

Listowel BIA launches Win This Space 2020

Applications now open for aspiring local entrepreneurs

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LISTOWEL – Local entrepreneurs will once again have the opportunity to showcase their unique business ideas and potentially score some prime commercial real estate in Listowel with the official launch of Win This Space 2020 last week.

A Listowel Business Improvement Area (BIA) initiative, this will be the second running of Win This Space following the success of the inaugural competition in 2018, which saw McIntosh Farms – the Butcher Shop situated on Argyle Avenue North take the top prize out of 15 competitors. The final applicant standing not only receives in-kind donations and financial support towards commercial space in Listowel, but also gets the opportunity to participate in workshops throughout the competition geared towards business plan creation, budgeting, human resources and marketing, while sharpening presentation skills for the creation of their new business, or

expansion of an existing business.

“Based on our previous success of the program in 2018, the Listowel BIA believes that Win This Space will directly result in business growth and development, new job creation, fill vacant commercial spaces in the community, and provide valuable exposure for Listowel and the Municipality of North Perth,” said Listowel BIA coordinator Lisa Schaefer during the official launch of the 2020 edition on March 4.

“We are thrilled again to be collaborating with the Listowel BIA to launch this exciting initiative,” added Marty Rops, regional manager for the Libro Credit Union, which sponsors the Win This Space initiative through a Libro Prosperity Fund Grant for \$7,700.

“The first time around it created a real buzz in the community, and we’re really looking forward to seeing what it does the second time around. It’s going to be exciting to see what each of the participants bring to the table, and to help them share and grow their ideas into successful enterprises that are made right here in Listowel.”

With applications open as of last Wednesday, Win This Space 2020 has spots available for 25 applicants. Workshop training sessions will commence on



Dan McNee Photo

ROUND TWO – The Listowel BIA has launched the second instalment of Win This Space, making the announcement on March 4 as well as officially opening the application process. The final applicant standing not only receives in-kind donations and financial support towards commercial space in Listowel, but also gets the opportunity to participate in workshops throughout the competition geared towards business plan creation, budgeting, human resources and marketing. Pictured at the launch, from left: Perth County Warden Jim Aitcheson, Listowel BIA chair Sean Eaton and BIA coordinator Lisa Schaefer, and Libro Credit Union regional manager Marty Rops.

April 22.

Five finalists will be selected to move on to the finale scheduled for June 10.

“The municipality is happy to support an initiative that encourages new business to develop in our community, and assist local entrepreneurs in achieving their goals,” said Coun. Matt Duncan on behalf of North Perth council.

“We’re excited to see these businesses and their unique ideas that come about

through this process.”

“The focus of this program is on the education component,” said Schaefer. “We like to think that regard-

less of who wins, everyone comes out a winner as they are provided with the tools and new skills needed to open a new business.”

To apply for Win This Space 2020 or for more information on the Listowel BIA, visit discoverlistowel.com.

Caregiver Connection & Information Event



An invitation to caregivers and healthcare providers to drop in and learn more about caregiving resources available in Huron Perth.

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Location: Festival Inn, 1144 Ontario street, Stratford.

Time: 2:00-6:00pm

- Connect with caregivers and healthcare providers in Huron Perth
- Learn about helpful support services and programs in the area
- Over 30 displays and guest speakers throughout the day

This is the third annual event presented by Connecting the Dots for Caregivers and the Alzheimer’s Society of Perth County.

For more Information, contact: trina.cooper@hpha.ca

Alzheimer Society
PERTH COUNTY

CHANGING CARE
CONNECTING THE DOTS FOR CAREGIVERS

Location of local dog park remains bone of contention

Finding place for dogs to frolic in North Perth easier said than done

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NORTH PERTH – North Perth council did not embrace a proposal to put a dog park near the Steven Kerr Memorial Complex as recommended at its meeting on March 2.

There has been talk of putting a dog park in North Perth since it was suggested for the 2013 Parks and Recreation Capital Projects Budget, but was removed at the request of council.

In 2017, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan indicated that ‘dedicated off-leash areas provide opportunities for dogs to exercise and socialize in a controlled area. Dog parks should not only be viewed as places for dogs but also areas of social interaction for dog owners who share a common interest.’

In May 2018, the municipality received a persuasive letter from a local student encouraging the building of a dog park. Staff were then asked by council to bring back information and in July 2018 the North Perth Dog Park Report was received by council.

In October 2019, a delegation led by Siobhan Jackowski and Nancy Conley Keeso, co-directors of ‘Wag ‘N’ Tails Dog Park Inc.’, a not-for-profit group dedicated to fundraising for a dog park in Listowel, requested council donate one acre of land near the Steve Kerr Memorial Complex for the establishment of a dog park.

On Nov. 18 council requested a report to identify municipal lands that may be available and financial implications to the municipality.

A report by Amy Gangl, interim manager of recreation, was presented to council on March 2 recommending a 3.29-acre area north of the Spinrite soc-

cer fields for the dog park.

“The area we are proposing is larger than one acre to accommodate a small dog area and a large dog area,” said Gangl. “Also, to minimize crowding opportunities which could increase the stress and tension in dogs. In research we’ve discovered the play area should allow 75 to 100 feet per dog. Having some good running space helps with their behaviours.”

While researching dog parks, Gangl said they found a healthy park is the product of a healthy dog park culture, part of which is created by choosing a location which is respectful of surrounding neighbourhoods.

Coun. Julie Behrns said she was concerned with the location because the land might be prime for future development.

“I do not believe putting dogs near a soccer park, near a recreation complex or near an elementary school is in the best interest of anyone,” she said.

Other locations such as the former landfill and a portion of the land at the agricultural fairgrounds were suggested, but Gangl said they had already been considered and dismissed. The former landfill site would require an environmental survey which would be cost prohibitive; Gangl said the fairgrounds “wasn’t a welcoming location.”

In 2013 and 2014 extensive research into locations was completed. Three options were brought before council and none of those were deemed viable.

Mayor Todd Kasenberg asked if the Westfield Elementary School had been contacted for comment.

“Yes, in my report it is highlighted that we contacted the principal,” said Gangl. “They had no concerns as long as it was fenced. Their biggest concern had to do with the bus route and people parking in the bus route.”

The estimated cost of construction and materials, such as chain-link fencing with gates, signage and installation, buffer plantings, solar lighting and dog waste containers is \$100,000 and this will be paid for through fundraising efforts by Wag ‘N’ Tails Dog Park Inc.

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FEATURE

Growing vegetables... in the Canadian Arctic

Jim Bender speaks to Westfield students about involvement with Naurvik project in Nunavut

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The Canadian Arctic is not known as an ideal place to grow fresh vegetables. However, North Perth's Jim Bender is part of a group that is attempting to change that. Bender spent a month last fall in the Nunavut community of Gjoa Haven working with the Arctic Research Foundation on the Naurvik project. Bender got involved in the project through his employer, Ideal Supply. Bender is the automation group manager at Ideal Supply, leading a team working on a lot of "cool things" with robots, and green/renewable energy. Bender's boss, Tim MacDonald, is co-founder of the Arctic Research Foundation (ARF) along with Jim Balsillie (former co-CEO of Research in Motion). The ARF had the Naurvik project – a cool project consisting of green energy in the Canadian Arctic – and needed someone to help build it. The project excited Bender, and soon he and fellow Listowel native Mark Blackmore, who works at Ideal Supply's Barrie location, set off on a one-month

adventure to the remote northern community. Bender recalled the trip recently to a group of students from North Perth Westfield Elementary School. One of the major obstacles of the project, Bender explained, was getting the necessary equipment and materials to the remote northern community. Gjoa Haven, like the majority of Nunavut communities, is only accessible by air or sea. While planes can make it in year-round, boats have a short window of six to eight weeks to get into the community. Gjoa Haven has a population of 1,324 according to the 2016 census. The community is best known as the resting place of the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror; both ships sank there during Sir John Franklin's lost expedition in 1848. Only in the past few years have the two ships been located. While there is some tourism involved with these ships, overall there are not many jobs in Gjoa Haven. "That was part of our project there – to create some jobs for the local people," said Bender. The other big part of the project was to bring some food sustainability to the community.

Naurvik – an Inuktitut word that means 'The Growing Place' – consists of a green energy power station that powers two grow pods – two metal shipping containers that have been converted to growing stations – which produce fresh vegetables 250 kilometres inside the Arctic Circle. The stations are powered by two six-kilowatt wind turbines, a 24-kilowatt solar array and is backed up by a 20-kilowatt diesel generator. In addition to the support from ARF, Agriculture Canada and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) has provided funding for the project. Bender said the CSA is curious how the project evolves, as this type of technology could be used in space in the future. Currently, the local Inuit get their food by hunting caribou, musk ox, fox or by fishing, or by buying groceries at the store. Buying fresh produce at the store can be very cost-prohibitive in a community with few jobs. Bender told the students that a bag of produce that costs \$60 in Ontario would cost \$240 in Gjoa Haven. The price difference is mainly due to transportation costs. "They're flown in by plane, not always very fresh, and extremely expensive," he said. "Unfortunately, this leads to some very poor dietary choices. People tend to exist on processed and frozen foods, and don't have terrific access to fresh and nutritious foods." Naurvik hopes to change that. "The goal is, with Agriculture Canada and the Canadian Space Agency, is to do these grow stations throughout (the Arctic's) 25 communities," said Bender. "It's a very ambitious goal, but it would create a lot of jobs and opportunities... the ultimate goal is to make them sustainable where they can produce and sell enough product that the revenue side would be neutral or positive." Currently, the grow pods produce lettuce, tomatoes and carrots. The two grow pods do



Jim Bender Photos

THE GROWING PLACE – North Perth's Jim Bender was part of a team that travelled to the Arctic community of Gjoa Haven, Nunavut last fall to build the Naurvik project. Naurvik (The Growing Place) is a sustainable food project that will allow the Inuit to grow fresh produce in the Arctic Circle. Pictured: (Above) Gjoa Haven crew – the local Inuit who work at Naurvik; (Below left) the Naurvik site overlooking Gjoa Haven in October 2019.

not produce enough product to feed the entire community year-round, and there are plans to expand in the future. Bender said the vision of growing produce is not limited to traditional southern vegetables; the group is looking at growing local seasonal berries like cloudberries, crowberries and natural teas. These local berries have a short growing season – four to six weeks a year – and the ability to lengthen the growing season would benefit the community. "Maybe (these products) could go into a health food store or grocery chain, and some of the local herbal medicines could be marketed," he said. "That would create more jobs and a larger revenue (for the project)." Now the project is up and running, and a team of local Inuit operate and manage the facility. Bender was asked by one of the students about the relations between southerners and the local Inuit. He responded by saying that at the beginning of his trip, it was tense. "The Inuk people there are very

timid about white people, as they refer to us, and it certainly takes some time to gain trust," he said. "For the first few days, maybe even a week, very few people would talk to us and were a little suspicious about what we were doing there. As we got to know people and they became comfortable, they are extremely friendly and wanted to know about the project, about us and the south." Although he enjoyed his time in Gjoa Haven, Bender said it was tough to be away from his family for that length of time. He also came home with a better understanding of the Inuit people and the challenges they face. "I got to understand some of the hardships they go through, but also some of the change they are embracing and moving forward," he said. Bender says that the challenge he feels now is how we, as people, can support these northern communities. "They're so remote and their access to resources is so challenging that we have to find ways to help support them."



Council awards Monkton, St. Mary's playground projects

Snell reports daycare programs running well

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The Council of the Municipality of North Perth awarded the Monkton and St. Mary's Child Care Playground projects to Earthscape Play Inc. on July 6. Each playground will have a total cost of up to \$100,000 including HST. Plans are moving ahead for an operational date of Sept. 8 for the childcare centres. Seven companies replied to the Request for Proposal. North Perth childcare staff and North Perth clerk Pat Berfelz reviewed the submissions based on play value for all age groups, ability to design and provide

play equipment components in accordance with the Child Care Emergent Curriculum and ability to meet all standards of CSA Safety and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. "Based on what was presented to us, we would like to proceed with the services of Earthscape Play Inc. to provide us with playgrounds for both the Monkton site and the St. Mary's site," said Berfelz. Council agreed with the staff recommendation. CAO Kriss Snell reported things are running well with the daycare programs which have been allowed to reopen. "We are operating at about 50 per cent capacity, offering both school age and day-

care programs," he said. "The recreation department is working hard creating two-hour summer camp-type programs in the park to allow the youth in our community to take part in activities." Snell said municipal staff are continuing to monitor provincial announcements in anticipation of moving into stage three of

reopening. He expects that could happen as early as the end of July. He has also been involved in conversations with Dr. Mariam Klassen, Medical Officer of Health for Huron-Perth. Snell anticipates there will be instructions from Klassen regarding wearing masks available by the July 13 council meeting.



Dan McNee Photo

UNDER CONTROL – The North Perth Fire Department and other local emergency responders quickly had a kitchen grease fire under control on the afternoon of June 29 at a residential address on Davidson Avenue North in Listowel.

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Dan McNee Photos
PADDY PUB NIGHT – Paddyfest Pub Night on March 7 helped to get the 2020 edition of North Perth's Irish festival underway for another year, with local act The Hearsay taking the stage at the Listowel Kin Station. (Left) Hearsay front man Chad Newman; (Below) the band brings the crowd to its feet.



A Few Good Men – plus one good woman – is a dramatic start for Drayton Entertainment season

MARLENE OTTENS
Special to the Banner

ST. JACOBS – The first show of the season at Drayton Entertainment's St. Jacobs Country Playhouse is a familiar title to many, given that it was a 1992 Hollywood blockbuster movie starring Tom Cruise, Demi Moore, and Jack Nicholson. *A Few Good Men*, written by Aaron Sorkin, is a courtroom drama that began as a successful Broadway play before becoming an award-winning film.

It tells the tale of an earnest but not particularly successful young lawyer, Daniel Kaffee, who is defending two young Marines accused of killing another Marine. It looks like a hazing gone wrong until Kaffee is joined by Joanne Galloway, a by-the-book naval investigator who leaves no stone unturned in her tenacious desire for the truth.

There are coverups, codes of honour, arrogant higher-ups, and military rigidity to wade through, but Kaffee and Galloway are up to the task.

Tyrone Savage plays Daniel Kaffee with the perfect mix of reticence and determination. It is his history of settling for plea bargains that makes him suspect



Contributed Photo

CAN YOU HANDLE THE TRUTH? – *A Few Good Men* is on stage at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, with various afternoon and evening shows, until March 22.

that he was selected for the defence to abet a coverup. His respect for Lieutenant Commander Nathan Jessep lessens as he discovers what is happening. Jessep is played with crusty brilliance by Benedict Campbell, with the salty language to match.

The almost all-male cast is large, and all the supporting actors do a great job. Notable is the inclusion of George Alevizos, who uses a wheelchair. His small role as a court reporter seems so natural

it is surprising that he is one of the first differently-abled actors to be included in a major theatre company.

However, even though the show is *A Few Good Men*, there is one very good woman in the cast –

Shannon Currie as Galloway. The character holds her own in this sometimes sexist environment and era, and it could be said that those few good men would be nothing without that token woman, not to mention the few bad men.

Because this show was a popular movie, it may be tempting to see the movie again before attending the play. I never saw the movie version at all, so I had no idea how it would turn out and had thought about watching the film to familiarize myself with the plot.

However, just going anecdotally by the experience of friends, I recommend leaving the movie for after. A stage play is an intimate setting, but can't always live up to the scope and budget of a Hollywood blockbuster.

We thought *A Few Good Men* was a fantastic story told well by amazing actors.

Directed by the talented Marti Maraden, *A Few Good Men* is on stage at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, with various afternoon and evening shows, until March 22.

For tickets, call the box office toll-free at 1-855-Drayton (372-9866) or go to draytonentertainment.com.

Regional unemployment rate increases for month of February

SPECIAL TO THE BANNER

PERTH COUNTY – In February, the unemployment rate for the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region increased by 0.8 percentage points to 4.9 per cent. At the same time, the provincial unemployment rate increased slightly, by 0.1 percentage points, to 5.1 per cent.

Overall employment in the region decreased by 200 with full-time gains

(+1,600) offset by part-time losses (-1,800).

The number of goods-producing sector employees increased by 800 in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Economic Region. The greatest gains were in construction (+2,200) and manufacturing (+900), which were offset by losses in agriculture (-1,200) and utilities (-1,000).

Employment in the services-producing sector decreased by 1,000. The greatest

losses were in accommodation and food services (-1,400) and wholesale and retail trade (-1,200). These losses were partly offset by gains in professional, scientific and technical services (+800), transportation and warehousing (+500) and educational services (+500).

"Although the local unemployment rate continues to rise in 2020, this is similar to what we observed last year at this time and does not point to any shifts in our an-

nual unemployment rate," said Gemma Mendez-Smith, executive director of the Four County Labour Market Planning Board.

Note: Statistics Canada's monthly Labour Force Survey provides estimates of employment and unemployment, based on a sampling of households in communities. Stratford-Bruce Peninsula figures represent a three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.