

## **Update on Community Economic Development for Perry, Magnetawan and McMurrich/Monteith**

**December 19, 2017**

In January 2016, a partnership was formed between the Municipalities of Perry, Magnetawan, McMurrich/Monteith and Kearney to work towards economic development in these communities. Our four municipalities partnered under the leadership of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to hire a Community Development Officer Intern. Community and economic development initiatives were focused on improving the economic well-being and quality of life for the respective communities by retaining and creating jobs, supporting the development of the community and growing the tax base.

Successful projects from the 2016 year included the completion of the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) report. A BR+E project is an ongoing cooperative effort between businesses, local government, agencies, other organizations, and people in the community, with the purpose of identifying opportunities and actions to assist local businesses in expansion, the retention and creation of jobs and the diversification of the local economic base. Our BR+E report summarized and analyzed information from over 250 business interviews across the Almaguin Highlands. This project was a huge achievement, resulting in a partnership between the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce (AHCC) and 13 municipalities. Also in 2016, the Committee was responsible for the “Local Love for the Villages of Almaguin” shop local campaign, supporting the Villages of Almaguin Regional Marketing Partnership and developing and supporting the Almaguin in Motion (AIM) cycling movement.

As of January 2017, the municipalities of Perry, Magnetawan and McMurrich/Monteith continued to partner under the new name EcoDev to further economic development for the Almaguin Highlands. Successful projects included another “Local Love for the Villages of Almaguin” shop local campaign, the Almaguin Careers and Trades Day (ACT2017), partnering on the 3R Volunteer Recruitment Campaign, a series of business workshops, partnering on the “13 Ways to Kill Your Community” presentation, providing continued support for the AIM cycling group and developing a Strategic Plan for the EcoDev Committee.

The Committee would like to express congratulations and gratitude to Courtney Metcalf (nee Rizzo), our Community Development Officer. Working with assistance from Carole Mantha and the NOHFC Internship Program, Courtney has successfully completed a two-year internship with EcoDev. Courtney’s work and involvement in our communities has been essential to our success and growth to-date.

As of January 2018, the Municipalities of Perry, Magnetawan and McMurrich/Monteith will be taking our first step towards a regional economic development department for the Almaguin Highlands. As the landscape of economic development changes in the Almaguin Highlands, the EcoDev Committee recognizes the benefits of partnering with neighbouring municipalities to enhance the economic development services that have been developed over the past two years.

In 2018, Perry, Magnetawan and McMurrich/Monteith will partner with the Burk's Falls and Area Community Economic Development (BACED) Committee and the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce to offer community and economic development services on a larger scale. Our goal is to build on this regional approach in the coming years to bring communities from across the Almaguin Highlands together into a single multi-faceted department.

We are very excited to be going through this transformation towards regional economic development. We believe that our communities will benefit from this collaboration and will see how much we can achieve when we focus on forming strong partnerships.

If you have any questions about the economic development services in your community, please contact your municipal office or visit the municipal website.

Sincerely,

***EcoDev***

*Your Economic Development Team for Perry, Magnetawan and McMurrich/Monteith*

