roundtable discussions focusing on community development. Participants in the weekend retreat represented all five high schools in the County.

The three-day retreat for youth was planned and presented by Rob Bundy, Youth Engagement Coordinator, and Community Development Officer Bonnie Baynham of the Huron County Health Unit, with considerable help from Craig Harrison and Vanessa Yates of the Willing Workers Project. In addition to providing learning opportunities to youth in leadership skills, effective communication and self-discovery,

the weekend was organized to give participants the opportunity to share their unique insights and concerns and to give them time to have some fun together in a safe and healthy environment.

The weekend included a wide variety of workshops and presentations including True Colours, the Virtues Project, Effective Communication, Running a Successful Meeting and a long and in-depth discussion by the youth

themselves on what 'community' means to them. In addition to the valuable information provided to the youth participants, the weekend was made fun through the organizing of games, the

showing of late night movies and encouraging walks on the beach.

Come Sunday morning, after a full breakfast, the two-dozen participants were brought together in a 'tribal circle' which allowed everyone a chance to openly reflect on their experiences of the three days. What came from that exercise was the oft-stated desire to come together again as a group and to move forward with a plan to further strengthen the growing sense of community. Since that weekend, organizers have been diligent in keeping in touch with the youth participants and further gatherings are being planned.

"I just wanted to thank you again for the weekend," said student participant Matt Harris in a follow-up e-mail. "It was loads of fun and I can't think of anything I would rather have done. I look forward to the next one!"

The entire weekend retreat, including accommodation, presentations and all meals, came in at less than \$2,000 which was taken from the Youth Skills fund.



Virtues presenter Jane Hoy engages youth with an exercise in positive self-discovery at the recent retreat.

**"I just thought I would drop you a quick note to thank you for providing such a great opportunity for Preston! He had such a great time, and gained a lot of great knowledge and had many great stories to tell. Great job!"**

- Janice Eadie, mother of participant



[www.huroncounty.ca](http://www.huroncounty.ca)  
[www.smallbusinesshuron.ca](http://www.smallbusinesshuron.ca)

## Huron Economic Development Matters

### Results-to-date

(January—December 2007 Actuals)

- Number of business contacts—30,959
- Value of projects approved—\$148,992
- Small business loans approved—\$828,976
- Number of business start-ups and/or expansions assisted—243
- Number of jobs created and/or maintained—1,147

## Mark Your Calendars!

The next

### Huron Women in Networking (HWIN)

Dinner will be taking place on Thursday, March 27, 2008 at the White Carnation Hall in Holmesville.

Registration begins at 6:00pm with supper at 6:30pm. The cost is \$25 per person. For more information, or to register, call Alison Lobb, at 519.527.0305, ext. 35.

Don't forget to bring your brochures and business cards, as well as a door prize if you wish!

## Harrison set to expand spokes learning portal

When Kelly Harrison took on the position of coordinator of the spokes Project, she knew she would have a huge job ahead of her. spokes, the on-line learning community which provides quick and easy access to learning opportunities, labour market information and job listings, was poised to expand its reach and Kelly had lots to learn, quickly.

“It was a huge learning curve for me,” says Kelly, a GDCI grad with a BA from Lakehead University. “I’ve got a pretty good handle on it now but I did have to hit the ground running.”

Funded in part by HEDM through its Youth Skills fund, spokes is the result of collaboration between a number of community partners including the Avon Maitland District School Board, Fanshawe College, the Centres for Employment and Learning and the Huron Manufacturing Association. Visitors to the site will find not only a job bank, but a comprehensive list of continuing learning opportunities. Institutions utilizing spokes as a way of marketing their programs pay a hosting fee to the site.

In addition to expanding listings on the site, which will provide the



project with sustainability, Kelly says her immediate task is to expand the service area served by spokes. “We’re currently holding talks with Georgian College, the Bluewater School Board, the Saugeen Economic Development Corp. and various area employers looking for learning opportunities for their staff,” says Kelly. Through spokes, employees can access training such as WHMIS, SmartServe and In Good

Hands on a fee for service basis.

Maintaining the site on a regular basis is also part of Kelly’s portfolio, one which keeps her busy. “Any groups with workshops or learning

opportunities can have them posted on the site,” says Kelly from her office at the Centre for Employment and Learning in Goderich. “And anyone looking to upgrade their skills is encouraged to check those postings.”

For a first-hand look at just what Kelly has brought to the project, check out the site at [www.myspokes.ca](http://www.myspokes.ca).

“...visitors to the (spokes) site will find not only a job bank, but a comprehensive list of continuing learning opportunities...”

## Seventeen talented local women chosen for 'Noted!' CD

Huron County has long been noted for the depth and quality of its local talent and a goodly number of those talented individuals will soon find themselves on a professionally recorded and produced CD. 'Noted!' is a community arts project designed to foster and promote female musicians living in Huron and will see to the recording and distribution of a special CD featuring more than a dozen local artists.

The 'Noted!' project is a collaborative effort spearheaded by Huron United Way, the Heritage and Culture Partnership and Women Today of Huron. Funding to offset some of the costs of recording and production is being provided by the Mildred Grimes Trust Fund and Huron Economic Development Matters through its Community Development Fund. Additional community sponsors are also being approached to help cover the costs involved. The total cost of the project is estimated at just over \$25,000.

Once the 'Noted!' project received its core funding, organizers called for local female musicians to submit tapes of their performances for consideration of inclusion on the homegrown CD. The response was outstanding.

"We were very pleased with both the number and calibre of the submissions," says Kimberley Payne, United Way's Executive Director and chair of the 'Noted!' steering committee. "Originally we were looking at filling ten spots for the CD but when the committee listened to the recordings and read the stories of the women hoping to



take part it was impossible to choose only ten."

Eventually, 17 women were chosen to lend their talents to this unique and exciting project. The next step for the artists was to attend an educational weekend retreat at Brentwood on the Beach. During the weekend, participants took part in a series of workshops which covered all aspects of working and recording as a professional musician.

"We couldn't be more pleased with the quality, age range and diverse musical styles found in the chosen participants," Ms. Payne explains. "We are going to end up with a phenomenal CD that does all of Huron County proud."

The recording sessions for 'Noted!' will take place over a two week period in February with the release of the completed CD scheduled for early May of this year. Profits from the sale of the 2,000 'Noted!' CDs will be used to fund further arts programming in Huron County.

The talented local artists chosen for inclusion on the 'Noted!' CD include: Ashley Anderson, Suzanne Daniels, Christa Ducharme, Megan Finkbeiner, Jenelle Gaynor, Leisa Hartman, Melina Hussey, Monica Joy, Sarah Koopmans, Elizabeth Levesque, Marlene Mathers, Sara McGregor, Raylene Rebryna, Kim Souch, Sara Souch, Judy Sparks, and Jenna Ujiye.

### "Growing Your Opportunities" in Huron!

A two-day "Growing Your Opportunities" Conference will be held at the Huron County Health Unit on February 26th and March 04, 2008 (each day from 9:00am—4:00pm).

*If you are a farm or rural based entrepreneur who wants to learn how to tap into new value added opportunities from idea to market, this conference is for you!*

The cost is \$75 per person. To register, contact Lisa Harper, Information Manager for HBDC at 519.527.0305, ext. 25, or via email: lharper@smallbusinesshuron.ca. For more information, contact Jane Muegge at 519.482.5129.

**"We are going to end up with a phenomenal CD that does all of Huron County proud."**

- Kimberley Payne, Executive Director, Huron County United Way

## Uncorking a brand new industry in Huron

Huron County is well known for many things: glorious beaches, glowing sunsets, rich farm land and great wine...wait a minute, wine from Huron County?! It could become a reality thanks to a research project being funded by HEDM.

Responding to a proposal submitted by Anthony Shaw Ph.D from Brock University's Geography Department, HEDM has committed \$15,000 towards a project which will assess the climatic suitability of Huron County for the commercial production of *Vitis vinifera* grapes. According to the proposal, the first phase of the project will see to an analysis of the long-term climatic data from various weather stations in the County to determine whether 'Ontario's West Coast' may have the capacity to become the province's newest wine region.

Though this is a long term project,

the potential benefits are substantial. In expressing support for the project, the Huron Tourism Association said, "The timing of a possible wine industry is in line with the recent and growing emphasis on culinary tourism and the 'buy local' trend." In addition, vineyards and wineries present wonderful new opportunities to promote edu-tourism, agri-tourism and cultural tourism in this area.

The funds provided to this project will see to the preparation of a formal report which will establish Huron's suitability as a grape growing region and will also address such considerations as the possible use of wind machines to protect against freeze damage which can occur due to late spring and early



fall frosts. Should the study show that this area is not suitable for the production of wine-producing grapes, it will, at the very least,

lead to the establishment of a network of climatic stations for the long-term monitoring of the meso climates of our region. Such a network will provide valuable information in the context of global warming and other potential land uses.

And, of course, should the study prove the suitability of the lakeshore climate to grow grapes, we may soon be able to toast a brand new industry with a glass of our own home-grown wine. A sip of Bayfield Merlot anyone...?

## New program for newcomers being developed for Huron

Most urban centres and municipalities in Ontario have programs in place designed to encourage and welcome newcomers to the area – specifically people arriving from other countries. With financial help from the Huron Economic Development Matters Initiative, Huron will soon have its own Newcomer Program. Working under a community economic development youth internship, Goderich native Sarah Cieslar is charged with the task of researching the best practices of other newcomer programs in Ontario and developing a 'made in Huron' model.

Sarah will examine a wide range of services aimed at making the

transition to a new country, language and culture as smooth as possible for immigrants who choose to Huron as their new home.

"This includes such things as business opportunity tours, newcomer host program, translation and interpreter services, employment counselling and other traditional settlement services, just to name a few," says Sarah who also delivers the ESL Program for the Avon Maitland District School Board.

Sarah is quick to point out that the success of any Newcomer Program is dependent on a buy-in from the community through such initiatives as diversity training for employers.

"As our population in Huron County decreases," says Sarah, "there is a need to fill positions in all sectors. Newcomers can help us to fill these holes." With this fact in mind, she is also looking at the success of Newcomer Recruitment Programs, specifically doctor recruitment, as a way of encouraging professionals to relocate to Huron.

Sarah holds a BA in Geography and Philosophy, a Certificate in English Language Teaching and is a licensed Thai Massage Therapist. She has taught English in both Japan and China and Business English for such companies as Mitsubishi Rayon, NEC, and PriceWaterHouse.