

The Next Big Thing

Local farmer lands an opportunity for the Ottawa Valley

By: Jennifer Layman
Jenn@ovbusiness.com

In the 1960's, soybeans were a minor crop in Ontario agriculture. It was grown mostly for silage and forage, simply because no one really knew what to do with it or how to harvest it. Today, soybeans are the third largest crop in Ontario. It is a high earning crop, and one of Ontario's most significant agricultural exports. In the beginning, there were six seed varieties and farmers produced about 17 bushels per acre. Today, there are over 200 varieties and production is more than 40 bushels per acre.

So here we are, some 50 years later, and a young farmer out of Micksburg seems to think he has stumbled upon the next soybean opportunity, except better.

"With soy no one really knew it was going to end up in every product out there," says Reuben Stone, a fourth

generation farmer in Micksburg. "With hemp we already know it can, and has in the past, been in just about every product in history.

didn't matter.

In 1998, industrial hemp was re-legalized. Since then, it has been fighting to get its reputation back, and Reuben

**Agriculture and Agri Food Canada calls it
"the world's premier renewable resource."**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Hemp just needs to be put back where it belongs."

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada calls hemp "the world's premier renewable resource," having been used in food and fibre for 10,000 years. Yet in 1938, Canada banned the cultivation of industrial hemp because hemp and marijuana belonged to the same species: Cannabis Sativa. Unlike marijuana, hemp only contains 0.3% of the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Marijuana contains 5-15% THC. At the time, that

Stone is one of hemp's biggest advocates. Stone Farms is responsible for 2% of Ontario's hemp industry, and 1% of the world market. They had 106 acres of hemp in cultivation in 2009. That doubled to 245 acres in 2010 and is planning 1,400 acres for 2011! (That's not a mis-print.)

After years of hard work and a little luck, Stone's hemp seed variety has attracted the attention of Manitoba Harvest, the largest farmer-owned vertically integrated hemp food company in the world.

"Manitoba Harvest broke the \$10M gross sales level in 2010," says Stone, "and they believe they will stay on the 50% annual trend they have been riding for several years. They are headed for estimated \$15M in sales for 2011."

And that is only considering the grain side of hemp. Like corn and canola, there is a fibre side to the plant that can also be used.

Recently, Stone took his hemp show on the road with meetings in Admaston Bromley and Galetta, speaking to farmers and farm organizations about the benefits of growing hemp. He brought with him a key player at Manitoba Harvest, and a representative from the Ontario Hemp Alliance. His goal is to give other farmers the chance to get involved, and to bring a new industry to the Ottawa Valley.

Continued on Page 2.

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Ottawa Valley Business (OVB) is a monthly publication covering business news and events throughout Renfrew, Lanark and Pontiac counties, as well as within the surrounding areas. OVB is published by Forward Thinking.

WHO READS US:

OVB is delivered twice a month via email to more than 3,000 businesses, government and organizations.

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To receive OVB by email each month, contact us at: admin@ovbusiness.com. There is no charge to receive the publication.

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CONTENT & SUBMISSIONS:

News, article suggestions and letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. Content will be edited to fit the space available. We welcome press releases and news from our local business community to be published free of charge. There is also no charge for posting business events on the events calendar.

CONTACT US:

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Something Old Is New Again

Hemp makes a return in Canadian agriculture

“The opportunity is to add another crop to the rotation for farmers,” says Stone. “Hemp might be a better suited crop agronomically to certain areas and situations in Renfrew County and Eastern Ontario. Hemp fits very well in rotation and logistically in the harvest season, so doesn't conflict too much with current practices in general. Hemp is not influenced by commodity markets and has shown to have far more predictable returns to growers who contract hemp as part of their cropping strategy. It's also an opportunity to be part of a new industry getting started.”

In considering returns, custom farm work rates, seed, harvest expenses and such would come in at about \$480 per acre, (about 75% of corn.) The return at average yields and current contract prices would be about \$170 per acre for hemp grain. Corn comes in at about \$140. But Stone notes that corn is now at near record prices, while hemp has been at the same price for five years.

So, what's the risk? If this is a sure thing, why are more

farmers not planting hemp? Stone says there are two key things that make people wary. First, it is out of the comfort

“Canada will happily continue to feed the Americans all the hemp they want.”

Reuben Stone

zone of most traditional farmers. Second, it can be a lot of work. Unlike corn, there is a significant time pressure to get the hemp off the field there is a big price to pay for delaying harvest.

Measure that against the fact that hemp grows fast and to heights of 16 feet. With roots reaching down as far as three feet, soil erosion is reduced and organic matter is built. It reduces the incidence of systematodes when planted in rotation with soybeans and has no chemical inputs. Not only is that easy on the budget, but it makes a perfect crop for the growing organic market.

Oh, and one more thing. Industrial hemp is illegal to grow in most of the United States, though it is perfectly legal to import.

“Canada will happily continue to feed the Americans all the hemp they want,” says Stone. “The American farmers, especially in the west just south of Canada's main hemp region, recognize the opportunity they are missing out on, and that their government is handing it over to international players like us Canadians. The American farmer wants in and eventually they will be in. When that day comes we'll have a 20 year jump on them.”

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada says that over 100 farmers in Canada are in the business of hemp. Most are located in central and western Canada, primarily in Manitoba. Could the Ottawa Valley agriculture be an Ontario leader in the production of hemp? Reuben Stone is betting his farm on it.

For more information, contact Reuben Stone at www.stonefarms.ca.

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There are some pretty neat things going on in Renfrew County and you can find out what they are every weekday from now until Expo 150 begins on June 9, 2011.

[facebook.com/expo150](https://www.facebook.com/expo150)

Think you have a fact that people might find interesting? Send it along to: celebrate@expo150.com

Ski Hill Celebrates 50th

This winter marks the 50th year for Mount Molson in Petawawa. To mark the event, the Petawawa Ski and Snowboard Club is hosting a weekend of celebrations that will attract alumni from across Canada, and beyond.

Established in 1960 with a refurbished chicken coop serving as the first chalet, the Club took off when founding members channeled their efforts into training young alpine racers who quickly

made a name for themselves throughout the Upper Ottawa Valley and Outaouais ski communities. In the late 1960s, the chicken coop was replaced by a small chalet. A major fundraising program in the mid-1980s saw an expansion of the chalet and installation of a Pomma lift.

For more information on the festivities, contact Keith Patterson: 613-687-5421 or patersfami@nrtco.net.



events calendar

February 14

LuSha Sportswear Business After Hours. Everyone welcome. 3:00pm to 7:00pm. Located at 1330 Pembroke Street West, Pembroke (across from Murphy Ford).

February 15

The Renfrew and Area Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting with speaker Max Keeping. Mate-a-way Activity Centre in Renfrew. Doors open at 7:00am. Breakfast at 7:30am. Topic: Building Caring Communities. \$20 for members. \$25 for non-members. Contact Tammy: 613-432-7015.

February 15

Breakfast with Arnprior Mayor David Reid, McNab-Braeside Mayor Mary Campbell and Arnprior & District Memorial Hospital CEO Eric Hanna. Arnprior Legion. Doors open at 7:00am. Breakfast at 7:30am. For Chamber members only. Greater Arnprior Chambe. Phone: 613-623-6817.

February 16

The Zoomer Group's next meeting will be February 16th at 8:30 am at the Pembroke & Area Airport, located at Len Hopkins Drive in Petawawa. All are welcome for more information please call the Chamber at 613-732-1492.

February 17

Funder's Forum. For businesses, municipalities, charities and non-profit organizations to learn about funding opportunities in Renfrew County. 8:30am to 4:00pm. Marguerite Centre, 700 Mackay Street in Pembroke. \$20 per person includes lunch and breaks. Pre-registration is required by

Thursday, February 3, 2011. Cash only payments may be received at the door. Call Kim at 613-735-8224 (phone), 613-735-2492 (fax) or email her at kfraser@countyofrenfrew.on.ca.

February 21

Chalk River Branch of the Canadian Nuclear Society annual President's Dinner meeting. Open to the public. 6:30pm. \$20 for members. \$30 for non-members. Contact Geoff Edwards. 613-584-8811 ext.43247.

February 24

North Grenville Chamber of Commerce AGM. 7-9:30am. Broadway's at County Road #43 in the Shopper's Drug Mart Mall. \$25 for members. Future members \$40. Register online or pay at the door.

March 2

Wise Move Realty Business After Hours. Everyone Welcome. 5-7pm. Celebrate their 15th anniversary. 3468E Petawawa Boulevard in Petawawa in the Bridgeway Mall next to Scotiabank.

March 23

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and the Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a workshop to help Ontario businesses comply with Ontario's new customer service standard. All organizations must be in compliance by January 1, 2012. Pembroke Legion. 11:45am-1:30pm. Cost TBD.

April 7

A lecture with Environment Canada's Senior Climatologist. David Phillips. Festival Hall in Pembroke. 7:00pm. Topic: What's up with the weather? Tickets on sale at the Festival Hall Box Office. Call 613-735-2613. 10am-4pm. Tickets \$10 or \$12 at the door. In support of Algonquin College.

If you have a business related event, Open House or other happening, send the details to: Admin@ovbusiness.com. There is no charge.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR GROUP

For entrepreneurs 35 years of age and younger, and those interested in business.

Our Next Seminar:

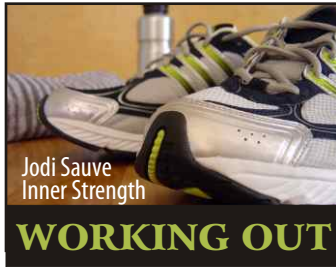
Tuesday, February 22 at 5:30pm
myFM Office
84 Isabella Street, Pembroke
Speaker: Emma Leavey
Pick-it Fence

Emma Leavey, of Pick It Fence, will be sharing her story, and some of what she has learned and faced as a young entrepreneur in our area. If you are a young entrepreneur, or thinking of becoming one, come out to this event. There will be an open discussion period following Emma's presentation. This seminar is free to attend.

The Young Entrepreneur Group is a new initiative of the Chamber of Commerce for young people who choose entrepreneurship as a career.



You can register by phone or email: Ph: 613-732-1492
Email: manager@upperottawavalleychamber.com



Jodi Sauve
Inner Strength

WORKING OUT

February is here and with that comes Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day and Family Day.

Bring yourself out of hibernation on February 2nd with Mr. Hog and plan for a better "YOU!" Think of a realistic personal goal you want to meet, and you will find it easier to work towards something that you actually want.

On February 14th, why not "love yourself" and start a fitness program for you. Whether you sign up at a local fitness facility, take up a winter sport or alter your eating habits, have a plan in place by the 14th! Create some heart shaped veggies in place of that heart shaped box of chocolates. Your body will love you for it!

On February 21st, make it a family affair and haul the whole family into the scene. A theme night for dinner is great neat idea and they'll hardly even notice the healthy choices. Whole grain pasta and garlic toast for "Italian night" or a stir fry for "green night" where all food items have to be in that colour category. Take advantage of the day off and head to the sliding hill (the old fashioned one where you still have to climb up the hill), or maybe the skating rink or ski trails. You'll find that there's not much arm twisting when there's fun involved!

Make February the month to make a difference in your life!

Do you have a fitness question for Jodi? Send it to her at: jodi@myinnerstrength.ca

Business News Around The Valley

OVWRC 2011 Board

The Ottawa Valley Waste Management Board for 2011 consists of five municipal members including Chair Steve Bennett and Vice Chair Tom Mohns, Bob Hackett, Lorenz Kelo and Bob Peltzer.

PDDC Announces Board

The new Board of Directors of the Pembroke Downtown Development Commission

(PDDC) includes: Shelley Burchart, Nora Johnson, Jane Loftus, Hal Ward and Rick Lewis. Erica Langille is the manager of the PDDC.

Summer Company Applications Open

Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) will deliver the Summer Company Program for its 11th year. Summer Company provides qualified

students aged 15-29, up to \$1500 to start their own business, and then up to another \$1500 upon completion of the Program. ERC had eight young entrepreneurs participate in 2010. For details, visit: www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com. The application deadline is May 9th, 2011 or when the program reaches capacity.

MV Wins Award

The Township of Madawaska Valley has earned an Ontario Economic Development Award in the Product Development Product Re-development Initiative Category for their Radcliffe Hills Ski Area Initiative. The ceremony honours winners for their efforts in promoting their communities for location and tourism opportunities.

Arnprior Doubles Business Start-Ups

The decision to continue the position of Economic Development Officer in Arnprior will be up for deliberations at the end of February. Until then, the Town of Arnprior will continue to pay the commitment for Erin Clarke who holds the position currently. With Clarke's assistance, the Town doubled the new business start-ups in the community.

Lloyd To Retire

The Township of Laurentian Valley will need to find a new treasurer/deputy clerk as Bruce Lloyd will be retiring at the end of 2011. The Township will retain the services of an Ottawa recruitment firm, for a projected price of \$30,000.

Public Works Director Resigns

Gagan Sandhu has resigned as the Public Works and Property Manager for the Township of McNab-Braeside. Sandhu hopes to move on to other employment that will fulfill his career expectations.

Continued on Page 6

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Creative Economy in Ontario East

New initiative offers growth for rural regions

Ontario East has launched a first-of-its-kind collaborative regional web portal that will use social media to reveal ongoing innovative initiatives in its communities and illustrate to the world that Eastern Ontario is Canada's most creative corner. The website for the initiative is: www.creativeontarioeast.ca.

Ontario East is focused on developing a creative economy out of the realization that rural regions like this one, which comprise smaller towns and cities, are less likely to benefit from corporate head office or major manufacturing expansions. The new portal will display social media posts from as many as 20 communities, detailing their hottest creative economy activities in real time. It also provides links to each community's website.

Creative economies are defined as ones in which

people are paid to think using ideas, analytical skills, innovation, knowledge, and collaboration, and in which the nature of work moves from routine-oriented jobs to creativity-oriented jobs. In Ontario, the creative economy employs 35 percent of the workforce yet pays 51 percent of wages.

The Ontario East Economic Development Commission, also known as Ontario East, was one of Canada's first regionally-based economic development commissions when it formed in 1988. Ontario East comprises 124 regional economic development professionals and business leaders who work together to promote the region as a premier business location. The organization represents more than 200 communities, thousands of businesses, and nearly two million residents.

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Snowmobiling

4

Number of major
snowmobile manufacturers
49,510

Number of snowmobiles sold
in Canada in 2009.

8,800

The average suggested retail
price of a new snowmobile in
US dollars.

765,275

Number of registered
snowmobiles in Canada.

6 Billion

Annual economic impact of
snowmobiling in Canada.

90,000

Number of full time jobs
generated by the snowmobile
industry in North America.

43

Average age of a snowmobiler.

75,000

Average household income
for snowmobilers.

1402

Number of miles traveled by
the average snowmobiler each
year.

4000

Average spend per year by a
snowmobiler on snowmobile-
related recreation.

88

Percentage of active
snowmobilers that are male.

54

Percentage of snowmobilers
who trailer their snowmobiles
to go riding.

3 Million

Charitable funds raised by
snowmobilers in the 2008-09
season in North America.

3000

Number of snowmobile clubs
worldwide.

Source:

www.snowmobile.org

Business News Around The Valley

Boom Results in 8 Re-Hires

KI Pembroke was pleased to announce they had hired back eight of their previously laid off employees thanks to a product order for the prison system in the United States. The news comes at a time of year that is usually not busy for the company.

211 Service in Renfrew County

The 211 information and referral hotline is now in Renfrew County. The service is for people to get support in times of difficulty and during non-life-threatening emergencies. Calls to 211 are free and confidential and inquires range from health services to housing to financial assistance, legal assistance and consumer protection. The corresponding website is:

www.211ontario.ca.

Battery Store Opens

Scott Brum has opened Prior Batteries, a specialty battery store that carries a variety of batteries from those fitting hearing aids to those for bulldozers. The store will also have battery recycling. Brum also owns Brum's Mobile Wash. The business is located in Arnprior.

Reid Joins Eady

Morris Eady, Broker of Record for Century 21 Eady Realty Inc., Brokerage wishes to announce that Rick Reid has joined the Renfrew office. Prior to becoming a licensed real estate sales representative, Rick was a Technical Customer Support Specialist in the high-tech industry. Rick will join his wife, Patti, who is already established at Century 21 Eady Realty. Rick can be contacted at: 613-432-2100 or rick.reid@century21.ca

Water Bottle Exchange

White Lake Marina is now offering a five-gallon water bottle exchange service from Culligan. The water cooler bottles cost \$4.99 each and five-gallon bottles from other companies will also be accepted for exchange. The Marina is open every day.

Accessibility Workshop

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a workshop to help businesses comply with Ontario's new customer service standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The customer service standard applies to all

businesses and organizations that provide goods or services to the public or to other businesses or organizations, and who have one or more employees. All organizations must be in compliance by January 1, 2012. The event will be held on March 23, 2011 from 11:45am-1:30pm at the Pembroke Legion. For info, contact Lorraine at 613-732-1492 or uovcc@nrtco.net.

Hospital Seeks Input

Memorial Hospital is inviting members of the community to give input about the future direction of the hospital. They have created an online survey at www.wdmh.on.ca and paper copies can be picked up at the hospital lobby. The survey deadline is February 11.

Calabogie Rink Opens

A regulation-size skating rink with new boards and footings is now in place in Calabogie thanks to the support of local businesses and over 70 volunteers. The total project cost was \$220,000 and 70% was donated. In addition, volunteers donated time and equipment to help build the project. The committee hopes to further the project with a concrete ice pad and a roof, and then make a year-round

facility. For info, email: calabogierink@gmail.com.

Third Doctor Joins Deep River Hospital

A third family physician has joined the Deep River and District Hospital. Dr. Cherinet Seid started full time at the end of January, and also works part time in the emergency department. Dr. Seid completed his residency with the University of Ottawa Medical School. He also has medical degrees and training from Scotland and Ethiopia.

New Tourism Office

RTO-11, also called the Ontario Highlands Tourism Association (OHTO) will be located in the County of Renfrew building. The OHTO has a regional responsibility that includes Renfrew, Lanark, Haliburton, Hastings and Lennox and Addington Counties as well as portions of North and Central Frontenac, the Rideau Heritage Route and Algonquins of Pikwakanagan. One of OHTO's projects is a Disney Institute Customer Service training sessions being held in Renfrew, Haliburton, Madoc and Perth. For more details, contact 613-629-OHTO.

Continued on Page 8

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Dear Delfi,

I am soon to be a recent university graduate in search of a career. My problem is that there is nothing that is really jumping out at me in terms of a career. What kind of a job should I look for?

- *Young and Confused*

Dear Young and Confused,

Here are a few things to think about when seeking out a first career.

1. A major goal in life is to enjoy yourself, and because work is a big part of your time, you should ideally seek out something that you will find enjoyable.
2. Generally when you start out after post-secondary education, you don't have a clear idea of what you want to do for the rest of your life. Think more focused, what would you like to do now. Maybe new

opportunities will present themselves within the company as you grow with it.

3. Seek out a company that is great at teaching you thing. Some companies have a structured methodology for developing people and some companies have great mentors. If you're lucky, there is both.
4. Think a little bit about the kind of person you are. Do you love analysis? Do you enjoy interacting with people? Are you driven to lead? Do you love being a solid contributor on a team? Do you like to travel? Do you like small or large companies better? This helps you find the type of career that suits your personality.
5. Don't worry about how much money you make.

I'm sure you have heard this before, but it bears repeating: Success is a Journey, not a Destination.

Have a question for the professionals at The Delfi Group? Send it to: questions@thedelfigroup.com

Chamber Announces Award Winners

The Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Business Achievement Awards Gala on Saturday January 29th at the Germania Hall. It was a sell-out crowd.

Sheldon Keefe, Pembroke Lumber Kings' owner, general manager and head coach was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year. New Business of the Year went to Barley's Bakery while Saffco Electrical Plumbing and Heating won Small Business of the Year.

M&R Feeds and Farm Supply was named Medium Business of the Year and Giant Tiger was Large Business. Hugli's Blueberry Ranch earned Farm Enterprise of the

Year and Communities in Bloom Pembroke Committee was named Community Organization of the Year.

The 2010 Feature Award recognized Community Contribution by a Business and was awarded to the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre. The 2010 Citizen of the Year was awarded to Renfrew County Warden Bob Sweet, and Shawn Behnke was named Chamber Member of the Year.

The evening also honoured Del O'Brien as the Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. The evening featured special music by 2010 CCMA Fiddle Player of the Year nominee Ben Rutz.

New Artists at Valley Artisans

Valley Artisans lost a giant last month when Bob Wiley retired. For more than 10 years Bob's bowls and woodcraft have been a staple of the gallery, particularly as wedding gifts. Valley Artisans wishes Bob well in his future endeavours, and also welcomes two new artists, Jim

Murphy and Karen Bernard.

Murphy is a former teacher who has been a photographer for 30 years. He is from Mackey, Ontario. Bernard is a graduate of the Graphic Arts program at Algonquin College. She displays paper relief art. Bernard lives in Petawawa.

For more information the Valley Artisans, visit them at: www.valleyartisans.com.

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Hall of Fame Nominees

McGregor's Produce, Larry Raeburn and Jack McLaren are three nominees for this year's Renfrew County Agricultural Hall of Fame. McGregor's is a fruit and vegetable farm, while Raeburn is a Beachburg cash crop farmer and McLaren is a farmer and businessman in Cobden. The nominees will be officially inducted on March 5, 2011 at a banquet held at the Renfrew Armouries.

Business News Around The Valley

Coulas Joins Royal LePage
Royal LePage O'Neil Realty Inc. is pleased to welcome Mike Coulas to our real estate team as a Sales Representative. Mike, a lifelong Renfrew resident was formerly the Chrysler dealer in Renfrew and has been in the automotive retail business for

33 years. Mike can be reached at 613-432-8122 Ext. 235 or mikecoulas@royallepage.ca.

High Speed Internet Moves Forward

The Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus (EOWC) as part of their \$170 million dollar regional broadband project, has awarded a contract to

Barrett Xplore Inc., through its Xplornet brand, to provide immediate and more affordable broadband access via satellite to residents across eastern Ontario. Starting on January 24, 2011 Barrett Xplore Inc. will begin offering residents an up to 1.5 Mbps package for \$69.99 per month

with an upfront one-time cost as low as \$99 depending on contract length. Residents of the rural areas of Eastern Ontario can call Xplornet at 866-841-6001 or visit www.xplornet.com to find the best package for them.

Open House For Improvement Study

Town of Arnprior invites public to view opportunities for growth

The Town of Arnprior has initiated the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and will host an open house on Tuesday,

February 22, to introduce and obtain input on the study. The CIP is intended to promote private and public investment in the community, especially

Downtown Arnprior and other areas considered to be in need of revitalization. Through a Community Improvement Plan, the Town may provide financial incentives in the form of grants, loans or tax incentives to property owners who wish to improve or develop their property. A CIP may also set a framework for municipally-led initiatives such as infrastructure

improvements, streetscape improvements and other revitalization initiatives. The Open House will begin at 6:00pm at the Town Hall council chambers. An additional opportunity for public input will take place at a public meeting in March, 2011. For more information, contact Robin Smith, Planner at rsmith@arnprior.ca or Phone: 613-623-4231.

ZOOMER ENTREPRENEUR GROUP

For 50+ entrepreneurs and those interested in business.

Our Next Seminar:

Wednesday, March 9 at 9:30am
Pembroke & Area Airport
Speaker: J.P. Quintal
Topic: Risk Management

JP Quintal is a lawyer with the Pembroke firm, Quintal Christink. He will discuss risk management from both a business and legal perspective as it pertains to starting a business or being involved in a business at the age of 50 or older. This seminar is free to attend.

The Zoomer Entrepreneur Group is a new initiative of the Chamber of Commerce that recognizes the increased number of people starting a business after having had a career.



You can register by phone or email: Ph: 613-732-1492
Email: manager@upperottawavalleychamber.com

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APRIL 28, 2011
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There is NO CHARGE to exhibit at this event.

Contact: Michelle Lariviere Ranger
Phone: 613-735-4308 ext.6 | larivim@algonquincollege.com

What 36% of Small Businesses Do And what 90% should be doing



An interesting article in The Globe and Mail revealed that only 36% of businesses with 1-9 employees have a website. Compare that with 90% of businesses with 100-500 employees that have a website. Why is that?

There are many advantages that large businesses have over small business, but the ability to have a website is not one of them. A website is available to any size of business, and today, it's not "do you have a business card?" but rather, "do you have a website?" that encourages customers.

The Internet has given consumers instant access to information. They can do their own research before visiting store, and comparison shop via

their computer screen. So when your business is not online, you can't even be considered by the consumer. That means, you don't even have a chance to win their spending.

Now, one key thing to note is that larger businesses likely have one or more people on staff to manage their website for them. That means that one person is dedicated to keeping the site current and active. Small businesses usually do not have the ability to dedicate one person to their website. Nor, do they need to. But, that shouldn't prevent you from being online.

Online Without A Website
Inner Strength Fitness Centre knew they wanted to be online, but didn't think they could manage a full website at this point in their business. Jodi Sauve not only runs the business, but teaches classes and personal training and felt

that she just wouldn't have the time to dedicate to a full website. Still, the need to be online was important. So, we created a solution.

We purchased a domain name and set up an email. That cost about \$30. This allowed the owner to reserve the domain name for when she needed a full website, but keep people familiar with it in the early stages of the business. It also allowed her to have a marketable email address @myinnerstrength.com instead of @gmail.com.

When you have a domain name, you need to direct it to somewhere. We created a page created in the business directory of Ottawa Valley Business for \$99, and had her domain name point to that page. All of this allowed her to build her business, while not committing to the time or cost of a full website. When the day comes to build the full

site, its as easy as re-directing the domain name.

Getting A Website

The goal of your website is to market your business or organization. That is at least the best way it can contribute to your business. In order to be effective, it needs to meet the needs of customers who will visit it. This means knowing what your customers want and making it easy for them to find. Remember, you are making an impression with your website, so you want to make sure it makes a good impression. It doesn't matter how nice it looks or how many bells and whistles it has if it doesn't attract your customer. After all, you are building the website for them, right?

Being visible online is one of the best ways small business can improve their profile and their bottom line. Take advantage of it.

Where do you want your business to be by Spring?

Whether you are looking to make some changes to your current marketing, or plan for something new, now is the time to start.

forwardthinking
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Ottawa Valley BUSINESS

February 22 Issue
Regular issue of OVB.
Deadline: February 15

March 8 Issue
Regular issue of OVB.
Deadline: March 1

March 22
Regular issue of OVB
Deadline: March 15

AD SPECIAL
Purchase an ad in OVB in January or February, and be listed in our business directory for the year!

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