

Discoveries on the way to Accreditation....

Over the past few months your Chamber of Commerce board members have been meeting to develop a strategic plan that will bring it and the business community into the next 3 to 5 years of development. This is also a requirement for Accreditation.

During the meetings we have worked on our SWOT, that is, our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

One of the strengths identified is our Small Community connection. The tag line of our Chamber of Commerce is "Connecting Business and Community" and much time was spent in discussing its meaning.

Your Chamber board members and staff devote much time to keeping connected. Volunteer board members attend many functions throughout the year to keep

abreast of what's happening here in Halton Hills. You will see representation of the board at Town Council meetings, in celebrations, and attending events honouring citizens and businesses in our town.

An additional strength is the wonderful groups of volunteer business people who give freely of their time to attend committee meetings that develop membership and connect members business to business that help our business community grow.

Unfortunately, this is also one of our weaknesses. We need new members on our committees, people who want to be

better connected with both business and community and are willing to donate just a few hours of their time to take part in

the growth of our Chamber and therefore the growth of your business.

Events such as the Golf Day, Business and Leisure Show, Mini Trade Shows and many others are organized by volunteer

committees. It is through this type of participation that your business grows.

The Chamber connection helps you as a member to build relationships with the very people who will help you build your business. Through these committees people get to know you and what you do.

These people become your referral base and will recommend your services to others.

My plumber, electrician, administrative assistant, web designer, lawn care company, window cleaner, pharmacist, chiropractor, health advisor, and many others all came to me through the Chamber connection.

Many Chamber members have also become my clients and my friends.

Become a part of your Chamber now; be more than just a member, grow your business and your community through participation. By the way it's fun too.....

*Wendy Hue, PCC, CSP
President,*

Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce

**From
the
Boardroom**

**Wendy
Hue
President**



BUSINESSLINK

A Quarterly Official Publication of
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BusinessLink is the official publication of Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce. Unsolicited material is not eligible for payment.

Opinions expressed are those of the author, not necessarily those of the Chamber, its Board of Directors or its membership.

It is distributed free to all Chamber members and through The Independent & Free Press.

How Do You Build A Vibrant Community?

*By Marnie Hughes,
Communication Artistry*

There is an art and a science to building a community. The objective for town planners is to create an environment that emphasizes quality of life. There are target land usage percentages that, once reached, should create the ideal balance between residential and non-residential uses. But the flow of a community is more subtle than that. The people who work with these numbers are the ones who apply the art to the science. Enter the Economic Development office.

The Economic Development (ED) office is a communication link between business and government on the municipal level. The primary focus of the office is to work with existing businesses to field their concerns and suggestions and to work toward keeping them as valued members of the community. The size of the ED department depends upon the size of the municipality. A large urban centre could employ twenty individuals in the ED office while smaller municipalities may employ only one. The ED office also works with local BIAs and historic sites to highlight the specific qualities that make our community unique.

The ED officer is a listener with an ability to take action and effect change with a priority for business retention. "We want to keep the businesses that are already here and help them to grow," says Bill Anderson, Economic Development Officer for Halton Hills. As ED officer, Bill needs to have an overall understanding of the different types of businesses that are contained within the community (i.e. agriculture, retail, manufacturing) and how their needs will vary. He needs to be a master at relationship building.

The second priority of the ED officer is to attract new business. In order to do this it is necessary to "set the table" to welcome newcomers by preparing the required support services such as natural gas, electricity services, telecommunications, fibre optics, and emergency services. The area known as the 401 corridor is an example of where these support services have been successfully deployed and have helped attract new business to our community. Fernbrook Springs, a bottled spring water company, has recently opened their doors in the area. Currently under construction and slated for a September 2006 opening is the new head office of Hayward Gordon, a systems and controls engineering firm specializing in pumps, mixers and filtration. Also new to the area is Patlon Aircraft, an engineering sales organization with market specialties in aerospace, military/civil defense, electronics, industrial, repair and overhaul. Future development is planned by Mold Masters Ltd. and is anticipated from Higgins Development.

Who heads up this complex department in our Town? Meet Bill Anderson. This is a man who has worked in economic development for over twenty years and therefore brings a wealth of experience to his position in Halton Hills. His background includes urban planning, real estate development and economics.

What draws Bill to this type of work? "I'm naturally curious about how things work and how communities work and grow," he says. It is this innate curiosity that makes Bill Anderson particularly well suited for the Economic Development office. Although only five months in the position, Bill has already been able to cultivate a number of relationships with local businesses and



**Bill Anderson,
Economic Development Officer
of Halton Hills**

he continues to build on the foundations laid by his predecessor, Allan O'Neill. While Bill can draw on his past work with the provincial government and larger Toronto municipalities, it is the smaller community that has captured his heart. The distinctive urban/rural setting and less crowded environment are some key reasons for Bill's choice of Halton Hills. The smaller municipality also enables Bill to see the fruits of his labour more quickly. Changes can occur more readily and things can get done in a timely fashion unlike at the larger ED offices.

The biggest challenge for Bill Anderson at the moment is familiarizing himself with all the businesses within the community. He has made great progress in the few short months that he has been in the position but acknowledges that it is a long term task.

When you encounter Bill Anderson you will find that his extensive knowledge, easy manner and genuine affection for people are a testament to the merging of the art and science of building a community.