

Huron Economic Development Matters

Helping entrepreneurs make good things happen in Huron County!

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August 22nd was the day Huron said "Yes, I Will..." to our young people

When Vicky Parent, Director of Huron Safe Homes for Youth, was looking for a unique way to celebrate her organization's 20th anniversary, she went for lunch.

That lunch meeting with Bonnie Baynham, Community Development Officer and Rob Bundy, Youth Engagement Coordinator resulted in very simple yet powerful campaign which encouraged adults to make a personal pledge to have meaningful contact with a young person. This pledge was made by wearing a button which read "I Will..."

The three-member I Will Campaign Committee believes that when young

people are nurtured by caring adults, are given opportunities to become involved in education or work which builds their skills and are actively engaged in and by the community, they have a much better chance of becoming valuable contributors to that community.

In an effort to get this message out, "I Will..." buttons and a pamphlet entitled 150 Ways to Show Kids You Care were distributed through local libraries, banks and other businesses. On August 22nd, people were asked to make their pledge to our youth, wear their button proudly and to actively engage at least one young person a day. This interaction could

be as simple as smiling at the young man standing on the corner or asking a teen how their day is going.

According to Vicky, "the "I Will..." Campaign exceeded all expectations" and spread quickly through the community when people wearing their buttons were asked what it meant.

It is hoped the "I Will..." Campaign will become an annual event, but at least it brought youth and adults closer together for a day.



"I Will..." champions Bonnie Baynham and Vicky Parent show local youth that they care.

Huron Economic Development Results (January –August 2008)

- Number of business contacts—21,147
- Value of projects approved—\$97,095
- Small business loans approved—\$797,500
- Number of business start-ups and/or expansions assisted—93
- Number of jobs created and/or maintained—552

Huron Economic Development Matters is a partnership between:



Huron sends contingent to annual BALLE Conference

In June, a contingent of eleven Huron County representatives attended the 6th Annual Business Alliance for Local Living Economies Conference (BALLE) in Boston, Massachusetts. The theme of the conference was Grow Deep: Business Leaders, Strong Communities. The conference revolved around building sustainable community economic development and how to take advantage of a growing green economy.

The conference opened with a community tour and visit to two sites of Boston's famous Food Project. The Food Project teaches youth and adults from diverse backgrounds to work together to build a sustainable food project. Through community gardens located within the city limits, program participants grow nearly a quarter million pounds of food (without chemical pesticide) in which half is donated to local shelters and the rest sold at a community farmers market.

Several thought provoking and informative keynote and plenary addresses were presented over the course of the conference including:

- Author Bill McKibben speaking on www.350.org; a project to educate individuals on how to reduce their carbon footprint
- Doing Good and Doing Well: Social Entrepreneurs Speak; three panelists share their stories of operating a successful green business
- Community Capital: New Models in Finance; panelists



Huron County delegates to this year's BALLE Conference included Ken Oke, Mayor, Municipality of South Huron; Connie Goodall, Community Development Coordinator, Township of North Huron; Deb Shewfelt, Mayor, Town of Goderich; Pamela Stanley, President, Huron Business Development Corporation; Hugh McMaster, President, South Huron Chamber of Commerce; Jane Hoy, Business Owner-Jane Hoy Initiatives, Dungannon; Pauli Sommer, Leader, Dungannon Revitalization and Relocalization Committee; Judy Crawford, CEO, Goderich & District Chamber of Commerce; Janet Snider, President, Bayfield Chamber of Commerce; Ralph Watson, Committee Member, Huron East Economic Development Committee; and Kerri Herrfort, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator, County of Huron.

- discuss information and challenges in funding emerging projects and businesses
- Growing Wealth: Reclaiming Economic Development for Communities; panelists include Bruce Hennebury, director of Economic Strategies and Initiatives for Nova Scotia Economic Development
- Author and Professor Juliet Schor speaking on commercialization and consumer culture.

Huron County delegates attended breakout session relevant to current and future local matters including green building, connecting the food chain, public policy, local energy

and building the green collar workforce.

As a group, the Huron County delegates met with a few seasoned reps from the BALLE organization and membership to discuss ways to take what was learned during the conference and apply to programs and initiatives within the county. The group intends on meeting again in the fall of 2008 to discuss any progress made in each individual community since the conference as well as potential countywide opportunities.

Interested individuals or groups may sign out DVD versions of the keynote and plenary sessions and audio CDs of the breakout sessions by contacting Kerri Herrfort, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator at 519-524-8394 Ext 3 or by e-mail at kherrfort@huroncounty.ca.

Goderich welcomes a new BIA boss

Don Hubick is eager to fill some big shoes

When former Goderich BIA Manager Jan Hawley accepted the position of Economic Development Officer with Huron East, she left some very big shoes to fill back in Goderich. Fortunately, Don Hubick has big feet.

Calling Hawley “a hard act to follow”, Hubick took over the manager’s chair in late August and has hit the ground running in those big shoes.

Don is certainly no stranger to Goderich businesses. He came to town back in 1975 as a co-op student with the Signal-Star and never left. Quickly rising to the position of Advertising Manager with the local paper, Don worked closely with the BIA during the 21 years he was with the Signal-Star. This vast experience in business, coupled with a rare creative energy and an intimate knowledge of the challenges facing the downtown core, makes Hubick a natural choice for this important position.

One of the first tasks waiting for Don when he accepted the position with the BIA was to organize and stage the annual Health and Harvest Festival which took over The Square during the second weekend in September.

“And that was a huge success,” he says, basking in the afterglow of the weekend, “but I take very little of the credit. Joanna Walker, our summer student this year, did a wonderful job organizing that event.”

In addition to keeping the downtown core a focal point for residents of, and visitors to Goderich, Don says he’s looking forward to developing mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses and community organizations right across the County.

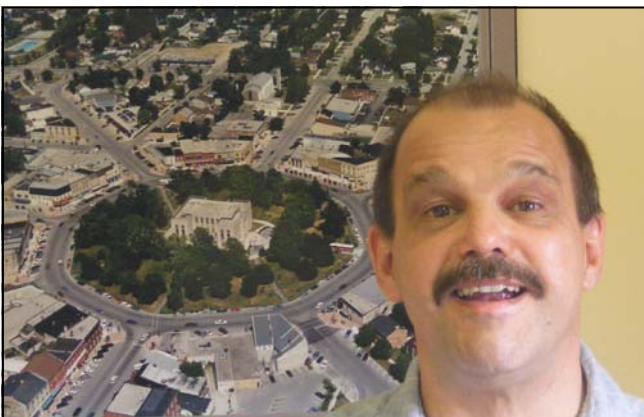
“Making connections, developing networks and forging partnerships within the county will be a big part of our strategy to showcase The Square as a unique place to visit, have fun and do some shopping,” says Don from his new office.

For the next few months at least, Hubick is not taking on this task alone. He is currently sharing his new office with Sara Rubino, a Goderich resident and marketing student at Georgian College on a co-op placement with the BIA until December. And, thanks to the financial support of

HEDM, Don has in hand the Final Report of the BIA Viability Review recently completed and compiled by youth intern Scott Young. The review uncovers potential business opportunities for the downtown core.

“We have a vibrant core that has managed to withstand, for the most part, what has happened to other downtown areas,” says Hubick, “but we can’t take it for granted. We have to be proactive, not reactive, in our approach.”

The Goderich BIA office is located in the Tourist Booth on Victoria Street and can be reached at 519-440-0871 or by email at bia@goderich.ca.



Long-time Goderich resident Don Hubick was recently named the new manager of the Goderich BIA.

Highest priorities

According to the results of the consumer surveys recently compiled for the Goderich BIA, the top three priorities for the downtown core are:

1. A butcher shop
2. Condominium units
3. A performing arts centre

We're on the web!

www.huroncounty.ca

www.smallbusinesshuron.ca

HEDM Approvals :

(May 2008–August 2008)

- \$4,000— MedQuest Camp (Workplace Skills Camps Fund)
- \$2,000—STEP Technology Skills Camp (Workplace Skills Camps Fund)
- \$2,000—Strength in Numbers Buy Local Workshop (Downtown Revitalization Fund)
- \$2,000—Celebration of First Nations Event (Community and Social Enterprises Fund)
- \$3,500—Merging with the Green Economy Event (Business Planning Initiative Fund)
- \$7,100—Brussels BR&E Project (Business Retention & Expansion Fund)

The next

Huron Women in Networking (HWIN) Dinner

will be taking place on Thursday, October 2, 2008 at the White Carnation Hall in Holmesville.

Registration/social time from 6:00–6:30 will be followed by a dinner and guest speaker/entertainment. The cost is \$25 per person—

pre-registration is required!

Don't miss this fun and exciting networking opportunity! Call 519.527.0305 to register.

Call Program may give HMA new priorities

In May of 2008, the Huron Manufacturing Association made the decision to conduct an industry call program. The goal of the program was two-fold: (1) acquire a better understanding the current state of manufacturing in Huron County; and (2) use this information to review and set new priorities for HMA.

Throughout May and June, former HMA Board Member, John Feeney and Huron County Senior Economic Development Officer, Mike Pullen conducted interviews with 60 Huron County manufacturers from small, medium and large sized companies. The interviews examined a variety of topics such as human resources, business investment and future growth. Another critical part of the interview involved questions related to where manufacturers felt the Huron Manufacturing Association should focus its efforts as an organization.

The majority of respondents felt that it is important to have an industry organization such as the HMA represent the manufacturing sector in Huron County. It was felt that the HMA is generally on the right track, but should focus its efforts on doing two to three things well. The HMA Board of Directors has responded quickly to the results of the call program and have recently identified two main priorities:

Workforce Development

Possible tactics and deliverables are as follows:

- Greater promotion of local job opportunities in manufacturing / skilled trades.
- Enhanced partnerships with local schools, colleges and existing programs to better engage youth and promote employment opportunities in

manufacturing.

- Soft skills training with an emphasis on youth (e.g. customer service, work ethic).



EDO Mike Pullen

- Manufacturing career fairs at local schools and colleges - i.e. recruitment.
- Enhancement of youth scholarships and internships in manufacturing.

Marketing, Networking & Communication

Possible deliverables are as follows:

- Build greater profile for manufacturing in Huron County (e.g. marketing campaign, career fairs, website, etc.)
- Develop new opportunities for networking and collaboration (e.g. local trade shows).
- Develop better tools to encourage business to business partnerships/linkages (e.g. enhanced Directory, website, etc.)
- Focus on 1 to 2 major events per year versus multiple workshops.

Some of the general observations resulting from the program included:

- Majority of manufacturers are 1 owner/operator/1 family (micro - 34%).
- Others fall into 3 additional segments: 2 to 5 employees (small - 24%); 6 to 50 employees (medium - 36%); 50+ employees (large - 6%).
- Micro and small companies account for almost 60% of manufacturing sector.
- Different sized companies have different needs/priorities.

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Strength in Numbers workshop well attended

On June 16th, an audience of 75 people were captivated by speaker Jeff Milchen at the Clinton Town Hall. Jeff, co-founder of the American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA), presented his “Strength in Numbers” workshop to give Hurontonians an up-close look at the recent trends affecting local independent businesses and how a collaborative effort can recreate wealth for the local economy.

“Independent businesses are struggling for survival everywhere,” said Milchen. “But through collaborative efforts and the active involvement of citizens, communities have proven that harmful trends can be stopped and home-grown businesses can still prosper.” Milchen described the three major realms of success for community campaigns as public “buy local” education, cooperating to win, and creating a voice for entrepreneurs.

The multiplier effect was

explained; for every \$1 spent at a local independent business, \$7 re-circulates in the community. Incremental changes in spending can positively benefit communities throughout the county. For example, if everyone in the community spent a few more dollars at locally owned businesses, the local impact would be millions of dollars.

In a showing of hands, the audience was asked if they felt a coordinated approach in the county would be a valuable use of resources. A unanimous vote spoke volumes and as a result, Kerri Herrfort, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator for the County is exploring the feasibility for a countywide buy local campaign.



Guest speaker Jeff Milchen opens the floor to discussion at the Strength in Numbers workshop held in the Clinton Town Hall recently.

Aim is to target activities to benefit manufacturers

← *Continued from previous*

- Majority of owner/operators were born and raised in Huron County and chose Huron County to locate due to quality of life and proximity to family.
- The geographical set-up and structure of HMA is unique as compared to an industry specific organization (e.g. metal fabrication association, wood products association, etc.). The challenge or opportunity for HMA will be designing programs that can address the needs of all sectors and/or

attempt to be more “sector-specific” in how membership and programs are structured.

- HMA should attempt to address the needs of different sized companies, but be accepting of the fact that some programs (e.g. workforce development) may apply more to small companies; however, programs such as marketing and networking could be designed to benefit all companies.
- Due to these differences among members, HMA needs to accept the reality that “being all things, to all

companies” is not realistic. Better targeting of programs within the membership and measuring their success accordingly should be the priority.

Further analysis of the Call Program results will be undertaken by the HMA Board of Directors in partnership with Huron County Economic Services, HBDC and industry stakeholders and is expected to result in changes to operations at the HMA with the aim that activities can be targeted to the benefit of Huron manufacturers.

Support given to theatre feasibility study

Thanks to funding provided in part by the Huron Economic Development Matters committee, the Town of Goderich is seriously looking at the feasibility of developing a performing arts centre. The needs assessment is currently being undertaken by Janis Barlow and Associates, a team of research, planning and management consultants who have been specializing in theatre builds for more than 25 years.

“Barlow is the best in the business,” says John Grace, co-chair of the Goderich Theatre Build Committee. “They are the gurus in Canada when it comes to theatre development.”

Calling their approach “highly consultative and participatory”,

Barlow will use interviews, focus groups and public meetings to establish the viability of a performing arts centre and will then add their experience, skills and industry standards to create a development plan for such a facility.

With arts and culture clearly identified as one of the main economic pillars of any community, the theatre build committee is hoping to prove long-term sustainability through the assessment process. The committee has high hopes that the proposed development can be brought to fruition using municipal funding and not having to conduct a community fundraising drive.

Barlow’s final report is expected by the end of November.

This week’s Mystery Picture



Can you identify this person, where he works and if, in fact, he is being arrested? Here’s a hint: there was a police officer in the room when this picture was taken. Good Luck!

Mystery picture revealed!

In our last issue we posed a question to readers: can you identify the photo shown here?

Well, the answer we were looking for is a challenge course, also known as a ropes course. Challenge courses such as the one pictured are used to deliver team building and leadership skills training programs and the Huron Business Development Corp., in a partnership with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, is in the process of bringing a challenge course to Huron County as part of an outdoor/adventure education facility.

The venture, to be known as the Above the Falls Challenge Course Project, will be constructed on land at the Falls Reserve near Benmiller



and will operate as a social enterprise by operating as a for profit business and then streaming excess revenues back into social programming in the county. In addition to the many benefits this education facility will offer to local students, the noble goal of the project is to build the entire facility using sustainable construction techniques and to operate off the grid by generating all power needs on site using photovoltaic solar panels and a small wind turbine.

By creating new jobs, sharing profits with the community and doing it all in an environmentally sustainable way, the Above the Falls Project will

boast what is known as a triple bottom line. The primary market for this venture will be area students from Grades 8 through 11. During the summer months, the facility will be made available to corporate clients looking for a team-building retreat with a twist. With a thorough feasibility study and business plan in hand, the project is now on the hunt for funding sources. With a little luck and a lot of hard work, it is hoped the Above the Falls Challenge Course will be open for business in the Fall of 2009.