

Mayor deplores lack of tourism push... Support for Chamber of Commerce, BIA questioned

Midland Mayor Moreland Lynn, in a speech to the Midland Rotary Club this week, chided members of the community, particularly businessmen, for their lack of promotion of the town and their lack of support for the Chamber of Commerce and the downtown Business Improvement Association.

The mayor said that Midland's potential as a tourist centre is largely unexploited. A 10 per cent increase in tourism here would mean \$5 million, he said. He asked for more participation from townspeople in running the community.

"We're doing all that we can but it's a frustrating battle," he said. The people who talk to the town are the five per cent of the residents who don't want change, the mayor said.

At the end, Mayor Lynn said he thought his comments "might have ruffled a few feathers and hit a few nerves. I think I did that."

Mayor Lynn's prepared text follows:

Midland is doing well despite the federal government (or lack thereof), despite the general economic slowdown, and hopefully, despite possibly the worst news to hit Midland since the shipyards closed - and, of course, I refer to the announced closing of RCA at the end of the year.

That closing is not good news to those already laid off, and it is not good news for those who will be laid off. But maybe, just maybe, in the next five to 10 months there will be the time to develop new opportunities with a growth potential and a diversity of base which will enable this area to dilute the effects of such a major industry closing in the future.

BUGGIES

Industries will come and go. That is the price of progress; otherwise, we would all still be driving horses and buggies. If that were the case, however, we would probably have legislated that you carry a "poop-scoop" with you.

But some good things have happened in Midland this year: the redeveloped downtown; the now-approved CARP program, Phase I, which council must now, without delay, proceed with, I hope; the continued expansion at Leitz and the goodwill that brings to Midland and area; the potential Szeliga development on the north boundary of Midland which must be encouraged - and you're part of that process; the fact that our summer events are taking a better hold than ever - lead off by your Rotary barbeque, and followed by Shondecti and the annual Sidewalk Sale - and many other events; (forgive me for not taking the time to mention them all, but if I did, someone wouldn't be able to criticize me for omitting their favorite event!); Goman Boats was saved, and Express Boats lives; and a new industry is coming to town in the Midland

Mall at the intersection of William Street and Heritage Drive.

NOT BANNER YEAR

But 1982 is not a banner year, and its end could be black indeed, as could the early part of 1983.

But, now is the time, and past the time, really, to search out and develop new opportunities.

For several years, I and others have been appealing for a much greater and more concerted effort for industrial and tourism development. The result has been an annual struggle to keep the industrial and tourism promotion budgets of the town at even minimal levels... with minimal encouragement and support from leaders in the community.

Yet today people say, what are you doing to get new industry here?

A few vocal critics say "Why are we spending money on more parking in the downtown area?" - yet in the last few weeks people are saying "Why don't we have more parking in the downtown?"

I don't believe for a minute that we maximize profit, that we optimize our opportunities or that we contribute a great deal of effort to things until

our level of satisfaction or our comfort zone gets threatened. We respond only to heat!

RCA

I think we could have minimized the effects of RCA's closing if we had aggressively sought more industry to locate here in the past, or if we devoted just a slight bit of attention to developing the potential of the tourism industry in this area.

And, you know, we haven't given anything but token effort to the development and marketing of these, the most vital aspects of our economy.

How do you give that effort?

Are you a member of the Chamber?

Are you active and do you participate if you are a member?

Are you a member of the BIA?

Are you active and do you participate as a member?

How many of even the board of directors of the BIA give a decent effort? - three or four out of nine directors... maybe.

Do you let your council members or members of boards and commissions know your views... or do you just let the Ogilvie's of this world speak for you?

WORK HARD

Oh yes! We all work

hard and long, but do we have our priorities straight? We want to do well, but we must remember that our success is measured by the success of everyone in the community. We do have a responsibility to the family man who is unemployed and his UIC is running out, and he can't get a job. We need him, and we need him working and happy, because on his success depends our success. We do not stand alone - any of us.

Well, I think we can do something to ensure our future. But we have to do it collectively and together.

In one word the answer is marketing. We have to market this area, and ourselves - and the direction has to be industry - but I would suggest that the most likely and important industry we can develop is tourism.

And I'd like to devote the rest of my time to that topic: developing tourism.

The game is strategic management: a war game, business style.

Its objective - to seek out new market opportunities in tourism - a more competitive industry than it's ever been, and one with more opportunity than ever!

Let me review some facts and conclusions drawn by others:

"This area (Midland-Penetanguishene) is designated as the major destination centre for the northern part of the zone".

"The zone offers a great diversity of recreational facilities which support some of the best recreational opportunities in Ontario. (It) is close to its major market and the demand for diverse leisure time and vacation facilities is growing..."

EVALUATION

"The primary con-

clusion of the evaluation process was that the C.O.T. zone is neither homogeneous nor integrated... The industry generally presents an uncoordinated and fragmented product of varying levels of quality, oriented towards market conditions of the 1950s and 1960s."

"... the lack of sufficient leadership, the existing approach to the development and promotion of the tourism industry, the competition for quality tourism and recreation resources, all combined with an impressive array of jurisdictional controls at all levels of government, serve to retard the growth of the zone's tourism industry."

"This is the worst packaged area in group tours".

"There is no formalized method of getting together in this area except the HTA (Huronian Tourist Association) and it's too broad for our purposes here".

"There is a reticence in this area on spending and investing in tourism development, and anyone should know you have to spend money to make it".

The Collingwood-Midland-Orillia zone accounted for \$263 million in tourism direct expenditures in 1979. In Ontario \$6.6 billion was spent by tourists in 1979 and the total effect of tourism in the province was \$12.5 million.

In the Tobermory to French River area around Georgian Bay in 1976, 21.7 per cent of the jobs were tourism oriented. That area had the second highest

tourism visitation and fourth highest expenditure of the 10 economic regions in the province.

It is a proven fact that the economic benefits of tourism generally stay in the tourist area; whereas the economic benefits of a manufacturing industry often accrue in greater measure to the central manufacturing regions of the province. That is to say, tourism has more direct and indirect benefits for an area in terms of total dollars expended than does manufacturing - except in the central industrial area of the province.

For every 10 direct tourism jobs, nearly six indirect jobs are created, and for every direct tourism dollar spent, nearly one additional dollar is spent indirectly.

Is tourism important in our area? We all know it is! Do we realize just how important? Do we understand its potential? Do we know that it's the easiest industry to gear up because its greatest builder is marketing - and most of that is soft service.

Just how important is it? The Huronia Historical Parks alone - Sainte-Marie among the

Hurons, and the Naval and Military Establishments - will generate \$5 million of tourist expenditures, direct and indirect this year.

Those two sites are up in attendance this year too. As I'm speaking, the 75,000th person this year is probably walking about Sainte-Marie versus 65,000 to this point last year.

500,000 PEOPLE

About 500,000 people visit this immediate area as tourists annually.

And what are we doing to develop tourism and promote it?

I submit - precious little!

For example, do we have billboards saying "Welcome to Midland", or "Midland Welcomes Visitors", or "Midland Welcomes Industry"?

And do we have a Tourist Information Centre in Midland? How does a visitor find it?

What about those simple things to help visitors out - like - "next tee and an arrow" signs at Midland Golf and Country Club or Brooklea?"


We're like the MTC which signs highways, I'm convinced, for

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