

# The ESSEX FREE PRESS BUSINESS

## Topcrop expands to Prairies

BY FREE PRESS STAFF

Essex Topcrop, one of Canada's innovators in animal care product manufacturing and a staple of the local business community for nearly 50 years, opened its new distribution centre in Winnipeg this week.

"It's a big step for us," said president Craig Brummell.

Brummell said the new distribution port will service about 200 stores in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, providing a variety of products including dog food, cat food and bird seed.

Brummell said the products will mostly be available at larger stores like Pet Smart.

Topcrop has partnered with a number of other busi-



nesses in the venture, including Royal Canin, Kaytee, Coastal Pet Products and Ranger Metal

Products, Pet Safe, Pestell Pet Products, Ethical and Woodstream.

Currently, there are three

other Topcrop locations; two in Essex and another in Colbourne, Ont., east of Toronto.



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### Tax Tips:

## Hire family and save taxes

If you have your own business, you can reduce your taxes by hiring family members.

Says Chartered Accountant Bruce Ball, Tax Partner, BDO Dunwoody LLP in Toronto, "The salary must be reasonable given the services performed. A good rule of thumb is to pay them what you would have paid a third party for the same services. Keep a record of the time spent and the services actually performed."

"If you plan on paying salaries to your spouse or children, make sure withholdings for income tax, Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance (EI) if it is required, and any applicable provincial payroll taxes are remitted as required."

"If your spouse is a director of your corpora-

tion, consider paying them a director's fee for services performed. These services usually include attending directors' meetings, directing the management and affairs of the business, approving financial statements, declaring dividends, approving changes to share capital and electing officers of the company," advises Ball.

"A word of caution: your spouse will also be jointly liable with the other directors for the fulfillment of certain regulatory requirements, such as salary withholdings and GST collections. In addition, a director's fee is subject to income tax and CPP."

For further information about taxes, contact a Chartered Accountant.

*Brought to you by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario.*

## Development commission looks at the county

BY BILL GAY

The Windsor-Essex County Development Commission introduced their new Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Fischer, to local politicians and business people last Saturday at a community breakfast held at Lakeside Produce in Leamington.

Board chairman Remo Mancini gave the assembled group a ringing endorsement of Fischer and the painstaking process that went into his hiring. Fischer's arrival, he said, foreshadows a new, aggressive approach to economic development in the entire area, city and county.

For his part, the new CEO emphasized the importance of business retention and expansion. He gave everyone something to consider with his



A community breakfast meeting held by the Windsor-Essex County Development Commission attracted over 50 people to Lakeside Produce in Leamington Saturday. Pictured from left are Leamington Councillor Hilda MacDonald, Anthony Cervini of Lakeside Produce, commission board member Lucy Kanary and commission chairman Remo Mancini. Following the reception and breakfast, the board held a daylong retreat with their new CEO, Matthew Fischer.

phrase "economic gardening" where half of all new jobs will come from only 3 per cent of the companies.

Kristen Callow of the Ontario Vegetable Growers

Association followed with a fact-filled presentation on the growth of the local greenhouse industry, which includes 1,400 acres in Essex County and

Chatham-Kent.

In Essex County, tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers make up 90 per cent of the crop and flowers 10 per cent. Greenhouses generate about \$3.9 billion in economic activity. Ontario's greenhouse agriculture represents over half of Canada's total and is the largest greenhouse sector in North America. Leamington alone has the largest area "under glass" in North America.

In the summer, the greenhouse operators use natural gas to create carbon dioxide to spur plant growth. Electricity is created as a by-product, which the industry hopes to sell into the power grid to help alleviate warm weather shortages. Kallow says she expects to hear from the energy ministry next month.

## Tax deductions for self-employed

"If you are self-employed, make sure you know about all of the available tax benefits," says Chartered Accountant Gary Kopstick, Senior Tax Partner, Soberman LLP in Toronto.

"For example, if you operate out of two offices, including one in the home, the costs related to the home office may not be deductible. In addition, only 50 per cent of meals and entertainment expenses

you incur for the business are deductible.

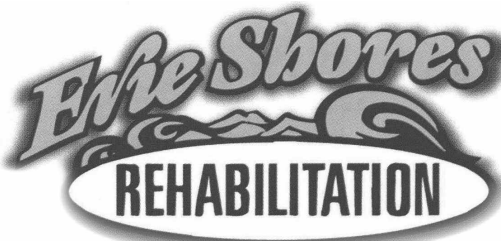
"You may also deduct a portion of Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions that represent the employer's share to a maximum of \$1,910.70 for 2006."

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