

APRIL 2010

the pulse

SAULT STE. MARIE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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GREEN BUSINESS: Provincial energy program a perfect fit for Sault Ste. Marie **MicroFIT gives anyone the power to generate power**



PHOTO: Installed by Superior Energy Solutions, this 10-kilowatt local solar project sits on the roof of Kensington Place Apartments on Market Street.

The province's incentives for small-scale alternative energy generation is proving too lucrative for many to pass up.

Under the Ontario Power Authority's microFIT program, citizens are encouraged to de-

velop renewable energy projects like rooftop solar operations. Essentially, participants are paid a high rate for selling power back to the grid, and the rate is guaranteed for at least 20 years.

In Sault Ste. Marie, the Alternative Energy Capital of North America, residents are already taking advantage

of the new program. This comes as no surprise to Councillor Steve Butland, Co-Chair of the City's Green Committee.

"It's a natural follow through to what we already have," he said. "It's good to also be

known as a community that promotes small-scale alternative energy projects, which, when grouped together, can be just as significant."

More information on the program is available online at microfit.powerauthority.on.ca.

For those in the Algoma region interested in taking advantage of microFIT, Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie can help. For more information, contact General Manager Andrew Ross at 705-759-5461 or a.ross@ssmedc.ca.

Local businesses, including Superior Energy Solutions and G3 Renewable Energy Corporation, can also help people access the program with installation and other aid.

TOURISM: Dudley Hewitt Cup comes to Essar Centre

Sault hosts Central Canada Junior A Hockey Championships

The Sault hosted the Central Canada Junior A Hockey Championships in April. It was the first time the Dudley Hewitt Cup was held here.

The event was bid on by the Soo Thunderbirds, in partnership with Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSMEDEC.

"They (TSSM) really helped out in the bid process," said Ritchie Donaghue, the team's Director of Marketing.

Also instrumental were the

local small businesses that sponsored the tournament, he added. "Their support really made this happen. It shows we're a hockey town."

When all was said and done, the Oakville Blades took home the regional title and will be competing in the national championships, the Royal Bank Cup, in May.

However, there were other winners involved in the 2010 Dudley Hewitt Cup. For starters, the team from the host city,

Soo Thunderbirds, got to compete in front of college scouts.

Secondly, Sault fans were treated to top-notch hockey. Finally, with upwards of 240 visitors for six days, the local tourism industry also benefited.

"This was a collaboration of the City, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie and Soo Thunderbirds," said Steve Hollingshead, TSSM's Coordinator of Sport Tourism. "It's an example of what can happen when everyone works together."

BUSINESS PROFILE: Jeannette's Custom Cakes

You can't have your cake and eat it too, but you can have fun doing either

It's amazing what can be accomplished when you take a hobby and a dream and combine them with some professional help.

When Jeannette Orazietti graduated from the Graphic Design program at Sault College, she had one primary ambition.

"I didn't want to leave the Sault," she said.

With this goal in mind, Orazietti decided to explore self-employment opportunities. And with her education and skill set, some sort of design work seemed like a logical choice.

She loved baking cakes, and combining this passion with her graphic skills was only natural.

"I thought it might be something fun to do," she said. "It started out as a hobby, but I thought it might also work as a business."

Though ambitious, her entrepreneurial know-how was a bit on the green side. This would change, however, with a little help from Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie.

"As far as business experience goes, I had none," said Orazietti. "They (ECSSM) guided me and really helped with my business plan."

With this push in the right direction, Jeannette's Custom Cakes was born.

The business plan was then used to apply for government funding, something most Enterprise Centre clients do, often with success.

"With the province's Northern Ontario Heritage

Fund Corporation, along with other programs, the opportunities that exist for regional entrepreneurs are immense," said Andrew Ross, General Manager of Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie.

"What we do is help people access those resources. With our experience in dealing with funding agencies, we know what they're looking for when they review applications. The end result often leads to grants and low-interest loans for entrepreneurs in the region."

Meanwhile, Jeannette's Custom Cakes is building its client base one unique — and delicious — offering at a time. For each creation, the customer's response is almost always filled with excitement, which is very satisfying, said Orazietti. "I love being able to see peoples' reaction."

Put simply, the new entrepreneur has taken her ambition, along with her graphic design skills, to new heights.

"It has been an adjustment, but it's been a blast at the same time," said Orazietti.

For additional information, or to order a special cake for that special event, visit www.jeannettestcustomcakes.com or call 705-942-5323.

For more information on Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, and how the organization can help your business start or expand, go to www.ecssm.ca.

Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie is the small business division of the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Develop-



PHOTOS: Whatever design you have in mind, Jeannette's Custom Cakes can make it happen.

GREEN MACHINE: The Business of Clean Technology**North America's Alternative Energy Capital hosts green tech conference**

What better place to hold a green technology conference than the Alternative Energy Capital of America?

Sault Ste. Marie hosted a workshop, The Business of Clean Technology, March 31. The event was organized by the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, a longtime partner of the SSM Economic Development Corporation.

Held at the Delta Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront Hotel and Conference Centre, the workshop featured internationally-renowned industry experts, clean technology business leaders, corporate executives, non-governmental organizations, and public policy makers from across the country.

Presenters included industry experts from places far

and wide, such as Gordon Quaiattini from the Canadian Renewable Fuels Association, Nathaniel Bullard from the Bloomberg New Energy Finance's Solar Insight

Group, Guy Dauncey from the B.C. Sustainable Energy Association, Glen Martin from Pod Generating Group, and Pere Soria from Heliene Canada.

The March Clean Tech conference joins a growing list of green endeavours in Sault Ste. Marie, the Alternative Energy Capital of North America.



PHOTO: Errol Caldwell, Research Director for the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, at the Green Tech conference. Caldwell is involved with a variety of alternative energy projects in the community, including the development of a biofuel production industry in the region.

GREEN MACHINE . . . STRIKES AGAIN: Sault's green sector hits the big screen**City's alternative energy projects inspire SMC filmmaking class**

What do you get when you mix Sault Ste. Marie's green sector with some young filmmaking talent?

The answer: A promotional video from the media communications class at St. Mary's College. The video has a primary goal, according to teacher Bill Howe, who's leading the project.

"This new video can be used to market Sault Ste. Marie as a leading centre in the alternative energy sector," he said. "The goal is to promote the community as green and hopefully attract green businesses."

Meanwhile, creating such

documentaries — something Howe's pupils are no strangers to doing — also gives the students a great deal of practical experience, he said.

"We're trying to get them involved in the community. This can be a tremendous learning experience."

The documentary will feature interview clips from various local green energy experts and enthusiasts, including Councillor Steve Butland, who Co-Chairs the City's Green Committee; Bruce Strapp, CEO of the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation; and Tom Vair, Executive

Director of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre.

The film is scheduled to be completed and ready for viewing by the end of May.

Howe's media communications class created another promotional video on the exciting projects in Sault Ste. Marie. It was presented at the April 26 City Council meeting to much acclaim.



ACTION!: Chris Rugo, a Grade 11 student at St. Mary's College, shoots a scene for an upcoming documentary on alternative energy in Sault Ste. Marie.

COLUMN: Summer Company is a great way to get entrepreneurial experience

Small business experience would have been good for this old guy



BY MARC CAPANCIONI
Communications Coordinator

I consider myself extremely lucky to be able to return home upon finishing university. Not long after graduating in the fall of 2008, I joined the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation team.

More recently, I've been eyeing the real estate market, looking for some sort of investment property to snatch up.

Crunching the numbers and factoring in other business conditions isn't the easiest, especially for someone who identifies more with words and writing than finances and figures.

Purchasing investment properties is, by many accounts, a young person's game — that is to say, such ventures are often long-term in nature, meaning one can capitalize on time, the more the better.

Put simply, my age makes this a near perfect point in my life to invest in real estate or some other business venture.

One slight problem, though. My entrepreneurial experience is somewhere between poor and non-existent.

I wish I knew more about business. I wish I had experience — if only a little — as an entrepreneur. This would certainly make my current

aspirations within an easier grasp.

I can't help but think that some sort of small business experience when I was younger would have been a great opportunity for me. Summer Company, it seems, would have been the perfect fit.

Soon after joining the EDC team, I learned about the youth entrepreneurship program delivered by our small business division, Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, in partnership with the province of Ontario, which funds the initiative.

A \$1,500 grant is provided at the start of summer to help the business open its doors. The cash can be used for marketing, capital purchases or other start-up spending, and it does not have to be paid back.

The participant then runs his or her business for the season. Over the years, ideas have ranged greatly — everything from lawn cutting and website design to sports camps and adventure guided tours.

Once the season is over, the operator is given an additional \$1,500, as long as basic business procedures were met. This, too, does not have to be repaid.

So, the Summer Company participant gets to keep the government grant, along with any cash made during the business season. The program provides entrepreneurs with hands-on knowhow but does not require a major cash com-

mitment from the participant.

My coworker, Zoltan Virag, the Enterprise Centre's Youth Business Development Coordinator, summed it up rather nicely.

"It gives young entrepreneurs a real world experience, but it's done in an environment that lends itself to little — if any — financial risk," he explained. "That's the beauty of Summer Company. It's the perfect way to gain valuable business experience, something that can lead to bigger and better things in the future."

My friend's brother, Mike Roy, is a prime example. He took advantage of the program last year, starting Our Lawn Care, a yard maintenance service.

"I learned that what you put into it is what you get out of it," the 18-year-old said. "It was a great experience. It helps with your work ethic, and you learn all the basics (like marketing and general business operation).

"I like working for myself," Roy went on. "That's one of the things I'm definitely considering after graduating from university. When you run your own business, the sky's the limit."

Roy did what I should have done years ago: learn the ropes of entrepreneurship at an early age.

As such, he's already

ahead of the game.

I envy that young fella. In fact, if you're reading this, Mike, call me. I may have a business proposition for you.

On the web: www.ontario.ca/summercompany.

Originally published in The Sault Star, March 27, 2010.

Author's note: With 19 business submissions getting the green light from the Province of Ontario, 2009 was one of the best years on record for the Summer Company program in the Algoma District. With 2010 already on pace to exceed last year's numbers, it appears the best has yet to come.



PHOTO: Mike Roy at the 2009 High School Business Plan Competition. The annual event is hosted by Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation. Roy is no stranger to small business, having operated his own last summer.

In the Community: EDC Photo Gallery



PARTNERSHIP: Bruce Strapp from the SSMEDC (middle) with Len Zwierschke, Vice-President of Elementa Group (right), and Ernie Dueck, Elementa's Vice-President of Engineering. The three were on hand for the company's open house event last month, which took place to show the public Elementa's cutting-edge technology.



TALKING APPRENTICESHIPS: Bruce Strapp, CEO of the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, discusses the importance of apprenticeships — for the employer, participant and community in general — at Sault College. The presentation was appropriately titled: "Apprenticeship = Economic Development."



THE PEOPLE OVER THE STAIRS: John Febraro (top left), Acting Executive Director of Development Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSM Economic Development Corporation, with a film production crew. The crew was in town to scout out potential locations for an upcoming movie shoot.

April 2010

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Sault Ste. Marie
**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation recognizes the financial support it receives from the City of Sault Ste. Marie. As well, it recognizes the strong backing it receives from the Mayor, Council and City staff team. The SSMEDC also thanks the federal and provincial governments, and its many other partners, for their financial support.

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit organization, funded by public and private partners, whose goal is to be the community's leader in supporting and promoting an environment that generates sustainable employment in a healthy, growing and diversified economy.