

Huron Economic Development Matters

Helping entrepreneurs make good things happen in Huron County!

Blueprint for county-wide economic development launched in June

On June 11th, over 100 industry and municipal leaders met to begin the development of a new sector-driven economic development strategy. Dubbed “Growth for Our Future,” this event was the official launch of a comprehensive process to identify and develop key opportunities - and implement actions that will strengthen the local economy and lead to future growth and prosperity for Huron County.



June 11th saw the gathering of local industry and municipal leaders to discuss the new county-wide economic development plan entitled “Growth For Our Future”.

The importance of municipal and cross-sector cooperation was a major theme of the event and was one of the key messages of the keynote speaker, Ian Hill. Mr. Hill, a highly successful businessman and philanthropist, is recognized for being a catalyst for positive change in rural communities throughout North America. Ian set the mood for the day with an inspiring and humorous speech that emphasized the necessity of cooperation, coordination and sector alignment for successful economic development. Mr. Hill also did not hold back on his message of the counterproductive approach of individual municipalities trying to “go it alone” - and stressed the importance of a strong regional partnership between the County and the nine municipalities.

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Over the next year, the County of Huron and the Huron Business Development Corporation will work in collaboration with the nine municipalities, industry associations, the private sector and other stakeholder groups to develop the new Economic Development Opportunities Blueprint. The Opportunities Blueprint will establish new actions - as well as support, enhance and sustain existing municipal and sector strategies, including Huron Economic Development Matters. Each of the nine municipalities will be examined in relation to the sectors and the economic opportunities identified - and sector-specific, municipal-specific and County-wide recommendations will be made.

The June 11th event was just the beginning of the development of the new Opportunities Blueprint Strategy. Subsequent industry and municipal consultations will occur to further explore and develop the ideas and concepts that are identified at the Growth for Our Future event. “An important part of this process will be to ensure that the final Blueprint Strategy contains short-range and long-range actions that are viable and can be implemented,” says Pullen. “The Strategy will examine all aspects of the County and be mindful of national and global economic trends to ensure that Huron County is well positioned to tap into new and emerging opportunities.”

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“The Strategy will examine all aspects of the County...to ensure that Huron County is well positioned to tap into new and emerging opportunities.”

**- Mike Pullen
Huron County EDO**

Huron Economic Development Matters is a partnership between:



Bayfield launches Business Retention & Expansion Project

June 18th marked the official launch of the Bayfield Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project. Janet Snider, BR+E Coordinator, organized the town hall meeting to educate the community on the BR+E process and set the stage for the Bayfield project.

Belinda Wick-Graham, Business & Economic Development Manager from the Town of Minto, was the guest speaker and delivered a presentation to share the success of her community's BR+E project. Shawna Stonehouse from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was on hand to answer questions and demonstrate how communities across the province have benefited from BR+E projects.



A community leadership team and task force are being established to oversee the project, which will begin surveying businesses before the end of summer. “With over 160 businesses, our target is to survey 100 in order to get a valid sampling of Bayfield businesses” expressed Snider. Volunteers will assist as interviewers and scribes for the survey process but the majority of surveys will be completed by Snider.

Project partners include the Bayfield & Area Chamber of Commerce, the Municipality of Bluewater, Bayfield Ratepayers Association, the Bayfield Heritage Committee and Huron Economic Development Matters.

Bayfield is one of three communities in Huron County undertaking business retention and expansion projects (BR+E) in 2009; Brussels and Wingham expect to launch projects in the next few months. Seaforth, Goderich and South Huron have previously completed BR+E projects and implementation of recommended actions is in progress.

HBDC involved in national HR project

Over the past 2 years HBDC participated in a National HR Pilot which will be ending in December 2009. The pilot project was created to increase the effectiveness of human resource (HR) management practices within small businesses, in order to increase productivity and competitiveness.

This pilot project is coordinated by the Restigouche CBDC and its HR Project Staff Team, along with 48 partnering organizations across Canada. Each of the 100 participating small businesses designated one staff person for 2.5 years of the pilot project. Each designated staff person will work one-on-one with a selected Agent from the same geographic region, with ongoing support from the HR Project Staff Team. The 100 businesses will participate in the development and evaluation of a set of human resource (HR) tools, towards the final production of a practical, accessible, basic-level HR Kit. Kim DePutter is acting as the HR Project Agent and is working with 3 Huron County businesses on developing their HR manuals and developing good HR practices through the tools developed by the pilot project.



Representatives of the Restigouche CBDC along with HBDC board and staff members — 2nd from left: Paul Nichol, Kim DePutter, Pamela Stanley and Brock Vodden.

The final HR Tool Kit is expected to be available in Community Futures organizations across the country by November 2009. Participating Agents will act as a resource to other centers in their geographic regions on the administration of the tool kits with businesses. This project was recognized with a “Projects of Excellence” Award at the National Community Futures Event held this May in Collingwood.

Huron County BIAs and Chambers of Commerce unite

For the first time in known history, leaders in business across the County came together to discuss common issues and opportunities at the premiere Huron Business Leaders Network event held at Benmiller Inn on June 2nd. Kerri Herrfort, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator, coordinated and hosted the event with the purpose of facilitating communication with representatives of the BIAs and Chambers of Commerce who do similar work around the County.



Vicki Luke, Rural Business Consultant with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) gave a presentation about tools and resources available to business organizations. Jenna Ujiye and Cindy Fisher presented information about tourism partnership opportunities with the Huron Tourism Association. Herrfort provided information about countywide programs including Customer Service Excellence and Local First. Communication was a popular topic of discussion and ideas were presented regarding ways to improve channels of communication between the organizations, to and from government of all levels and to and from the general public and members.

In total, 25 people attended the event and each Chamber and BIA in Huron County was represented. Those in attendance recognized great value in networking with each other and determined that semi-annual meetings of the group would be beneficial. Each organization will have an opportunity to host the event in their own community; plans are already underway to organize a second event in the fall of 2009.

Huron Economic Development Matters sponsored the Huron Business Leaders Network meeting and Benmiller Inn, the Municipality of Huron East and the County of Huron generously donated door prizes.

Fourth MedQuest camp held in Seaforth

Healthcare career exploration and investigation was in full swing at the 4th Med-QUEST camp in Seaforth at the Huron East Health Centre from July 6 and 10th, 2009. Twenty-five students from Huron and Perth counties attended the camp this year all looking for insights into the healthcare industry and to learn more about career fields in healthcare. They were able to speak with and observe professionals in career areas such as digital imaging, nurse practitioner, paramedic and naturopathic doctor to name only a few. They learned to perform interesting skilled tasks during sessions on suturing and injections with Dr. Carolin Shepherd. Job shadows also offered the opportunity to see professionals in the work environment. The healthcare community shared information on their careers during informative presentations/demonstrations such as Gateway Rural Health Research Institute and the Huron Community Family Health Team.



MedQuest students learn about proper suturing and injecting techniques. HealthKick and Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario will be gearing up this fall to start planning for next summer's program.

Activities over the week also included a mock disaster event in Exeter where Med-QUEST participants played the roles of injured passengers, truck driver, and parents. Participants included South Huron Hospital Association, OPP, Municipality of South Huron Fire Department, Huron County Ambulance Services, Hoffman Patient Transfer Inc. and the Municipality of South Huron and the County Emergency Management Coordinator. The 5-day camp wrapped up with a graduation and awards ceremony that recognized outstanding participants and a slide show offered a visual summary of the week's success.

HEDM Approvals :

(January '09—June '09)

The following economic development projects have been approved for HEDM funding:

- \$6,250 was approved to assist with the implementation of the Bluewater Blue Flag Program.
- \$5,000 was approved to the Four County Planning Board to support 2 years of funding for the Skills Opportunities Showcase.
- \$4,000 was approved to the Foundation for Education Huron-Perth to fund the Employer School Development/Discovery Fund.
- \$2,000 was approved to the Technical Training Group to assist with the 2009 Technology Summer Skills Camp.
- \$7,500 in seed funding was approved to the West Coast Blues Inc. to expand 2009 West Coast Blues Festival.
- \$7,500 was approved to undertake the maintenance and development of Huron's local abattoir industry.
- \$7,500 was approved to the Municipality of Huron East for Brussels to implement a Business Retention and Expansion Program.
- \$15,000 was approved to the Huron Farm to Table Network to implement a Growing Food Enterprise initiative in Huron.
- \$3,500 was approved to the Centre for Applied Renewable Energy to assist with the 2009 Green Symposium.

Exeter remains home of the white squirrel

Take a drive through downtown Exeter and you will see the efforts of the Exeter BIA branding project at work. Street banners adorning the new Exeter logo were installed in July and are the first of many future implementation projects to showcase the new look.



Establishing a new brand for Exeter was part of the Downtown Exeter Marketing Strategy and Brand Development project that was completed in partnership by the Exeter BIA and the Municipality of South Huron and received funding from Huron Economic Development Matters.

The branding process was led by a sub-committee of the BIA and included a community consultation, which gave residents and business owners a chance to help build the brand. Local graphic designer, David Gagne of SOHO Creative in Exeter was selected from six companies to turn the feedback from the community consultation into a polished logo. The design was narrowed down to two choices by the sub-committee and was published in the Exeter Times-Advocate asking for the public's advice, which assisted in the selection of the final logo.

The community is encouraged to use the new logo in marketing and promotion for the town, however, integrity is important to the consistency of the brand. Brand guidelines were developed to identify how to use the logo, the sizing and true colour for print processes. Copies of the brand guideline and logo files are available through the Exeter BIA. The Exeter BIA expects to showcase the brand by launching at least one new promotional item each year. BIA members are being provided with a branded window decal.

Other work that was completed simultaneously with the branding initiative included a Customer Origin Survey to determine the downtown trade market and a Business Mix Analysis. All of the information collected through the Customer Origin Survey and Business Mix Analysis will aide in the development of a downtown marketing strategy. A Resident Survey is also being undertaken to determine shopping trends of residents and assist in determining priorities for downtown revitalization. The Downtown Exeter Marketing Strategy and Brand Development project is expected to conclude in Fall 2009.

Last issue's mystery picture revealed...



These two recognizable faces are none other than Huron County Warden Ken Oke and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty. They recently had an impromptu meeting at a local dining establishment in our area to discuss the local economy.

HealthKick and Gateway Rural Research Institute win national award

The Huron Business Development Corporation (HBDC) is pleased to announce that the Gateway Rural Health Research Institute and HealthKick received a Community Futures Initiative Award at this year's Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC) annual conference in Collingwood in May. Paul Nichol, Economic Development Manager with HBDC, submitted the nomination as a joint effort as Gateway and HealthKick are closely connected in their healthcare goals and vision.



L to R: Laura Overholt—HealthKick, Rick Hundey—HBDC, Donna Taylor—HBDC, Paul Nichol—HBDC, Bonnie LaFontaine—HBDC, Pamela Stanley—HBDC

The Initiative Award celebrates programs that solve local problems at a local level. The judges were impressed with the fact that both HealthKick and Gateway could be duplicated by other communities throughout Canada. In HBDC's awards submission, the following accomplishments of HealthKick and the Gateway Rural Health Research Institute were listed:

- 1,500 high school students have been exposed to healthcare careers;
- 80 students have participated in the MedQuest Camp held in Huron County;
- 40 healthcare students have been sponsored with local work placements;
- 12 first and second year students are completing a six-week elective program in Huron County;
- 20 new RPNs will be receiving their degrees at a newly-established Georgian College Satellite site;
- 19 local students have begun a Food Service Worker training program;
- 20 community volunteers from five local recruitment teams have been sharing best practices in an ambassador engagement program;
- \$500,000 was invested by a private foundation to launch Gateway;
- 16 new physicians have set up practice in the area since 2005 as a direct result of HealthKick;
- 3 medical researchers have been attracted to Gateway;
- 3,700 orphan patients have been rostered.

It is hoped that both initiatives will now gain national recognition, which in turn could bring more funding and partnership opportunities. HealthKick has previously won two provincial awards.

For more information on either of these programs visit www.healthkickhuron.ca, or www.gatewayresearch.ca.

Huron Economic Development Matters Results-to-date

(January 2009— July 2009)

- Number of business contacts—18,624
- Value of projects approved—\$174,150
- Small business loans approved—\$543,092
- Number of business start-ups and/or expansions assisted—66
- Number of jobs created and/or maintained—512

We're on the web!

www.huroncounty.ca
www.smallbusinesshuron.ca



Successful Huron Perth Career Symposium held in April

The month of April saw the Huron-Perth Career Symposium staged at the Seaforth Arena with over 1500 area students passing through the doors over the two days. The event was co-lead by the Foundation for Education and the Four County Labour Market Planning Board, along with several other partnering groups. The event also played host to 150 educators and adults from the Huron Perth area.

In addition to the thousands of students who attended and enjoyed the symposium, a large number of adults also attended including busloads of former employees from Volvo and Wescast. The event also provided a great opportunity for local businesses, community agencies, non-profit organizations, training and development agencies, government agencies, academic institutions and small business enterprises to display their products and services. Interactive displays, games, and food and drink were all part of the two-day agenda.



Tim Martens, OYAP Coordinator for the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board, assists students in creating their own bird houses.

Thanks to great financial support from a number of valuable partners, HEDM included, the Career Symposium working committee now has money in the bank to apply to the 2011 event which will be held in Perth County.

Green trade show creates positive energy

On Wednesday, August 5, 2009, the Centre for Applied Renewable Energy (CfARE) hosted the “It’s Easy Being Green” tradeshow at the Goderich Knights of Columbus Hall.



The free tradeshow, which ran from 10:00am to 6:00pm, presented ‘greener’ versions of everything from transportation, to lighting, to heating and cooling, as well as environmental groups. With over 400 people in attendance and 35 vendors present, the show proved to be a great success. A group called “Scientists in School” offered kids learning experiences on how easy it is to be ‘green’. Local dignitaries and presenters were on hand at the ribbon cutting ceremony which kicked off the event.

Joan van der Meer, Manager of CfARE is pleased with the response to this year’s event. The tradeshow runs every two years, with the next one taking place in Goderich again in 2011.

This issue’s mystery picture...

Who is this man, and why does he look so happy? Perhaps his blues vanished when he learned that he was going to be spending some time in Huron County...

