

Belleville - Industries

The present structure of the committee is as follows: Ald. Frank Seemungal is chairman, with two other aldermen as committee members, Kerry Soden and Judy Woodley. Citizen members are Jack Harris of Durabla, Bruce Joscelyn of Brooke-Bond Foods, Chuck Lear of Alexander Vending, Peter Charboneau of Rollins Construction, Doug Chisholm of Chisholm Lumber and Doug Aselstine, a high school teacher and vice-chairman. Aselstine is also in charge of promotion for the committee. Mayor George Zegouras and City Manager Wilbur Purcell are ex-officio members of the committee.

Bemis looks back on 1982 with a certain amount of tension, considering a dramatic loss of jobs in Belleville's various industrial plants in the preceding months. But it was also a year when the writing seemed to be on the wall that better things were under way. Expansions went on at a number of city plants, having the effect of either ensuring jobs or offering potential for new jobs in the future. Northern Telecom completed several major capital projects and got them into production. A new plant with an expanded capacity was started for an existing small industry, Quintech Division of La' Volt; a new plant named Drossbach started negotiations were opened with several serious prospects for new industries, at least several of which are expected to start taking effect this year, including some in the early months. Even within the first few weeks of 1983, negotiations were opened with still more contacts, several of which promise to be serious prospects, says Bemis.

There is no way of denying that Belleville has felt a share of the impact of the recession. But he also believes that, because of its solid and wide-ranging base of existing industry, it weathered the worst of the storm with far less effects than many other Canadian communities.

Also in recent months, fostered by Bemis and his committee, improved and expanded job-training programs to provide badly needed skills to local industry, have been approved for Loyalist College.

To improve the efficiency and image of his own office, it was part of a major renovation program in city hall.

Bemis likes to place his department in the perspective of its achievements over the past 10 years since he took over as industrial commissioner and a chartered industrial commission was started.

He feels Belleville citizens often fail to realize that it was those years of effort, successfully adding new industries here and there, which have formed the

solid base which helped the city come through the past two years. He cites a list which would include Canwirco, Durabla, Enviroglas, Mobil Chemical, Poli-Twine, Procter and Gamble, Thermoset Plastics, Westwood Pharmaceuticals, Wilson Sports, TRW Repa and many smaller firms and business start-ups. In terms of jobs, it represents a total of about 1,500 new jobs, not counting the many plant expansions at previously existing industries.

The scenario for 1983 looks even brighter so far. A new manufacturer of precision parts and custom metal working was expected to start up during the early part of the year; Belleville as a site has been confirmed by a German firm with final arrangements expected within the next few months; a packaging machinery manufacturer is still expected to follow through with a Belleville location following preliminary approvals late last year; the new Quintech plant off College Street East is to be in production this spring; at least two or three of the plants with whom the department is now negotiating are expected to have completed their arrangements and be into production or near to it before the end of the year.

Bemis also hopes to see more land acquisition for industrial purposes in the near future. One recommendation is for a high tech park area to supplement the existing major industrial park. Pushing ahead and assisting in any way possible to attract a major hotel and conference area development is another goal as is successful completion of improved community air services.

And while the cost of the department has more than doubled, to \$115,000 this year, from what it was 10 years ago, Bemis reminds citizens that the taxes from the new industries alone, not counting expansions, for the past 10 years, is greater than the total amount paid by all industries in the city in all of the years prior to 1970.

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