

# Southland Plaza Tim Hortons slated to close

BY SARAH FISHER

Keith Crowder, the owner of Essex's three Tim Hortons stores is closing the Southland Plaza store later this month.

Since opening the newest Tim Hortons off Highway 3 on Maidstone Avenue in December, Crowder has concluded that Essex can't support three stores. He's closing the oldest store that he says is in need of renovations and doesn't have a drive-through. The Southland Plaza store was opened in 1994.

"I wanted to keep it open to see what we were going to do," Crowder said about

the Southland plaza store, which was considered for closure in December. "The decision was made to keep it open and I hoped everything would fall into place, but this market can't bear three stores that size and we are moving ahead with the original plan."

Crowder said the plaza store has done well, but is in need of costly renovations. It makes more sense, he said, to have the newer, larger stores that can also serve drive-through customers remain open.

"We don't offer 24-hour service and we don't have a drive-through. All those things factored into the

decision," Crowder said. "It's also 12 years old and facing renovations so it's sort of run its course."

Crowder said the plaza store has five full-time employees. He said many of the part-time staff are seasonal workers who weren't planning on working past the summer months. Plans have been made to move employees to other stores in the Essex area.

Crowder also owns the Tim Hortons kiosk at the Esso gas station on Manning Road and County Road 46 in Lakeshore, as well as stores in Leamington.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Tim Hortons closing, employees out of work

So, the Tim Hortons in the core of Essex is closing. Nothing new to our town, as we've had ample other businesses do the same due to poor sales, an abundance of competition or the steady stream of shoppers only willing to drop their dollars in Windsor.

But this is different because the only competitor is other Tim's. Shoppers are more than happy to stay in town for a coffee with gas at \$1.00/litre, and even on a bad day, customers are lined half way to the door for their caffeine fix. The advantage that site had to offer, and what people will miss the most, is the location. For anyone living or working in the downtown area, lunch was only a short

walk away. So why the closure? Could it be that the newest Tim Hortons built in the middle of a field and out of town, is not flourishing financially? I'm sure the owner is confident that the regular and loyal customers from his first Tim's will flock to the others, leaving him with less total overhead and expenses and greater income. It's a shame, but far too many profit-making businesses close because the owners see a greater profit by sending sometimes hundreds of people to the unemployment line.

Now to some, the Tim Hortons closure will be a very wise financial move, and I am very aware that the money I've dropped at his business over the years in no way interferes with his pay cheque, but I have to

wonder what is the cost paid by his 15 plus employees who will certainly all suffer either a lay off or greatly reduced hours. I can't speak for others, but I rarely visit the other two Tim's. The one's parking lot is a nightmare to get in our out of and the other is too far out of town for me. I've often wondered why Mr. Crowder didn't wait until that area was built up with other businesses and homes before he opened our town's third Timmie's.

I realize it's his decision, it's his business and it's his money. I guess I'm just sorry that once again the almighty dollar is crowned king and the employees' ability to earn a meagre income is now in jeopardy.

Vicki Bennett  
Essex

# New economic development commission announced

BY SARAH FISHER

Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis and Essex County Warden Mike Raymond announced the members of the new Windsor-Essex Economic Development

Commission July 28.

During a special meeting in Essex in March, Essex County Chief Administrative Officer Brian Gregg and Windsor CAO John Skorobohacz revealed that the county and city wanted

to develop a new commission. The new organization will replace the old commission, which disbanded in 2004 amidst criticism from both city and county members. The City of Windsor representatives criticized

the county for failing to contribute to the organization. County representatives criticized the commission for pursuing only Windsor's economic development interests.

"When we took over, the mayor of Windsor and myself, we renewed our commitment to an economic development commission and the old board disbanded," Raymond said in March. "The transitional board then took over."

A transitional board included Raymond and Francis and immediately began researching a commission.

The new commission includes nine non-elected members of the community as well as Skorobohacz and

Gregg. The commission will be funded by a charge of \$3.50 per resident per year in its first year, which will increase by 50 cents for five years until the total charge per resident is \$5.50.

The commission's new members are: Anthony Cervini, an entrepreneur and business owner in Lakeshore; Allan Conway, dean of the Odette School of Business at the University of Windsor; John Fancsy, an entrepreneur and winery owner in Harrow; Robert Feldman, the director of economic development at Union Gas; Lucy Ellen Kanary, the former vice-president of innovation and technology development at St. Clair College; Gina Leslie, the vice-president

and general counsel for Casino Windsor; Remo Mancini, a "corporate governance consultant"; Bob Renaud, a former senior executive at Daimler-Chrysler and "executive in residence" at the Odette School of Business; and Dr. Albert Schumacher, the former chair of the Ontario Medical Association.

One of the first tasks of the new board will be to hire an executive director.

"The new members will lead the revitalized commission into a new era, aggressively marketing our region worldwide, attracting new investors, and assisting business development of all kinds," a release on the new commission reads.



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