

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



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Serving the Rainy River District for almost 22 years! Read us on line at www.westendweekly.ca

The path forward - RRFDC plans for future growth

By: Teresa Hazel

Geoff Gillon, Regional Economic Developer for the Rainy River Future Development Corporation (RRFDC) sees growth for the future despite the news delivered by Resolute Forest Products last week to lay off 150 employees at their Pulp & Paper mill in Fort Frances due to market conditions for paper products. "Fed Nor and the Heritage fund want to help us get through this time. We are putting together a wish list of projects we want to get done". Gillon was at a Council meeting on Monday to discuss some of the projects that have not yet been done, including establishing a community foundation, purchasing the tourism centre building and revitalization of the downtown with the removal of the Rainy Lake Hotel.

"Fed Nor is willing to help with two or three smaller projects", noted Gillon adding that these projects would be in the range of fifty thousand dollars or less. Ideas for these funds in-

cluded new banners at the border crossing, new welcome signs and possibly the modernization of the Town's website.

How does Gillon feel about the recent news?

"It's been looming over us for many years. During this time, we have been able to put together an action plan".

RRFDC has been working with municipal and senior government partners, the business community and key stakeholders to implement a plan that will work to transition our economy and provide for a prosperous future.

The plan includes five key elements: growing mining supply and services; supporting value added forestry; strengthening retail and commercial; expanding other sectors; and building a tourism market.

Recent initiatives like the Go Local campaign to encourage local spending has been extremely successful. The plan also identifies exploring health care-related services and ways to market residential and in-

dustrial properties to developers.

To boost the tourism market, the RRFDC has also been working on various initiatives. Work is underway on a summer festival that will feature cross-border and cross-cultural musical performances bringing together people from Canada, the United States and First Nations and Metis.

The RRFDC would like to see activities and festivals held under the Big Tent on La Verendrye Parkway all summer long and are working on initiatives to make this possible.

Another idea to assist workers in the immediate future is to establish an action centre to help with training for jobs in diversified sectors.

"We may help someone to transition to a job in mining or it would be equally applicable for someone thinking about heading west to the oil sands".

With diversification across the Rainy River district, Gillon sees this as potential for Fort Frances.

"The money flows here as it



Geoff Gillon, Regional Economic Developer at Rainy River Future Development Corporation envisions opportunities for future growth.

is the service hub of the district".

Gillon does admit that it will

be a difficult time over the next while.

"It's not going to be easy.

Fort Frances will be able to focus itself though and create a vibrant economy".

"We will work closely with the Town of Fort Frances and its Economic Development Advisory Committee to determine what areas require immediate attention and how these priorities tie-in with the goals and aspirations of the District", explained Gillon.

The RRFDC, along with its Board of Directors works to create jobs and improve the commercial and industrial base of the Rainy River District by offering a variety of services to the community. They help to find fair and equitable business partnerships, help businesses communicate with a larger market and provide community learning for businesses and entrepreneurs.

For more information about the RRFDC and/or The Path Forward action plan, contact the Rainy River Future Development Corporation at 807.274.3276 or email info@rrfdc.on.ca. You can also check out their website at www.rrfdc.on.ca.

Rev. Quast becomes Cross-Border Pastor

By: Teresa Hazel

Reverend Jacob Quast has been the Pastor at the Church of the Lutheran Hour for six years. It was in May 2012 that he was called to serve as interim Pastor for St. Paul Lutheran Church in International Falls. Then a year later, in May 2013, a call was issued for Pastor Quast to serve as their permanent Pastor. He explains that in order to facilitate that call there was a time of preparation.

"We had to prepare an agreement between the Church of the Lutheran Hour and St. Paul Lutheran Church".

This Joint-Parish Agreement required acceptance by both congregations.

"There has never been an agreement like this. An International agreement between two synods, that being the Lutheran Church-Missouri and the Lutheran Church-Canada", noted Pastor Quast.

"Both parties had to accept it and they participated in community discussions and prayerful consideration", he added.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, which celebrated its centennial last fall, has always had a connection to the Church of the Lutheran Hour.

"It is the parent congregation to the Church of the Lutheran Hour. There has been a good and long relationship so it was a perfect fit for both", noted

Pastor Quast as he prepared to take part in the Installation service held last Sunday at St. Paul Lutheran Church after a community dinner where people from both congregations came together to celebrate the new Agreement.

As Pastor Quast has been serving at St. Paul Lutheran Church for over a year and a half, the Agreement solidified the relationship that has already been formed.

"I already know them. They are a welcoming, wonderful and warm congregation".

The issue of working in the United States also fit for Pastor Quast.

"I have a social security number so that wasn't a prob-



Cross-Border Faith and Fellowship. From l. Jim and Bev Moorhead (International Falls), Pastor Jacob Quast, Helga Leimenstall and Art Scheierer (Fort Frances) prepare to celebrate the Installation of Rev. Jacob Quast to the Joint Parish of The Church of the Lutheran Hour and St. Paul Lutheran Church.

lem", said Quast who was born in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois and therefore holds dual citizenship. He has lived in Canada since he was one.

Will it be difficult for Pastor Quast, who is also a husband to his wife, Jolene and father to his three children; Julia who will be 17 at the end of the month, Liam who is 13 and his eleven year-old daughter, Rowen?

"It will require good time management skills", laughs the Pastor who plans to divide his time equally between the two, adding "there will be give and take both ways as different events and occurrences arise.

The proximity works and allows me to be available to both churches".

As both communities have recently been impacted by paper industry downturns, I asked Pastor Quast what his message is to those who are struggling with job loss and economic insecurity.

"As stresses arise, even though it may not impact an individual parishioner directly, as a community, we are all af-

fectured.

If it happens to me, it happens to all. Even in the midst of trials, Jesus Christ is with us and promises to always be with us", affirmed Pastor Quast, adding a reference to Matthew Chapter 28 in the New Testament where Jesus says, "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age".

"It's a comfort to know Jesus is with us. He is with us in the Church through His Word and sacraments. There is a rock solid supply.

The Church is here to support in whatever way we can. There is a commitment in Lutheran heritage to God's Word and sharing the Truth of that Word with everybody".

Parishioners were eager to shake Pastor Quast's hand as they prepared for dinner.

Bev and Jim Moorhead of International Falls, who are long-time members of St. Paul Lutheran Church, were pleased to have reached the Joint-Parish Agreement.

"You bet! We were pushing for it", they enthused.

"We have a wonderful rela-

tionship with Pastor Quast and are blessed to have him and be in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Hour".

Helga Leimenstall and Art Scheierer from Fort Frances were also there to celebrate the new agreement.

"I was confirmed at St. Paul Lutheran Church when I was sixteen", recalls Scheierer who is a member of the Church of the Lutheran Hour.

Both he and Helga participated in the discussions and are fine with sharing Pastor Quast.

"It is the work of the Lord", smiled Scheierer.

As members from both congregations prepared to break bread together, Pastor Quast was beckoned downstairs to the hall to say Grace before dinner.

The Church of the Lutheran Hour is located at 508 Victoria Avenue in Fort Frances and St. Paul Lutheran Church is in International Falls at 1324 9th Street. To find out about times of worship and Bible study dates, call 807.274.5935 (Fort Frances) or 218.283.8642 (International Falls).

Photographers' showcase



This mother deer, with only one of her twins, are so often near our deck in Sioux Narrows, always intently watching all the birds feed....truth-be-told: they are intensely watching all the 'food', in those bird feeders!

Photo by Karen Andrews, Sioux Narrows



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Many economic opportunities on the horizon in NWO

By Sarah Campbell, MPP

This past week the community of Fort Frances received devastating news when Resolute Forest Products announced that it would be idling that location's last paper machine. My heart goes out to the workers, their families and the entire community as it deals with the loss of nearly 150 well paying jobs.

I spoke with the company this past week and it was stressed that Resolute remains committed to finding alternative products so that a restart is

possible. It was also mentioned that nearly fifty per cent of the affected employees may be eligible to retire, and for those who aren't, the company will try to place workers at other Resolute locations. The company has asked for my assistance with working with the provincial government in a couple of areas and I remain deeply committed to doing all that I can to ensure that we see a speedy restart.

I know the large footprint that the loss of even a few well paying jobs can have on a

community and the region as a whole, which is why I wanted to devote this week's column to some of the positive economic opportunities we have on the horizon.

There has been a lot of discussion over the past few years about the development of the Ring of Fire, but that project is still a number of years away. There are a lot of changes that need to be made to set the conditions necessary for the project to get off the ground and both the provincial and federal governments have significant

roles to play in its development.

What is encouraging is the other projects across the region that have either already started or are on track to start shortly.

Resolute has said that its Ignace restart is still on track for October of this year and that its Atikokan start is still scheduled for early 2015. Eacom is set to reopen the Ear Falls Sawmill with a 50 percent operational expansion this year and New Gold, near Rainy River, is still on track, pending provincial approvals, to start this fall.

Last week I had the opportunity to meet with the President of Bending Lake Iron Mine while in Ignace. The Bending Lake project is poised to be a very impressive operation, with an estimated 800 - 1000 jobs created during the construction phase, and about 360 permanent pellet plant jobs for the 30 to 60-year mine life. While operation is still a few years away, it could be a very promising opportunity.

While not intending to be insensitive to the devastating blow that Fort Frances received

last week, I want to point out that there are a number of lucrative employment opportunities within our grasp across Northwestern Ontario. I am committed to continuing to do all that I can to work with individual companies and entire industries to ensure that we continue to see economic investment and good jobs in our communities. I know the key to our continued enjoyment of this beautiful region depends on our ability to work here. I believe we will have a strong and bright future for years to come.

THE PATH FORWARD

The Rainy River Future Development Corporation (RRFDC), working with municipal and senior government partners, our business community and key stakeholders, has been implementing a plan that will work to transition our economy and provide for a prosperous future. Our plan is both practical and ambitious.

By assembling a team with expertise ranging from telecommunications to value added agriculture, we will continue to pursue a bright economic future for Fort Frances and the Rainy River District.

With a vision and strategy to celebrate what makes us unique, we will introduce a new brand for the Town of Fort Frances. This new brand will position us to attract new investment.

This Plan Includes:

Growing Mining Supply and Services

- Marketing to supply and service companies.
- Aiding businesses to identify procurement opportunities.
- Building awareness of Fort Frances' potential with the resource sector.

Supporting Value Added Forestry

- Reviewing local fiber supply and alternative products.
- Facilitating a partnered approach to tenure reform.
- Supporting export development within the business community.

Strengthening Retail and Commercial

- Increasing local spending through Go Local.
- Investing in businesses using our \$3.2 Million loan fund.
- Providing training for entrepreneurs.

Expanding Other Sectors

- Exploring a healthcare related services cluster.
- Marketing residential and industrial properties to developers.
- Initiating a telecommunications upgrade study.

Building a Tourism Market

- Offering border tourist information.
- Creating a new walking tour and summer festival.
- Building business partnerships and advertising their packages.
- Supporting existing festivals and events with staff and the RRFDC tent.

Contact: Rainy River Future Development Corporation
807-274-3276 or info@rrfdc.on.ca



Hear a missionary's African stories

Hi I am Pastor Sandy McEvoy and I am submitting this article about a missionary friend of mine who is coming to our area. He shares this story with us.

I was with a group of missionaries and we were in a large land rover. We were travelling through a wildlife refuge and observing all kinds of African animals-zebras, lions, giraffes etc. All at once we came into an area where there were huge baboons.

The engine on our vehicle suddenly overheated and stalled. The moment we stalled a large group of baboons (as many as twenty

converged on the land rover which had a canvas top and they began to attack us with loud screeching noises and they started to scratch at the top and pull on the door handles and other parts of the vehicle. They tore off the rearview mirrors and suddenly we realized how strong they were. They began to pound on the windows and we were afraid they would break and they were trying to get inside by pulling on the door handles.

The driver, a missionary friend of mine, tried to start the engine but had no success. We decided it was time to pray to

God to protect us from these animals in the name of Jesus and soon the engine started and we were able to escape with them chasing us.

It is very comforting to know in an unexpected and dangerous situation like this that God is mindful of us and we can call upon Him in times like this. You can also call upon Him and He will hear you.

If you are interested in hearing more stories of God's protection, Paul Tucker will be speaking at the Covenant Church across from the Canadian Tire Store at 7:00 pm on February 8th.

From the house submitted by John Rafferty M.P.

This week it's back to the present, or recent past I should say, to look at the end of Canada Post as we know it.

Canada Post home delivery survived two Great Wars, more than a dozen recessions and The Great Depression, and the austerity of the Mulroney years, but just eight years under Stephen Harper's administration has finally brought this proud institution to its knees. Just one day after parliament rose for the winter session Canada Post announced that for the first time in its history it won't be delivering mail to homes in Canada in the near future. The timing of the announcement, just a day after parliament rose for the winter, allowed the Conservatives to enjoy a winter break free from difficult questions from Tom Mulcair and the NDP Official Opposition on the issue. A pleasant coincidence eh? Right.

The arguments in favour of ending home delivery are, on their face, bogus. I have heard the following three reasons offered by the government and some constituents on the cuts; a) mail volumes are plummeting, b) the internet has rendered mail useless, and c) Canada Post loses money and I don't want to pay for it. These arguments are exaggerated at best and flat out false at worst. Let me explain.

Is mail volume really plummeting as some would have us believe? Let's look at the numbers provided by Canada Post in their annual reports. In 2006, Canada Post processed

11.6 billion pieces of mail. In 2012 the Crown Corporation processed 9.6 billion pieces. Two billion pieces is an astonishing drop you say? It's about 11.1% over a six year period. Not fast and not dramatic. More like a steady drip than a flood some would say. There should be lots of time to adjust and remain profitable - and Canada Post has (see below).

Is the internet making Canada Post and home mail delivery redundant? This is a common one, and the answer again is 'no.' There is no universal agreement as to when the internet was founded, but for consumer purposes it wasn't really useful until the mid-1990's. In March 2001 Canada Post delivered 9.8 billion pieces of mail - about the same number as in 2012. So who still uses Canada Post for home delivery - older people who are not as tech savvy as the younger crowd, but also small and large businesses who rely on online sales. You see, when you buy something online and pay the bill via online banking the supplier must still deliver your book, sweater, or computer to you and Canada Post offers the most competitive shipping rates.

So that's all well and fine, but Canada Post still loses money and costs taxpayers billions right? Well, let's look at the facts. Here is Canada Post's profit by year from 2002 to 2012: \$71 million (2002), \$253 million (2003), \$147 million (2004), \$199 million (2005), \$119 million (2006), \$54 million (2007), \$139 mil-

lion (2008), \$357 million (2009), \$142 million (2010), loss of \$226 million (2011), and back to profit in 2012 with \$131 million taken in. Doing the math, Canada Post has not only NOT cost taxpayers money in 9 out of the last 10 years, but actually passed on \$1 BILLION IN PROFITS to taxpayers over that time - and all while providing timely and high quality service to our doorsteps and mailboxes.

So what is the problem at the Canada Post really? I would say leadership. While cutting home delivery service and 5000 well-paying jobs the President and CEO, Deepak Chopra, saw fit to give himself a 33% bonus last year on top of his \$518,600 salary. If Canada Post is really struggling and in crisis what's with the bonus for the CEO? And don't even get me started on the 22 Vice-Presidents (yes, 22), none of whom will be among the 5000 job cuts.

With near record mail volume (just over 10% off the record) last year, the need for face-to-face delivery even in the digital age and with more than \$1 billion in profits over the last 10 years is there really a crisis at Canada Post? Do we really need to scrap home delivery? Should Canada Post CEO keep his job and his big bonus while cutting those of 5000 others? The evidence shows, and my strong opinion is, that the answer to all of the above questions is a loud and resounding 'NO.'

Doll therapy for Dementia



Pictured: Sitting from l. Rainycrest Personal Support Workers: Marg Moore, Janice Mundle, Patty Labbe, Colleen Kinnear, Irene Kaemingh, and Kristina Desaulniers. Standing from l. Sara Galusha, Geri Yerxa, Mona Palubeskie, Rainycrest PSW, and Kayla Caul-Chartier, Director of Nursing at Rainycrest.

By: Teresa Hazel

Geri Yerxa, who is the Psychogeriatric Resource Lead and Sara Galusha, an Outreach Personal Support Worker from the District Mental Health Services for Older Adults Program were at Rainycrest Long Term Care recently to discuss a relatively new treatment technique for dementia patients.

Although controversial, Doll Therapy is proving to benefit some of the residents in care homes by providing them with a sense of purpose and meaning. Staff were able to ask

questions about its effectiveness and learn about ways it can be used and incorporated. They were also able to raise concerns relating to the stigma of treating residents like children.

Although Yerxa conceded that the therapy is not for everyone and some caregivers and family members struggle with seeing their loved one

with a doll, it has proven effective and once they see the improvements in the behaviours exhibited, they may feel differently.

Doll Therapy, if properly used, may bring comfort and happiness to the person with dementia. It may also bring a sense of purpose and meaning and bring back memories from their own childrearing years.

RAINY RIVER CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Annual Meeting

Thursday, January 23rd

7:00 pm at Our Lady of the Way School in Stratton

We encourage everyone to come, we always need input from our members!

- Arden Schneckenburger, BFO Board, will have a presentation
- Barry Potter, OMARFA, "How to handle cows the happy way!"
- Elections to the 2014 Board • Constitution Change

Coffee Break sponsored by Rainy River Meats

Alcoholics Anonymous

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