


WEST LORNE
WOMEN'S
INSTITUTE 
TWEEDSMUIR
HISTORY

VOLUME 8

2004 - 2005

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Compiled by Leola Lawrence

Biooil plant construction completed

■ Experiments run successfully at world's first biooil plant

JEFF KEMPENAAR

staff

West Lorne BioOil Cogeneration Ltd. completed the first test run of its biooil production and is expecting to begin creating power soon at Erie Flooring and Wood Products in West Lorne.

The world's first commercially installed pyrolysis system took wood waste from Erie Flooring and created a brown oil, smelling like creosol.

The biooil was combusted and heated further, turning a gas turbine and becoming char.

"Early experiments successfully demonstrated this pyrolysis system works," Jan Barynin, vice president of engineering for Dynamotive of Vancouver told the Chronicle on a tour of the plant. "Everyone here is dying to see it going."

Barynin has been coordinating the installation which began in May.

Dynamotive has invested around \$3 mil-

lion in the first-of-its-kind project and the Sustainable Development Technology Foundation of Canada, a not-for-profit government agency, funded \$5 million.

Developers hoped Ontario Power Generation would commission the plant to begin generating electricity from its gas turbines before the end of the year.

Once commissioned the plant can ramp up production and produce up to 2.5 megawatts, enough to power the mill, pyrolysis plant and up to 2,500 houses.

Steam created by the plant will be used to heat the wood kilns.

Half of the energy created from the gas turbines will be used by Erie Flooring and the plant itself and the other half can be distributed to the power grid.

OPG also funded around \$200,000 for the project.

Barynin couldn't say when the plant would be up to full capacity.

When it is, up to 70 tonnes of wood waste would be heated at 500C per day to create a

biooil.

The biooil would be used to turn the Orenda Industrial gas turbines.

The pyrolysis system was being encased behind walls last week and large blue and yellow silos were erected last month to hold wood waste used in the process.

Barynin said the pyrolysis system could create oil from any biomass including agricultural waste.

Currently, Dynamotive is looking at developing a pyrolysis system in Brazil that would create power from breaking down sugar cane waste.

Barynin said he has received a lot of support locally towards the West Lorne project and Erie Flooring has integrated well with the new system.

Training programs began for about eight employees of Erie Flooring who will operate the West Lorne BioOil Cogeneration plant.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

Jan Barynin, vice president of engineering for Dynamotive Energy Systems Corp. stands in front of the West Lorne Biooil Cogeneration Plant.

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Beef farmers have hope US border will reopen

SCOTT HILGENDORFF

staff

With nothing more official than news reports that US President George W. Bush expects the border to open "soon" to Canadian beef, a local beef industry leader is cautiously optimistic.

"What does 'as soon as possible' mean? It could be one month or a year. That's frustrating," said Ian McKillop, a Dutton-area farmer and Vice President of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association.

However, he said the fact Bush has commented publically about the issue is an encouraging sign.

Bush announced last week it was looking good to reopen the border but did not give any specific indication as to how much longer it would take.

The border closed a year ago May 20 after a single case of mad cow disease (BSE) was found in Alberta.

Cattle prices plummeted putting the beef industry in jeopardy.

Prices have slowly recovered as some restrictions were lifted to allow certain cuts of meat across the border from cattle under 30 months of age.

However, live cattle have

been prevented from crossing the border since last May.

Struggling beef farmers were helped with more than \$1 billion in government aid since the crisis first began but McKillop has said last month the industry was soon reaching a point where it would have to downsize operations.

So far, he said he doesn't know of any local operations that have closed down but said banks are having a tougher time providing loans to farmers whose futures have remained uncertain since the crisis began.

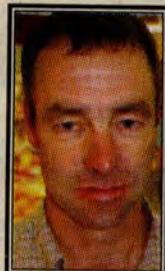
He expects Bush's announcement last week will give banks reasons to be optimistic as well.

The American government held a period of public comment regarding reopening the border.

The comment period closed April 7 but McKillop expected it would take at least a month to go through the more than 3,000 comments the US government received.

He is optimistic the process could take about a month but said that is just speculation.

He doesn't expect any advance announcement beyond a press conference to announce the border is reopening.



Ian McKillop



Economic development new focus for Chamber

By Scott Hilgendorff
The Chronicle

The West Elgin Chamber of Commerce has decided to become its own collective economic development officer after failed attempts in the past to get an economic development project in place.

"Lots of studies have been done. Lots of desires have been expressed. But that has to be transferred to buses with wheels on them rolling down the street," said Keith Fretter who chairs a new chamber of commerce committee as part of a recent restructuring to help the chamber focus on economic development.

Fretter and chamber president Tom Jones said the chamber has been spinning its wheels for years now on economic development, spending more time on planning than doing.

Both said chamber membership decided it was time to take some forward steps directed toward bringing new industry and business to the area.

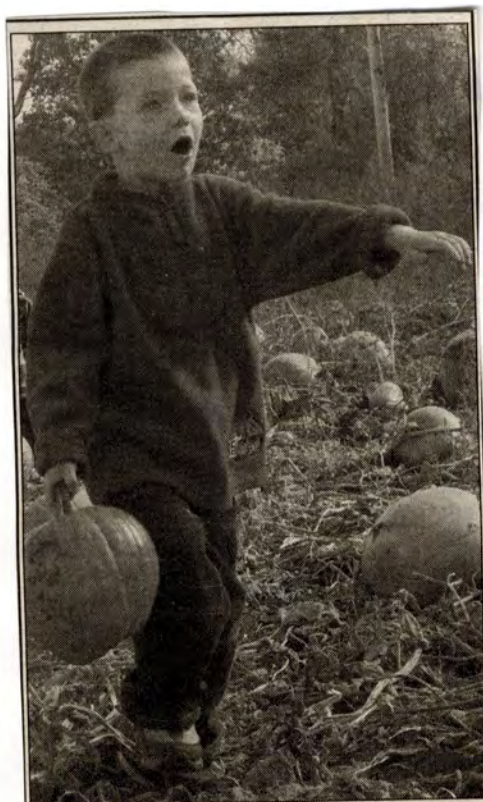
"The object is not to do any more research," said Fretter.

The research has been done including participation in a recent Business Retention and Expansion Committee survey that has helped identify areas of need from local businesses and industry.

From the chamber's own research and that of the Business Retention and Expansion Committee, Fretter said it's time to start taking action.

"We need to do some work in getting our ear to the ground," said Fretter, referring to the need of starting to contact industries that are looking for

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LOOK MOM KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

Tommy McGill, four, from West Lorne carries a pumpkin to his mom at a Tiny Tots trip to Jamieson's Pumpkin Patch north of West Lorne Oct. 13.



PUMPKIN PATCH KID

JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

Steven Fodor, three-years-old, from Rodney looks for worms under this pumpkin at a Tiny Tots trip to Jamieson's Pumpkin Patch north of West Lorne on Oct. 13. About 20 kids came with parents to hear the Great Pumpkin Patch story.

Women At Work

After working at the Dutton Advance newspaper and in the commercial printing industry for 22 years, Nancy Mott is committed and loyal to her home community, West Elgin/Dutton.

Her commitment continues on at West Elgin Support Services in West Lorne.

West Elgin Support Services offers a range of services to West Elgin and Dutton/Dunwich in a partnership of community agencies.

The services offered are employment counselling, interview workshops, dexterity

testing, access to job posting, job banks, job developing, employer services, access to wage subsidy programs for employers, student outreach in high schools and summer job services. The centre also offers recreational, leisure, literacy and children's programs along with assistance and advocacy for the developmentally disabled.

The centre also coordinates the West Elgin Transportation Network and arranges bookings for the Community Room for West Elgin.

Nancy enjoys helping people and gets great satisfaction from seeing

results and getting positive feedback for her work at the centre.

She has lived in the area for 33 years and after the Dutton Advance newspaper closed she upgraded her skills at Fanshawe College and started working at the centre in August 2003.



Nancy Mott

"I consider myself very fortunate to work in West Elgin/Dutton-Dunwich," she says.

She gained a mentor at the newspaper in former owner/publisher Dan Moore who passed away in May 2002.

"I admired Dan's dedication and commitment to his community. I still have that influence with me every day and I think of him often,"

She encourages young women starting out in business today to strive to work at what they enjoy.

"There's nothing like being able to say, 'I love my job!'"

Nancy can be reached at West Elgin Support Services in West Lorne at 160 Main St. (adjacent to the library), by phone at 768-0020 and by fax at 768-0401.

'WOMEN AT WORK' is a special advertising feature of The Chronicle. If you would like to be part of this exciting avenue, to let our readers know of your service, please call Scott to book your space at 768-2220.

Women At Work

Empowering people to make positive change in their lives is a service Alicia Allen is rewarded with.

Alicia is an employment counsellor at West Elgin Support Services in West Lorne.

"I believe our success comes from empowering people and helping people obtain employment by utilizing our services," said Alicia, who measures the success of the centre by the high number of referrals the centre has received.

The centre offers free employment counselling, interview workshops, dexterity testing, access to job postings, job banks, job developing, employer services, access to wage subsidy programs for employers, student outreach in high schools and summer job services.

"We work with many groups in West Elgin and Dutton-Dunwich including students, youth, adults and seniors," she said.

West Elgin Support Services is a partnership of community agencies including Employment Services Elgin, Elgin Association for

Community Living, Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic, OPP, Quad County Support Services, Violence Against Women Services Elgin County and YWCA of St. Thomas-Elgin.

Good leadership can lead to success and Alicia has found a good leader, Cathy Grondin.

Grondin is a program co-ordinator with Employment Services Elgin and Fanshawe College and Alicia looks to her as a mentor.

"She is a patient, intuitive leader who encourages you to challenge yourself and grow while you give support," she said.

One way to empower people is to enjoy life yourself, Alicia said.

"I would advise any young woman to stay focused and enjoy the journey instead of focusing on the destination."

Alicia can be reached at West Elgin Support Services, in West Lorne at 160 Main St. (adjacent to the library), by phone at 768-0020 and by fax at 768-0401, three days a week and two days on alternate weeks.



Alicia Allen

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The Chronicle



SERVED

CHRONICLE

Members of the 4-H Bit and Bridle Club in West Elgin served up dinner at a recent horse information night hosted by Dixon's Feed Service at St. Mary's Hall in West Lorne. Above, Kenzie and Alex Ranson find some dishes they like.



DEMOLITION AT MILNER RIGSBY CLEARS WAY FOR PARKING LOT JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

A storage building was demolished at Milner-Rigsby to make way for an employee parking lot this week. During the demolition, the façade of the building fell towards Argyle St., scraping the road. Henry Bens, site manager at Milner Rigsby said the demolition will be complete by December. He said there were safety concerns with the old storage building and the floor was deteriorating. Demolition started on a boiler building behind the old storage building that was condemned three years ago. At one time, the almost hundred-year-old building was a cannery for locally grown produce, said Bens. In the photo, Lawrence Bell operates the excavator while Chris Kalita, left, Mark Vandenboomen, centre and John Carrol, right, repair the site fencing. A hydro poll was struck and shifted during the demolition, but later repaired.

BioOil produced at West Lorne plant

Dynamotive announced this week eight production runs have been completed at the West Lorne Biooil Cogenerational facility, housed at Erie Flooring.

Further production runs were planned for this week as the company aims toward producing electricity by burning down wood waste into a biooil that can fuel a turbine.

In the latest press release, Dynamotive says biooil has been produced from wood and bark remains from Erie Flooring.

Before the plant can generate power, a steady flow of biooil must be produced.

The company has not said when the project will be completed entirely.

The plant has been commissioned to begin generating electricity but has continued testing the new, one-of-a-kind technology.

Engineers demonstrated noncondensable gases can be generated to heat the biomass

to create biooil.

The biooil is greenhouse gas neutral and the entire plant is seen as a way to reduce harmful emissions in the air while producing electricity to power Erie Flooring, and neighbouring houses.

Also, the end result of the testing and burning of the biomass was char, which can also be used as to create energy.

The company has yet to test the Magellan Aerospace turbine which will create energy to power the sawmill.

Stockholders eagerly watching the progression at the West Lorne plant hoped it would have been fully operational earlier this year.

While testing, the company now says it will begin marketing the biooil, to sell it as an alternative liquid fuel.

As part of the demonstration phase of the

project, 4.8 tonnes of Biooil were fired in the steam boilers.

The Biooil was fired at 5801°C/hr, generating a heat output of 13MMBTU/hr with no hydrocarbon emissions, no sulphur-dioxide, low nitrous-oxide and CO2 neutral.

The company also announced it was to ship 12 tonnes of Biooil May 31 for testing and market development purposes to Classic Power in Toronto which also plans to use the Biooil.

The fast pyrolysis system built and being tested at the West Lorne plant is the only one of its size in the world, says the company.

The pyrolysis system is what creates the biooil from the leftover wood product.

A new project is planned for the Toronto area to create energy from other wastes.

Erie Flooring fined \$45,000

Erie Flooring and Wood Products has been fined \$45,000 after an employee was injured in a workplace fall last year.

The company pleaded guilty May 30 at the Court of Justice in London to not having a required guard rail in place when the employee fell from an elevated hoist platform on Feb. 19, 2004.

The employee suffered cuts to his right hand and both arms and required surgery for lacerations to his hand and hip.

The employee was passing wood products from one pallet hoist to another when he fell 6 feet (1.828 metres) into an adjacent pit.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act the company was convicted of violating a section requiring guard rails to open areas, said Rene Laframboise, program manager for the provincial Ministry of Labour.

Erie Flooring lays off 14

JEFF KEMPENAAR

staff

Erie Flooring laid off 14 probationary employees last week, a move management did not anticipate they would have to make.

A contract ended earlier than what was negotiated with a company resulting in a reduction in the afternoon shift.

Forty employees were hired in the spring and the company had anticipated they would have work throughout the winter.

The 14 employees worked on the laminated trailer flooring line from 4:30 p.m. to 3 a.m. Monday to Thursday.

They were hired with the anticipation of becoming fulltime employees, but a shortage of work came before the three-month probation term was met.

"We generally tend not to hire people if we know there isn't going to be work," said Alan Vandenbrink, Erie Flooring and Wood Products general

manager. "It's not something we anticipated."

The company employs 210 on the active payroll but operates with around five per cent of its staff on short-term disability or maternity leave and three per cent not active due to absenteeism.

Vandenbrink said the company is diversified and usually has inventory built up to keep work flowing, but the unexpected end to the contract left a shortage of work.

West Lorne IGA ready to open LCBO

SCOTT HILGENDORFF

staff

West Lorne's IGA will soon include an LCBO agency store.

Steve Browne, IGA's owner, is hopeful the operation will be running inside his store by the end of the month as work wraps up to restructure the store to include a separate 400-square foot area to house the LCBO agency.

The project also includes becoming a Beer Store retail partner which will see the store selling a range of beer, wine and spirits.

Browne said the first few months will be spent researching the buying habits of local people until they are able to determine what are the most popular beverages and brands customers are looking for in the limited retail space.

Following the same rules as the LCBO,

employees will all receive "smart-server" training and customers who look 25 and under can expect to be asked for ID before being served.

Browne said he plans to take good care in working under the laws that govern the sale of alcohol and isn't going to take any chances on losing the LCBO licencing.

For the store, Browne said having the LCBO agency will mean increased traffic and business, helping provide more services to customers and keeping the store viable.

He has been waiting for an opportunity to connect with the LCBO for about six years now and it took almost that long before the LCBO made a space available in this area to house an agency store.

Browne underwent the application process late last year and had word earlier this spring that he was approved to open the agency.



TURNING OVER THE KEYS

John Vaughan, centre, receives the keys to his new Pontiac Sunfire from West Lorne IGA owners Brenda and Steven Browne. Vaughan won the car in the Great Ontario IGA Giveaway Contest.

SCOTT HILGENDORFF/CHRONICLE

Industry coming, could mean 50 jobs

SCOTT HILGENDORFF

staff

Hiring will begin in late August or early September for TFT Services which will begin an automotive subassembly operation at the former E&E McLaughlin facility on Gilbert Street in West Lorne.

Initially hiring six to eight employees, the West Elgin Chamber of Commerce has said the company is expected to hire approximately 50 employees by mid-2005.

"This is a huge step forward for West Elgin. Hopefully there's many more to come," said Tom Jones, chamber of commerce chair.

TFT Services is located in Tillsonburg and is an automotive inspection, sorting and containment company.

The move to West Lorne came after TFT Services signed a deal with a "major Tier 1 supplier to Ford Motor Company", said the chamber in a media release.

"We welcome the company and its management and employees," said Jones, adding the chamber will do whatever it can to assist the industry.

The chamber recently restructured and has placed an emphasis on economic development, citing a need to spend time and effort meeting with industries to help attract them to the area.

Council has tentatively placed \$20,000 in its 2004 budget to meet a request from the chamber to help cover the costs of economic development initiatives.

Hiring for TFT Services will be done through Employment Services Elgin.

US mad cow adds to strife faced locally

By Scott Hilgendorff
The Chronicle

A Monday deadline for public comment in the United States to plans to reopen the border to live cattle should have brought the Canadian beef industry another step closer to the light at the end of the tunnel that local beef producers were seeing.

Instead, that light is growing dimmer.

"This week will have a better indication on how much impact BSE (known as mad cow disease) in the United States has had on Canadian markets," said Ian McKillop, a local beef producer and vice president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association.

Since Dec. 23, when a case of mad cow was found in the United States, fears grew worse that slowly recovering Canadian prices would be hurt again following Canada's single case of mad cow found last May.

Canada's mad cow discovery forced the closing of borders around the world to Canadian beef including to the United States, which in the fall were reopened to certain cuts of meat.

However, McKillop said the Canadian and American beef industry are so closely tied that a crisis in one country greatly affects the other. Whether or not the American cow turns out to be originally from a Canadian herd, the industry across North America is in a crisis.

"It causes a great deal of stress on producers," he said.

Feed lots have been able to withstand the poor prices and the inability to move live cattle.

Many producers have kept their herds several months longer than planned, meaning increased feed costs and losses mounting in the hundreds of millions of dollars in Ontario alone.

"The industry in Ontario just cannot stand one more punch in the stomach," said McKillop, not wanting to sound dire.

But he said banks that finance the feed lots and large producers would soon be reaching a point where they have to look at their investments in the industry.

"I'm not sure how long before they have to start making some

tough decisions on financing farmers," said McKillop.

Sun Media reported Tuesday 80 per cent of calls to an Ontario farm crisis line are from worried beef producers facing financial pressures.

About a month ago, McKillop reported a light at the end of the tunnel.

While beef prices remained low, they had risen slightly, cuts of meat were being allowed into the United States and a process was in place to potentially reopen the border completely.

This week, the American government decided to put on hold any plans to reopen the border to live cattle from Canada until its own investigation is complete on its case of mad cow, throwing back into question the survival of Canada's beef industry.



Ian McKillop

'THE INDUSTRY IN ONTARIO JUST CANNOT WITHSTAND ONE MORE PUNCH IN THE STOMACH,'

— McKillop, Ontario Cattlemen

Combining sound and colour therapy with creativity, Good Vibrations for Sound Health has grown out of Sharon Little's first operation, One Quality Note.

One Quality Note, which Little still operates on the side, began seven years ago as a photo card business but for the past three years, she has been building Good Vibrations for Sound Health.

Although filled with healthful applications, people have a lot of fun through a range of offerings from music lessons, music improvisation programs, drum circles and more.

"People discover they are musical, whether they have any music background or not," says Little.

She offers music lessons, drum circle programs, creativity coaching, sound and colour therapy, meditation and "authentic music making for the terribly terrified and the classically trained."

She also has the only monochord sound table in the country and provides a highly unique and individualized set of non-invasive vibrational healing and self-transformation techniques.

For inspiration, Little watches and

listens to people who are on the leading edge of their professions and looks to people who are creating a unique life that is fully lived and enjoyed.

"I watch what others do and learn from what works and doesn't," says Little.

One of the best parts of being in business is the fun she has leading drum circles and improvisation sessions.

Working with people through sound, colour, meditation and coaching allows her to individualize her work for the client and she enjoys seeing how quickly positive changes are made in their lives while they establish a

greater life balance and live more purposefully.

For a young woman starting out in business, Little says, "Find out who you are; what your real outer and inner strengths are, what is in you that is holding you back and how you can overcome those obstacles. Make it a priority to establish a solid connection with others and with your better, higher self, even when your little personality fights back, and take the high road."

Little can be found at 23807 McLean Line outside Rodney or by phone at 785-0797.



Sharon Little

'WOMEN AT WORK' is the newest feature of The Chronicle. If you would like to be part of this exciting avenue, to let our readers know of your service, please call Shirley to book your space at 768-2220.

Women At Work

After working for 12-years in greenhouses and flower shops, Marilyn Howse and her mother-in-law, Jenny Howse, decided to put their combined horticulture experience together and go into business.

That was 15 years ago when they opened Dutton Flowers, a flower and gift shop on Dutton's main street.

They offer a full range of floral services for any occasion from weddings to funerals and carry a selection of tropical plants, silks, gardening supplies and they offer world-wide delivery services.

It's a personal business for Marilyn who keeps the individual in mind when she is designing arrangements for her customers or offering unique decorating and gift ideas to them.

In particular, she finds designing funeral flowers a very personal part of the job and important to her.

"I try to make my designs a celebration of their life," said Marilyn.

But any chance to design something personal for someone's home gives her enjoyment in her work.

Jenny became Marilyn's mentor, teaching her much through the years.

"Because of her dedication, our flower shop has been successful," said Marilyn.

For a young woman starting out in her own business, she said patience, determination, caution and lots of hard work are keys to being successful.

Experience in the particular field of interest and believing in yourself are also important.

She said her own success comes from caring and taking pride in offering specialized, personal service to her customers.

"Without my customers, I wouldn't have a business," she said.

Success for Marilyn also comes from having a supportive family.

"My husband, my sons, my father-in-law and a special aunt are always there to help me," she said.

Dutton Flowers is located at 167 Main Street and can be reached by phone at 762-2059.



Marilyn Howse

Farmers feel helpless, says Elgin federation

For The Chronicle

"There's a real feeling of helplessness and frustration out there among the farm families."

And for Elgin Federation of Agriculture (EFA) president Donna Lunn that frustration is compounded by the staggering impact of BSE (Mad cow disease) and a new provincial government that has "blindsided" the agriculture industry with its shift on nutrient management.

As a result of bovine spongiform encephalopathy restrictions at the U.S. border, Lunn predicts "there won't be any live animal movement for a long, long time" and that is impacting producers in Elgin County.

"The crucial effects are right

to the farms and farm families themselves who have livestock," explained Lunn, elected EFA president in December.

"That's beef, dairy and sheep. It's not crossing the border so there is no more dairy breeding. We have some of the largest dairy export breeders in the province right here in Elgin and they're really feeling that effect. There are absolutely no breeding animals going across the border."

And the economic impact will ripple through communities across the county.

"THERE'S NO SPENDING. NINETY PER CENT OF THE FARM FAMILIES IN ELGIN COUNTY SPEND THEIR INPUT COSTS HERE IN THE COUNTY."

**— Donna Lunn
Elgin Federation of Agriculture**

"There's no spending. Ninety per cent of the farm families in Elgin County spend their input costs here in the county. So then we're talking how it affects our rural infrastructure in our communities as well."

This is troubling enough without the curveball Premier Dalton McGuinty's Liberals threw at farmers who are struggling to cope with nutrient management legislation that requires them to have facilities able to store manure for up to 240 days.

Settling in as EFA president,

Lunn said she was not expecting to see the rules change after McGuinty took over as premier.

"The farmers have been asking for clear legislation (on nutrient management) for so many years, and we finally had done so much consultation and planning and so much organizing with the last government. We were really moving forward. And now it's a whole shifting with the McGuinty government."

Lunn said the new government did not consult with the agricultural community when it acted "quickly" to shift the responsibility of first-complaint enforcement of nutrient management matters

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JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

STOOKING

(left photo) Jim West pulls Hugh McFadden on a binder harvesting oats on West's farm. McFadden purchased the Massey Harris binder in 1930. (middle and right photos) Peter Hentz forks a sheaf of oats to Hugh McFadden on the wagon on Monday near Wallacetown. They were participating in a Tyrconnell Heritage Society deomonstration on harvesting grains in the 1900s. Don Lumley helps put the sheaves on the wagon produced from oats grown by Jim West, on the tractor. They will be threshed at the Heritage Farm Show Sept. 4 and 5 at the Backus-Page House.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

FARMING FUN FOR FAMILIES AT FAIR

Jonathan Woolsey, front left, Jan Kool, back left, Brad Tunks and Megan Regnier push a bale around an obstable course during the Farm Olympics on Sunday at the Rodney Aldborough Agricultural Fair. Fair goers enjoyed three warm days at the 150th anniversary celebrations.

Willy reopens, revamps family garden centre

By Scott Hilgendorff
The Chronicle

Building on the traditions of her parents, Willy VanDyk is opening up Willy's Plants and Flowers.

"Mom and dad had this business for over 30 years. They retired. I'm trying to start it up again," said VanDyk.

After retiring two years ago, VanDyk said her parents, Joanne and John Bakker were still getting comments from people missing Bakker's Greenhouse on Thomson Line.

"Mom and dad did it for years. There was a need for it," said VanDyk who decided to take on the challenge of revitalizing the business as Willy's Plants and Flowers.

"It will be what they used to have plus my own," said VanDyk. One tradition she is building on is geraniums grown from cuttings.

It was a specialty of her parents that customers came to expect and is a tradition she is carrying on, although not in big numbers as her parents this season as she works to get the business growing again.

She will keep a range of flowers as well as herbs and vegetable plants which she said were popular items at the store.

New will be some wave petunias and other flowers the original greenhouse didn't have and VanDyk is hoping for a few surprises in the summer including possibly growing cut flowers for people to make arrangements.

"We might be selling some cut flowers at the side of the road," said VanDyk.

They're also looking at fall mums and other products as they work to get the business going again.

It's been a lot of work as she prepares to open her doors in the next couple weeks and VanDyk said her husband George will be getting the "employee of the month" award on a regular basis.

And while her father retired, he's still been known to get his hands dirty helping his daughter in the greenhouse.

As she builds the business, she said she's more than willing to help customers with gardening tips and is welcome to advice and suggestions from other experienced gardeners.

Willy's Plants and Flowers is located on Thomson Line, east of Graham Road.

Beef farmers move beyond BSE with or without U.S. border open

JEFF KEMPENAAR
staff

The beef industry got a \$488 million boost earlier this month and now advocates are waiting for the province of Ontario to kick in money.

The federal government announced the funding earlier this month based on suggestions from

the Canadian Cattlemen's Association.

The Alberta government announced it would contribute \$230 million to its beef producers and talks this week will be aimed at the Ontario government to add its normal 40 per cent.

"The funding will help the industry but what we need is the border

opening to live cattle," said Ian McKillop, vice-president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association.

While the federal contribution is less than the \$750 million the cattle industry received in 2003, this funding goes directly into programs that will enhance the profitability of Canadian producers with or without the U.S.

Continued on Page

Besley's celebrate 50 years

The Besley's are humbled that there are a few homes in the area which could pass as Besley's Furniture Store showrooms.

It's no doubt because the family-run business has been the area's predominant furniture and appliance store for 50 years.

"I think just about every house around has at least something from Besley's," said owner Bill Besley.

He started helping with deliveries at 14 with his grandfather El who opened the store in

October 1955.

In the same location, Besley's has expanded from its beginnings as just an appliance store.

It took over the Chinese restaurant in the adjacent part of the Main Street building in West Lorne shortly after opening.

In 1999, a 3,000 square-foot warehouse was built behind the store.

The warehouse gave the store more floor space for furniture and mattress display, cornering the display models of appliances in the back.

With only Bill, his wife Tracy and some additional part-time help, Besley's remains a small town, family business.

These are rare, said Bill, "You just don't see (furniture) stores in small towns anymore."

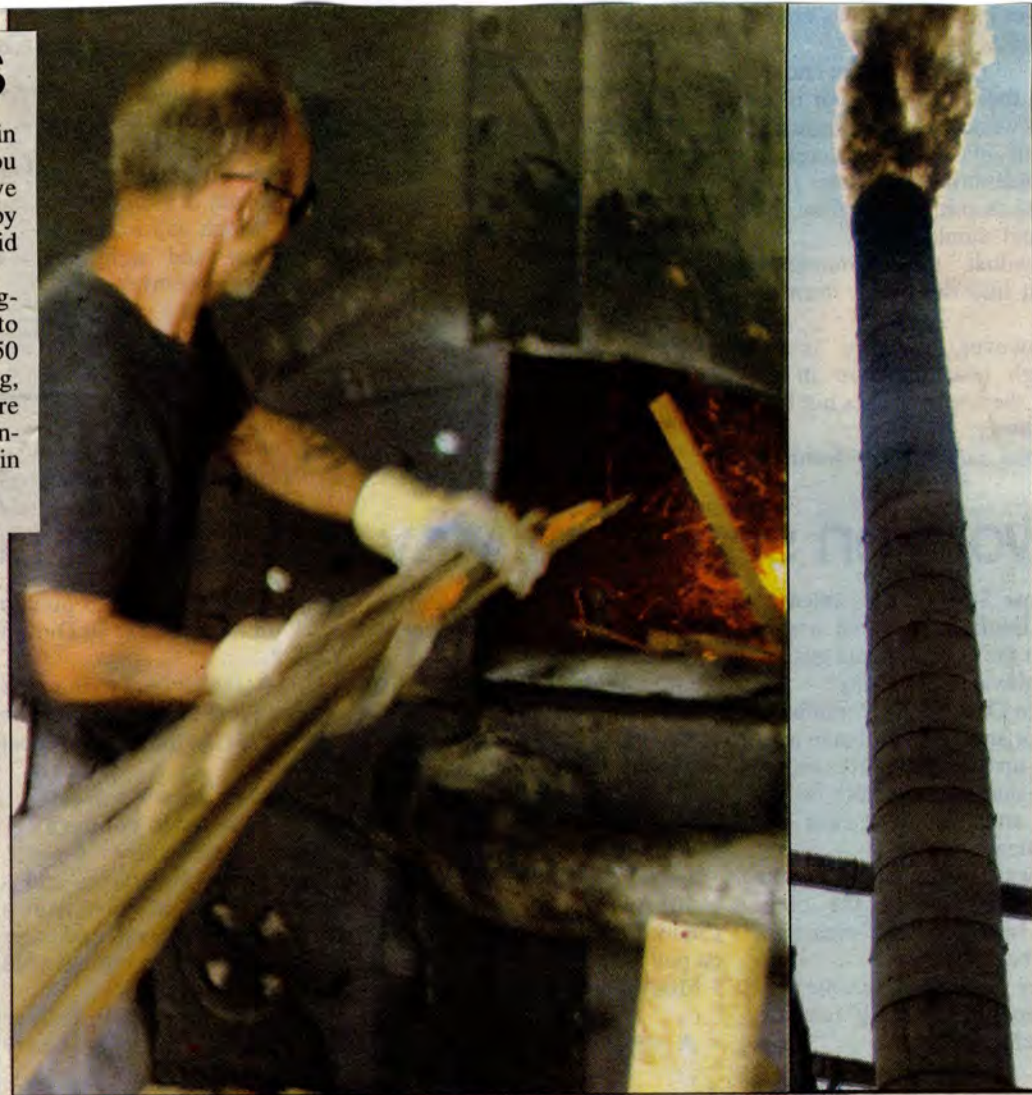
But word of mouth and competitive pricing has kept the business going.

With no commission-based salespeople and free delivery, Besley's continues to offer a relaxed shopping experience not found in the city.

"You can tell if

someone just came in from the city. You can tell they have just been attacked by a salesperson," said Bill.

While encouraging customers to shop around, for 50 years and counting, Besley's furniture and appliances continue to be found in area homes.



Changes come to burning process at Erie Flooring

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Jim Schneckenburger puts a handful of wood shavings into the Dutch oven at Erie Flooring and Wood Products Monday. Employees have been instructed to only throw up to three handfuls of shavings into the oven to reduce the amount of black smoke which has been billowing out of the smoke stack, right, for years at the mill.

Man hurt at Erie Flooring

A 48-year-old Rodney man was air lifted from a nearby field after suffering serious injuries while working at Erie Flooring and Wood Products Aug. 17.

Robert Ritchie, was working in the stacking area when he was injured by equipment.

OPP and Thames EMS responded at Erie Flooring before determining he had to be air lifted to London Health and Science Centre.

The Ministry of Labour is currently investigating the

accident.

They would not release information about how Ritchie was hurt.

"We're just starting investigating so we can't say just what happened," said Patrick O'Gorman, senior communication officer with the ministry.

Management at the company would not comment on the accident at this time.

Ritchie remained at LHSC in critical condition Monday.

After an initial investigation by the Western Regional

Office of the Ministry of Labour, 12 orders were given to the company related to the incident.

"Orders were issued in regards to what has happened to ensure nothing else happens," said O'Gorman, adding the investigation could take up to a year.

Orders given were to improve safeguards for moving lumber piles.

Also included were orders to provide information, instruction and supervision to work-

ers as well as training for rigging techniques.

Along with this, orders were issued to have guardrails

added around uncovered areas on the floor and that workers be given a safety latch to prevent falls.



Earlier harvest pressured by high priced fuel

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

A dryer summer could bring an earlier harvest to the area this year. Hugh McFadden was tightening bolts on his combine Monday with plans to begin harvesting later this month. He's holding off on buying fuel, hoping the prices will continue to drop.

Gas prices to impact harvest

Higher gas prices have farmers looking to reduce the amount of time spent in a tractor for this year's harvest.

Extra tilling to cut weeds may be one way farmers will reduce fuel costs, says Ontario Farm Association Vice-President Paul Mistele from Rodney.

But the real hit to farmers may not be until next year when inputs like fertilizers are more expensive from higher fuel costs impacting transportation of the inputs.

"There will be a huge impact on fertilizers," he said, adding with a 30 per cent increase in fuel, costs would rise at the same rate.

Mistele and the OFA have been working on a demand to bring to the federal government to get some of the tax money back.

"Thirty-four per cent of the fuel cost is taxation. Don't tell me they don't have extra revenue. They are raking it in and haven't added a penny to industry producing food," he said.

Mistele, who also has pigs is already dealing with a 20 cent surcharge for each hog hauled away.

He said he will look at cutting back on tilling next year by 60 per cent.

However that would put pressure on him to use chemicals to reduce weeds.

With an early harvest expected from the dry temperatures this year, no farmers should be looking at not harvesting.

"Unless they have a very poor crop," said Mistele.

Harry Mezenburg is also looking at the costs of high-fuel prices on his crop.

With prices for corn around \$2.50 a bushel, the expense for each bushel could reach \$4.

"I'm established and have been here a long time. But some of the young guys may look at off-loading assets to pay for this," he said.

"Gas prices are going to hurt everyone," he said.



St. Clair Region tree planters tour Erie Flooring

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Aaron Palmer, health and safety representative with Erie Flooring and Wood Products in West Lorne led two bus loads of St. Clair Region Conservation Authority members around the plant Aug. 16. Behind Palmer is a truck load of sawdust. About 70 tonnes of sawdust is produced at the plant in a day. The sawdust is burned in ovens to create steam to run the plant.

BioOil project puts West Lorne on world map

WEST LORNE

SCOTT HILGENDORFF



ACROSS COUNTY LINES

It's a village of just about 1,000 people but it's attracting attention from around the world.

It's not from tourists visiting the local hot spots and beaches. It's from scientists, investors and government representatives interested in the success of a BioOil production facility that began producing green energy this summer from the oil created from the superheating of wood waste.

Housed at Erie Flooring and Wood Products, one of the partner agencies in the more than \$12-million project, the plant is putting West Lorne on the map, yet even the village's own residents don't fully understand the significance of the facility.

Because foreign visitors are coming directly to the plant, the community is almost oblivious to the fact various nations have been represented in the village throughout the summer and now fall.

Just last week, the plant gave tours to visitors from Japan, Russia and the United States. There have also been visitors from China.

"They want to import this technology to their country," said Gholam

Yavari, director of engineering on the project. He said there should be signs erected at the village entrances, declaring Home of BioOil.

He also said it's something for the village to be proud of and is surprised at how little attention it's getting.

"West Lorne is the centre of attention," he said.

While the project has been under construction and test runs for about two years now, it's only in the past month or so that it has begun to gain national media notice.

The technology itself is not completely new, using a process called fast pyrolysis to convert Erie Flooring wood waste into a product called BioOil. The BioOil, which can also be produced from other agricultural byproducts that normally are considered waste, is then burned in turbines and produces less emissions than traditional fuels.

In the Erie Flooring project, pat-

ented technology from the Canadian company DynaMotive, the lead agency in the project, produces the BioOil from sawdust and other wood waste. A gas turbine has been modified to use the BioOil to produce enough electricity to power Erie Flooring and neighbouring homes, with excess power available to be supplied to the overall provincial power grid.

According to DynaMotive, BioOil is considered a greenhouse gas-neutral fuel source, which is partly why it's generating worldwide attention, as countries around the globe work toward lowering greenhouse emissions under the Kyoto Accord.

At Erie Flooring, several benefits exist to the project. Locally, residents have complained for years about the thick black smoke produced as waste is burned at Erie Flooring. This summer, a petition was started by local residents demanding the pollution stop. The problem is expected to be resolved with the operation of the new BioOil facility.

An extra benefit is that steam created in the pyrolysis will be used to heat the facility and in the drying of its finished products.

DynaMotive expected two years

ago the Erie Flooring project would attract global attention, and the company proved true to its word as it works to expand investment into its technology.

The overall project has received \$5 million in federal funding from Sustainable Development Technology Canada, as part of its investment in the production of more environmentally friendly fuel sources. The project has also been supported by a consortium of partners, including Magellan Aerospace Corp., Orenda division, UMA Ltd., and Ontario Power Generation.

While some of the visitors have been representing private corporations, Yavari said they are also reporting back to their various governments, looking toward gaining approvals to develop the technology overseas.

Locally, West Lorne goes under the radar of many passersby on Highway 401, but the sleepy little community is the centre of some very positive world attention.

"Right now, West Lorne is on the map," Yavari says.

Scott Hilgendorff is a freelance writer based in Elgin County. Across County Lines appears Thursdays and Saturdays.

Border open, costs keep cows home

Jeff Kempenaar

Staff

Area beef farmers are waiting for market prices to adjust to the border to the U.S. opening last week to Canadian cattle.

"It's not the rose we thought it would be," said Dave Clark, a Dutton-area beef farmer.

Cattle under 30 months old entered the U.S. last week from Ontario and Alberta for the first time since May 2003 when a case of mad cow, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy was found in an Alberta cow causing the border to close.

Clark is not as keen to send meat south as he thought he would be when the border opened.

Producers can get more per pound selling to slaughterhouses here.

Clark was waiting to see how that will affect the price of cattle here.

Clark would rather see the prices rise in the U.S. to make a better market for all producers.

"I'm not keen to ship. There's no economic feasibility," said Clark.

He has 700 feeders and 150 cow calves.

While there is demand for cattle across the border, Clark is daunted by the red tape to get it there.

He said regulations require him to pay a certified veterinarian the cost to verify the age of the animals.

Also, in the last two years, cost of shipping across the border has risen with



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Uffen Incorporated moves into old Chronicle building

Uffen Incorporated has relocated to 242 Graham Road in West Lorne from its home office in Rodney after 10 years of business. Ted and Louise Uffen have renovated the office to accommodate a meeting room for training sessions. Uffen Inc. assists other businesses in registering and maintaining ISO-type management systems as well as training internal auditors.

Tobacco farmers move on

A handful of tobacco farmers bought out of the industry earlier this year have moved on to experiment with new crops.

For the Fischer family farm between Rodney and West Lorne, cash crops will keep them going but they're hoping three new crops will make the farm successful once again.

Dennis and Sandra Fischer sold quota for 40 acres worth of tobacco in May in a buyout program.

"It was a fair deal," said Dennis. "It didn't put the farm ahead or behind."

More than 700 of the Ontario tobacco producers holding quota participated in the buyout auction.

Changes in the tobacco industry have left western Elgin County with 15 tobacco farms.

The clearing price in the buyout was \$1.05 per pound of basic production.

The program had its snags though for the Fischer family, the tobacco had already been planted in the greenhouses as they waited for the federal government to chip in money to the program.

But now, the family is looking ahead after 50 years in the tobacco industry.

"There was a lot of pride. I was never ashamed to grow it," he said.

Now, the Ontario government is working on legislation to ban smoking in public in 2006.

In May of this year, \$50 million dollars was given by both levels of government to the Flue-Cured Marketing Board.

In a bidding war, farmers like the Fischers sold their quota.

Modern kilns weren't as modern at the family farm and the next generation wasn't

interested in growing tobacco.

So the Fischers sold.

Now, they have several types of berries growing. The orchard is doing well and their daughter has taken to managing it.

Currently, the Fischers are also growing black tobacco also used for cigarettes but not part of the marketing board and buyout program.

In between their cash crops, grows 12 acres of hemp and bird seed.

Dennis, who researches soybeans at Ridgetown College full-time, is optimistic

about the future of hemp.

"It's not going to be as high paying as flue-cured tobacco but if industry and the public get behind it to produce it in quantity, it can be used for a lot of different things," he said.

The hemp in the field now will be sold for seed production.

"We have to try something," said Dennis.

While moving on, Dennis said every day he thinks about his decision to leave the industry and whether it was right or wrong.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Moving on
Dennis and Sandra Fischer have moved on from the tobacco industry to try crops like hemp and blueberries.