

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Feature Business— Norlund Oil</i>	2
<i>RRFDC Celebrates 25 years</i>	2
<i>RRFDC Receives an Award</i>	2
<i>Feature Business— Energy Fitness Centre</i>	3
<i>2007 Customer Service Challenge</i>	3
<i>Rural Agricultural Coordinator con't</i>	4

FI:RE 2007

Fueling Innovation:
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RURAL AGRICULTURAL COORDINATOR HIRED

The Board of Directors of Rainy River Future Development Corporation (RRFDC) is pleased to announce the hiring of Jeannette Cawston as the new rural and agricultural coordinator.

Born and raised on a district farm, Ms. Cawston is familiar with the challenges faced by rural communities. She comes to the RRFDC bringing years of experience in working with Rainy River District organizations and municipalities. She is particularly skilled in the coordination and implementation of community based events, as was seen by her role as coordinator for the successful staging of the World Health Conference in 2002.

This rural/agricultural project, funded by Industry Canada/FedNor, will involve the creation of partnerships to forward such initiatives as the creation of a committee to evaluate agricultural immigration to the area, the staging of local food events with area producers and businesses, providing project support to area municipalities and working with area producers to increase district exposure at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto.

It is the hope of the RRFDC that the completion of this two year project will see an increase

focus in the production and sale of local foods, and increased economic activity among the areas municipalities.

After 3 months on the job, we asked Jeannette how things are going and what has been happening so far.



“At the onset of my work I have been contacting as many of the Rural Agriculture leaders and Municipalities to familiarize myself on projects currently underway and also to garner thoughts and ideas on how to proceed on potential future projects.

One of the rural projects that I will be working on will be the re-vitalization of the Mom’s Way Highway project. This existing initiative has potential for the tourism in many of our communities as well as opening up opportunities for Agri-tourism. I also began working on the possibility of immigration to our district by travelling with council members of the communities of Rainy River to Morden, Manitoba. We spent time with the Economic Development Officer and CEO of

that community and attended an information session with the Mayor of Winkler, Manitoba. Both of these communities are leaders when it comes to an immigration program and how it impacts both the rural and agriculture communities there. They rely heavily on their Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) to aid in bringing foreign workers over from Europe to work in their factories and on farm operations. Currently, Ontario and Quebec are the only provinces that do not have this program available. Ontario began a pilot PNP program earlier this spring and it is hoped that it will be fully implemented for 2008.

The Rural Agriculture Initiative has established a working group committee made up of representatives from Municipal, First Nations, Agriculture Associations within the district, along with an immigration committee and works with the current Clover Valley Farmers’ Market and their local food vendors. A new direction of the working group is the promotion of the ‘Building an Appetite for Local Foods’ campaign which will see local Shaw TV segments about local producers and how to access them together with two local foods event, one being a vendor at the Fort Frances Canadian Bass Championship,

Continued on page 4

*Congratulations to
Norlund Oil
On being one of
RRFDC's
2007
Customer Service
Champions*

NORLUND OIL (2004) LTD.

For more than half a century, Norlund Oil in Emo, Ontario has been a source of bulk and retail fuel for customers across the district. Ownership has changed since the Elmer Norlund family sold the business in the early 1990's, but Mr. Paul Koomans, the current owner, understands well the tradition of good service associated with the enterprise. Moreover, now as an authorized distributor for Petro-Canada, "Canada's Gas Station", he has to adhere to additional standards of product quality and customer service.

Mr. Koomans said: "We aim to give top shelf service with a smile." Also: "The phrases, "prompt and friendly" and "we will go the extra mile to help you" are not just slogans for us."

The nature of Paul's business is to provide a range of products while always paying attention to the small, yet crucial, factors of customer service. He employs four full-time staff and, during busy periods, a handful of summer students. All receive the same level of orientation and training.

At his prominently location on Hwy. 11/71 on the western edge of Emo, Paul is able to operate as a "full-service" source of fuel and oil, and as a car and light

truck tire shop. "People stop to buy gas, snacks, or just to ask directions," he said. "We always try to point them in the right direction."

He also has the bulk fuel delivery service – serving mostly the agricultural, logging and home heating sectors – and 24 hour Key-lock fuel pumps. The latter are mostly used by logging truck operators. Paul will deliver fuel to any road accessible point in the district south of Sioux Narrows.



Paul grew up in Ottawa and met his wife while going to university. She hales from Emo. In 1998 they decided to settle permanently in her home town. "This is the best place in Canada to raise a family," he said.

RRFDC Celebrates 25 years

The 25th Annual General Meeting was held in Rainy River where about 40 people from across the district attended. The evening consisted of an update from Geoff Gillon on activities the RRFDC has been involved in over the past year, the various services offered and an election to the Board of Directors that welcomed two new members; Tony Marinaro and Gord Armstrong. It was in February that the RRFDC reached a quarter century of serving the Rainy River District and its' residents. We look forward to another 25 years of dedicated service!

RRFDC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007-2008

Russ Fortier, *Chair*
Ken McKinnon, *Vice*
George Emes, *Secretary*
Martin Dufresne
Eugene McPherson
Kim Williamson
Tony Marinaro
Gord Armstrong

RRFDC RECEIVES AN AWARD

The Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC) awarded the Rainy River Future Development Corporation the Outstanding Achievement Award Trophy and a cheque for \$250. The award was presented to Russ Fortier, RRFDC Chairman back in June in St. Thomas, ON. The RRFDC was recognized in part for being a community leader and bringing high speed internet to 90% of the district through a \$4.8M broadband project, which serves 8 First Nations and 6 Municipalities. As noted it was a very significant accomplishment in a rural district with a small and sparse population.

ENERGY FITNESS CENTRE

Energy Fitness Centre is more than a room filled with sophisticated exercise machines. This is a fitness experience with a panoply of additional offerings and services. Welcome to the new world of gym exercise...and to the potentially new, or improved, body shape for the visitor.

different exercise machines are present, plus stacked weights and dumbbells. The Women's only machines are designed to accommodate gender differences. The Cardio machines are audio equipped. Well appointed saunas, tanning beds, and shower/change facilities

Laverne, proprietors of Heikki Lampi Sand and Gravel. Her interest in exercise and fitness dates to when she participated in aerobics classes at the Memorial Arena Gymnasium. She also took dance and figure skating.



Ms. Jackie Lampi-Hughes, owner/operator, emphasizes one thing: "The point is for people to enjoy it." Also: "We offer a supportive environment where users can develop a friendly relationship with our staff. Moreover: "We always say good morning and try to use the customer's name."

are present. Both short and long distance running clubs are based at the Centre and seasonal programming is popular.

After finishing high school, Jacki spent 11 years away from town, pursuing further education in London, ON and Tennessee, and traveling and working in Australia and Dryden, ON. She completed the Fitness and Health Program at Fanshawe College and is a Registered Massage Therapist.

Her business occupies a large two story building with an attached balcony. Group or individual Fitness Classes, Cardio, and Strength Workouts are available. Many

Jackie said she gets her entrepreneurial spirit from her parents, Heikki and

The building, itself, stands as a metaphor for rejuvenation and maintenance: Energy Fitness Centre was re-constructed on the foundation of a long-time dry cleaning service, but in its new form, is now more than twice the size.

2007 CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPIONS

In it's fourth inaugural year, the RRFDC congratulates this year's top 10 winners of the 2007 Customer Service Challenge:

- Energy Fitness Centre
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Fort Frances General Supply
- New Life Clinic
- Norlund Oil (2004) Ltd.
- Northridge Funeral Home
- Northwoods Gallery & Gifts
- Shoppers Home Health Care
- Super 8 Motel
- Warehouse One

Along side our top 10 we would also like to congratulate our 10 honourable mentions:

- Curves for Women
- Drs. Lidkea, Elliott & Lidkea
- Global Gaming
- Green's Countrywide Furniture
- Kreger Sales & Service
- McTaggart's
- NCDS Career Works
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Skills & Employment Source
- The Corner Closet

Please visit www.rrfdc.on.ca and read the stories of our 2007 Champions.

*Congratulations to
Energy Fitness
Centre
On being one of
RRFDC's
2007
Customer Service
Champions*

*WATCH FOR
OUR UPCOMING
SEMINARS ON:
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RURAL AGRICULTURAL COORDINATOR CON'T

and the promotion of 'Why Buy Local' at the Agriculture Society Emo Fall Fair and the planning of an October Harvest Dinner. Planning has also been in development for local operators to either attend or send products to the Royal Winter Fair in November of 2007.

A few other new directions the initiative has moved into is the urgent need for a large animal vet in the district. Working in partnership with the Rainy River District Vet Services Committee, a vet recruitment brochure has been developed along with a recruitment package which highlights Agricultural

opportunities, and includes information on our wonderful diverse communities in the Rainy River District. In addition to linking the vet brochure to the RRFDC website and sites such as the four Veterinary Colleges in Canada, advertisements have been done in the Vet Medical Association magazine.

With the eventual onset of the Rainy River District Regional Abattoir, a need was identified to begin seeking funding to establish a district "Branding" program. Two letters of intent have been submitted to the Ontario Cattlemen's Association and future plans for branding

proposals are in development. In following along with the strategic plan that has been done in the past with the Rainy River Federation of Agriculture, some discussion has taking place with the feasibility of a district feedlot with the regional Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) representative and a few local cattle producers. The plan is to reference other feedlot programs beginning with a feedlot tour held in Manitoba in early September 2007."

"Competition is a healthy entity on its own, but pair it with a cooperative spirit and the prosperity is endless".