

MARCH 2009

the pulse

SAULT STE. MARIE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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SSM plants seed in western Canada

Linking the local economy with markets around the world will help position Sault Ste. Marie for long-term sustainability and growth.

Linking it with other markets in Canada is equally as important, especially when the market size is the equivalent of 86 years of exporting to China.

Knowing the potential that exists in western provinces, Development Sault Ste. Marie recently planted a seed there. Even with the global financial downturn, tremendous opportunity remains in the region. With this in mind, an office is being set up in Alberta to represent Northern Ontario businesses.

"We see an opportunity to help diversify, strengthen and

expand the economic base of our community," said Mike Wozny, Executive Director of Development Sault Ste. Marie. "We're conducting joint economic development activities between Ontario and the western provinces."

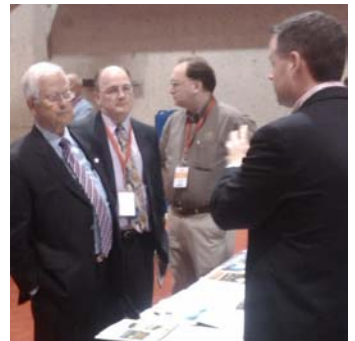
Originally, the mission only involved the oil and gas industry, which is in need of outside suppliers. However, other opportunities were realized and, as a result, the Oil Sands Initiative became the Western Canada Economic Development Initiative.

"We saw other economic opportunities in other provinces," said Wozny. "We knew we had to take advantage of them as well."

Utilizing the benefits that come with strength in num-

bers, Sudbury, North Bay, Timmins and Thunder Bay will also be represented by the Northern Ontario office.

"Partnering with other communities allows for an increased presence," said Wozny. "It's about strength in numbers."



The N. Ontario delegation meets with Jean Marc Lalonde, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development.

Enterprise Centre teaches e-business skills

In an interconnected world, technology is used by companies to gain a competitive advantage. Electronic business is becoming an integral part of this trend.

Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSM Economic Development Corporation, is teaching the local and regional small busi-

ness community skills to utilize this technology.

The division held three local e-business information seminars earlier this month.

"These seminars can be very beneficial for both new small businesses and ones looking to grow," said Melissa Cuglietta, who became ECSSM's Marketing and Com-

munications Coordinator late last year. "With the current state of the economy, providing support for entrepreneurs can have a significant impact in the community."

In February, Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie also organized small business seminars in Wawa, Chapleau and Blind River.



Hockey's best Bantams invade the Sault

Local hockey fans were treated to quite a show earlier this month when some of the best Bantam teams in the province competed.

The 2009 All-Ontario Bantam AAA Championship took place at the Essar Centre



March 22 to 28.

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSM Economic Development Corporation, helped make the successful bid on the event with a local organizing committee.

More than 140 players, along with their families, friends and special guests, descended on the city for a week-long extravaganza of sticks, skates and pucks.

"Again, we're building a reputation as a first-rate destination for sporting events," said Steve Hollingshead, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie's Coordinator of Special Projects and

Sport Tourism.

"With the state-of-the-art Essar Centre, I'm confident that Sault Ste. Marie will host many more major sporting events in the years to come. These events will attract more visitors to our community, something that's particularly important during the current economic climate."

The tournament brought the top seven teams in the province together, including the Soo Greyhound AAA Bantams.

The Toronto Marlboros took home the championship trophy after defeating the London Junior Knights.

Challenges and opportunities for Ontario tourism

Continuing its strong marketing campaign and focusing on quality product offerings will help the local tourism industry weather the current storm of global economic uncertainty, said Ian McMillan, Executive Director of Tourism Sault Ste. Marie.

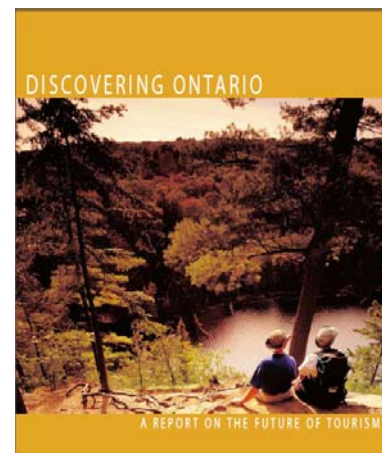
"During this recession, marketing our tourism products is especially important. As the battle to attract visitors becomes more difficult, effective marketing is a way to give your destination a leg up."

A study commissioned by the provincial government, Discovering Ontario: A Report on

the Future of Tourism, was released in February.

Along with better marketing, the report also recommends more tourism industry partnerships, more investment in attractions and infrastructure, and being more competitive on a global scale.

"This is a challenging time for the Ontario tourism industry, which relies heavily on visitors from the United States," said McMillan. "But with well-placed marketing, government and private sector investment, and other efforts, we can minimize the impact of the recent economic downturn."



The recently-released tourism study from the provincial government, Discovering Ontario: A Report of the Future of Tourism, is available online at www.tourismstudy.ca.

Local snowmobile trails draw international attention

Although the winter season can be a little long for some Sault Ste. Marie residents, the snowflakes also provide the region with a variety of fun activities.

Whether it's skiing, ice fishing or just playing a little shinny on the outdoor rinks, there's no shortage of things to do in Sault Ste. Marie winters.

Snowmobiling is another prime example. In fact, the area's pristine trails attracted the International Snowmobile Media Council last month.

Five travel writers from the United States came for a ride on the region's world-famous

trails.

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie organized the ride and provided support for it. This was the first time the council came to Northern Ontario.

The articles will appear in snowmobile magazines across the U.S., giving Sault Ste. Marie and area some high-profiled publicity.

"The visit will help promote our city and its wonderful snowmobile trails to riders from around the world," said Steve Hollingshead, Coordinator of Special Projects and Sport Tourism for Tourism



Sault Ste. Marie.

"Securing a media ride of this calibre is the end result of actively pursuing this market at snowmobile tradeshows. The end result of this and other familiarization tours will be more visitors to Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding area."

Development SSM builds more global relationships

At first glance, you might not think Sault Ste. Marie has much in common with Austria.

After all, they rest a few thousand kilometres apart on different continents. But despite the geographic differences, the two have many similarities.

They share a passion for the environment. They share a commitment to the development of alternative energy. And they both want to build a sustainable planet for the future.

With this in mind, representatives from Development Sault Ste. Marie, Elementa Group and 50 other Canadian businesses travelled to Austria last month. They toured bio-fuel and alternative energy sites in 11 cities across the European country.

The delegation, which also included delegates from other

Northern Ontario communities, attended the World Sustainable Energy Days as well. The alternative energy expo in Wels, Austria housed more than 800 exhibitors showcasing their products and services.

Representatives from Elementa, a company that's converting Sault Ste. Marie's municipal solid waste into clean energy, met with Austrian businesses. Formally discussions were started, which will hopefully lead to future partnerships.

"By working with our Austrian friends and others who share our common interests, we can build a sustainable future together," said Randy Tallon, Director of International Relations & Global Logistics for Development Sault Ste. Marie.

"A collaborate effort helps all

parties involved."

A Slovakian mission came to Sault Ste. Marie in early February, and Development SSM helped foster a business relationship. This was strengthened when the Canadian delegation visited Slovakia during the recent European trip.

Next month, Development Sault Ste. Marie will host a delegation from Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This is also a part of the city's International Relations Strategy.

"It's important that we continue to connect Sault Ste. Marie and our businesses with markets around the world," said Tallon. "Accessing these markets and attracting investment to our community will help position our city for long-term success."

"By working with our Austrian friends . . . we can build a sustainable future together."
-Randy Tallon, Development Sault Ste. Marie

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The SSMEDC 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. The SSMEDC also thanks the federal and provincial governments, and its many other partners, for their continued 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.

New General Manager at Enterprise Centre SSM

The staff and Board of Directors at the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation are pleased to announce that Andrew Ross is the new General Manager for Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie.

The division, one of four at SSMEDC, provides support for local and regional small businesses. Ross, who was appointed Enterprise Centre's Acting General Manager a year ago, is now its official head.

He brings extensive experience and education with him. Ross holds an Honour's degree in Business Administration from Algoma University and has worked in the retail sector for more than eight years.

Ross' business experience led

him to Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie in January 2007, where he held the position of Youth Development Coordinator.

"In 2008, under Andrew's leadership, the Enterprise Centre helped 66 businesses start or expand, which created 146 full and part-time jobs," said ECSSM Chair Greg Peres. "That says a lot about his work ethic and the skills he brings to the table."

As the division's General Manager, Ross is responsible for developing small businesses within the Algoma District.

"Small business is an integral part of our economy," said Ross. "It's a privilege to be involved with this sec-

tor, and I look forward to working with my team to advance the small business community in the city and region."

Along with his current position at ECSSM, Ross Chairs the Alumni Committee at Algoma University. He is also a past President of the Algoma University Student Union and a former Board member for the Sault International Youth Association.

Born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie, Andrew Ross now leads the local Enterprise Centre as its new General Manager.

