

1 Huron Street
Stratford, Ontario
N5A 5S4

Bernia Wheaton,
Economic Development Officer
t. 519-274-4651
e. bwheaton@perthcounty.ca

May 2010 Newsletter

PERTH COUNTY

MAY 2010

Youth Foundations

"Youth skill development is the corner stone to building a vibrant future for Perth and Huron counties." Wes Macvicar, of the Foundation for Education, remarks on the importance of creating foundations for our youth, the workers and tax payers of a not so distant future.

"Its no secret that skill brings a priceless sense of hope and self-worth," He goes on to explain, "[these are] attributes that bolster the kind of human spirit and ingenuity needed to successfully manoeuvre in an ever changing world."

The Foundation for Education has done wonderful work for youth over the time it has been in operation. The charitable multi-faced organization has been serving Perth since 1989. The foundation strives to integrate cultural, corporate, industrial and agricultural resources of Huron and Perth County into the school systems. In addition, it assists schools with fundraising campaigns and receipts donations to these campaigns.

In the past year the Foundation has worked with over 30 county partners on 11 projects. They have also introduced 165 mentors and volunteers to students and have directly provided over \$42,000 in grants, funding the operation of work related to youth skill development and retention in Perth and Huron. In undertaking large amounts of projects and programs aimed towards our youth, the foundations show cases their understanding of the importance of the development of skills in the workforce of tomorrow. Additionally, they understand

retention is crucial.

"If a region has skilled youth they essentially have confident and purpose driven youth who not only value who they are but also the people that have sponsored their growth," remarks Macvicar on the idea of youth retention.

The Foundation for Education strives to see the intersection between the ideas of youth skill development and retention.



If a region has skilled youth they essentially have confident and purpose driven youth

Macvicar comments on the pivotal point between the two concepts: "Local adults as mentors and leaders meet and encourage youth in all areas of life, from which they gain not only expertise and maturity but, in many cases, a deep sense of community as well."

The primary objective of the Foundation is to essentially "bring business and community together to with educators by providing opportunities for youth throughout co-op placements, mentoring and apprenticeships." They encourage employers to register on www.EmployerRegistry.ca, Ontario's free online community connecting employers and tomorrow's workforce. The foundation for education continues to

support and operate in partnership with many youth related projects and programs.

Take, for example, the Band of Brothers Pilot Project. The project bands twenty men from a wide spectrum of career fields to mentor 120 grade 9 boys.

"This event reminds boys of their vast potential, points out the wealth of opportunities within the region and gives them a clear and concise view of the steps, both personal and academic, that need to be taken to pursue a certain field." Macvicar explains.

Other projects in the area of youth skill development and retention the Foundation for Education works with are: The EPIC Youth Arts Festival, Girl's Unlimited Career Day, the 'Back home' Projects (focusing on local entrepreneurs), and the Specialist High Skills Major Video Project.

The Foundation for Education actively supports the workforce of tomorrow. They understand how significant youth skill development is to the growth of our community as well as how vital youth retention has become. They continue to inspire potential and lay the foundations for today's youth.

The Perth County Economic Development office is continually working with the Foundation for Education, to jointly achieve the common goal of Youth Skill Development and Youth Retention.

Summer Students are on the job

Milverton—Two summer students will be working hard this summer on a variety of projects.

We introduce Aaron Wybrow as our Summer Business Liaison. Aaron will be working on a number of projects that support our existing businesses. By working with business associations, Aaron will assist in promoting the various events and festivals that benefit our diverse community.

We also welcome Taralyn Martin as our Summer Youth Liaison. Taralyn will be working on a variety of youth skill development programs, as well as a number of initiatives to encourage youth retention rates.

The recently adopted recommendations from

the Retail Gap Analysis will be a document that both students will be working to implement throughout the County.

Aaron and Taralyn will also be working to implement a number of initiatives from the recently adopted Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Both students will be based in the Milverton office, which is located at 12 Main Street South. They can be reached by telephone at 519-595-6800. Their email addresses are

awybrow@perthcounty.ca and tmartin@perthcounty.ca

Join me in welcoming these students as they work to enhance our economic stability in Perth County.



Aaron Wybrow and Taralyn Martin will work with businesses and youth this summer

Perth County JOBS



Any Perth County resident who has ever been in the predicament of searching for a job has undoubtedly been discouraged by the lack of viable online searches that are available. Many of the popular websites just aren't able to provide suitable filters to narrow down the search or provide results for opportunities that are located in Perth County without also including jobs from the London and KW areas.

To assist with this dilemma a facebook group called Perth County JOBS was created. Yes, yet another way to utilize Social Media platforms to our benefit! In just over a month, the group has more than 800 members and posts jobs from all over Perth County. Currently this is done via daily web searches, weekly newspaper scans or contributions from facebookers (individuals or business representatives).

Our goal is to that the group will grow in popularity and not have to rely on these searches, that local businesses will post their opportunities on the group in an effort to attract new recruits that are already located in our area.

If you have a job posting at your business, contact us and we will broadcast your opportunity to our audience.

Constantly evolving, we have included a section for jobs that are suitable for students. Recently another discussion was started for job seekers to add posts about themselves and what they have to offer. Links to the local employment assistance resources as well as to businesses that are known to be hiring are also provided. Suggestions or contributions are always welcome, so take some time to check it out under Groups on facebook: Perth County JOBS

Job Creation is a high priority. If you are looking to hire part-time, full-time or seasonal staff, let us know, and we can help you find the workers that suit your business.

The Forbidden Ride

Huron and Perth Counties have once again partnered together to support the Perth and Huron Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations and to offer all motorcycle enthusiasts a fun weekend adventure they'll never forget. The **'Forbidden Ride'** weekend will kick off with a police escorted ride through downtown Stratford to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival for **'Biker's Night'**. On Friday, May 28th, all **'Forbidden Riders'** can purchase \$50.00 tickets, more than half off regular ticket prices, to the witty romantic comedy *'As You Like It'*. To order tickets call Stratford Shakespeare Festival at 1-800-567-1600 and quote savings code 31394. Following the play, you'll enjoy the charming hospitality of one of our motorcycle-friendly accommodations.

On Saturday morning, participants are encouraged to visit one of our many fantastic restaurants for a delicious breakfast. Be sure to browse through some of the unique shops before heading to the Perth County Welcome Centre and Artisan Market in Shakespeare to begin the **'Forbidden Ride'**. The cost to participate in the ride is \$25 for the first rider and \$15 for a passenger, with all of the proceeds being donated to the Perth and Huron Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations.

The **'Forbidden Ride'** will take you from countryside to coastline, with bikers looking for five of ten stamps on the "roads less traveled". You will stop at various attractions throughout the two counties to explore the luscious landscape and forbidden finds we

have to offer! The ride will end on Cove beach in beautiful Goderich (Canada's prettiest town), where a savoury BBQ featuring local foods, live music, and great prizes will await you.

If your love for your motorcycle runs almost as deep as your love for your partner, you might just be the next **'Forbidden Couple'** during the 2nd Annual Forbidden Ride motorcycle event.

REGISTER NOW to guarantee your space!

Call the Perth County Visitors' Association office at 519-603-3724 - OR call toll free 1-888-366-0160

Ride the Counties

www.visitperth.ca for more information on this exciting adventure



Theatre 311

Theatre Three-Eleven has been providing Listowel with brave, entertaining, year-round live theatre since 2001. Enjoy quality productions, view art by local artists, or visit the licensed lounge before or after the show. Ticket prices are reasonable, and the atmosphere is sophisticated and inviting. The theatre is located at 311 Main Street East, Listowel. Online at www.theatre311.com

Starting Thursday, May 27th, the theatre will be presenting **"Proof"**. Catherine has spent years caring for her genius, but unstable mathematician father. Now, after his death, she must deal with her

own emotions, her estranged sister as well as the attention of Hal - a former student of her father. Over the weekend that follows, Catherine begins to wonder how much of her father's genius, or madness she may have inherited.

Thursday May 27 - Saturday June 12
Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, 8pm

Cast: Gary Seibert of Guelph, Madchen Funk of Guelph, Carrie Thompson of Listowel, Drew Brotherton of Waterloo.

Director: S. Webster

**"You know, I've paid a lot more money, for a lot worse theatre."
~Steph's father**

Reports, Plans, and Documents

The County of Perth has recently adopted two different reports for implementation in Perth County. These reports can be found on our website under the Economic Development tab.

The Retail Gap Analysis study offers recommendations to enhance the shopping experience in our local downtowns. There are a total of six recommendations resulting from this study. They are:

Recommendations:

1. Retail merchants have an opportunity to expand products and services to local consumers. Business associations have the opportunity to promote price comparisons and opportunities for cost savings by shopping in the local community.
2. Retail merchants and business associations have an opportunity to join together and offer convenient Hours of Operation which meet the needs of the local community.
3. Retail Merchants can expand their merchandise and market products to include products more desirable for youth and young families.
4. There are business opportunities in the recreation and family fun sector. Many ideas have been suggested for an entrepreneur to invest in.
5. The municipality/economic development office can work to attract the following businesses, brands, and franchises to Perth County: American Eagle, Garage, Stitches, Coffee Culture, Home Depot, Old Navy, Guess, Chapters, Northern Reflections, Tim Horton's in Milverton, and a Movie Theatre to Mitchell.
6. Retail merchants and service providers can entice youth to shop locally by:
 - Staying open later into the evening
 - Offering student discounts

- Offering a more relaxed atmosphere, especially in professional offices
- Playing music in the downtown

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is a study which was conducted in cooperation with Perth County, the City of Stratford, and the Town of St. Marys. This plan looks beyond the traditional industrial landscape to identify ways to diversify local economies and explore new sectors employing new technologies.

Council has recently adopted two important documents for implementation.

Economic Development is on the move in Perth County as we make it an area that draws new people into the area. New people bring new business, commerce, and trade for a thriving and growing economy.

Most communities have several business sectors where a concentration of business ventures, community organizations, educational institutions and other organizational structures overlap or converge in their areas of focus and expertise.

The key industry sectors to focus on in the next 3-5 years, include

- Freelance Professionals
- Arts, Culture & Tourism
- Agriculture and Agri-Food
- Green & Technology based manufacturing
- Retail and Business Services

The development of a genuine cluster-growth strategy will allow our communities to identify specific areas of convergence that compliment each other, thus identifying the points at which the

community has a unique regional advantage.

Perth County is working on a 5-year marketing action plan that looks at a medium-term time frame with achievable short-term goals.

Our key Strategic Priorities:

Regularly achieve a high standard of services delivery and maintain top quality promotional presence in target markets and in social media.

Promote the region to Freeland Professionals as the preferred destination for small business in southwestern Ontario through reaping the opportunities available from the region's many quality of place advantages.

Integrate tourism product offerings across Perth County, St. Marys and Stratford and become a leading overnight destination in Ontario

Develop the beginnings of a digital media cluster into a growth node that has spinoff benefits with the business, theatre and education communities, strengthening the region's position as an attractive place for young works and creative enterprise.

Create higher value added agricultural opportunities that build off the region's quality farming practices.

Build off of the region's traditional manufacturing strengths to create an environment that nurtures development in green and technology based manufacturing.

Ensure the viability of all main streets through ongoing capital investment as well as brand/promotional campaigns and retail service mixes that differentiate them.