

From the Kincardine Independent

THE KEY TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS COLLABORATION, SAYS PREDC

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By Barb McKay

Kincardine's economic development should rely more heavily on businesses and organizations working more closely together, according to the municipality's economic development corporation.

The Penetangore Regional Economic Development Corporation (PREDC) held its annual meet and greet event on June 19 at the Best Western Plus Governor's Inn to update the public and the business community about new and ongoing initiatives. New executive director Ron Coristine reflected on his predecessor Gerry Taylor's vision for business retention and expansion in Kincardine. He said Taylor constantly reminded the PREDC board that the business community, municipality and organizations that work with businesses needed to collaborate more closely to encourage people to invest in Kincardine and shop local.

"That's what we'll continue to do," Coristine said, "because we are better when we are working together."

Starting this year, PREDC plans to host business seminars and post information on its website with ideas for how businesses can share ideas. There is also a plan in the works for a future innovation centre to help new entrepreneurs get up and running. Coristine said it's a large undertaking and PREDC is looking at potential partnerships and federal funding opportunities to make it happen.

Bren de Leeuw, senior community development manager for EMC (Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium) and a Kincardine resident, was the guest speaker at the meet and greet event. She said EMC was founded in Owen Sound 26 years ago to help manufacturers network to improve their operations after companies found that they were each trying to hire trainers for the same training program when the training could be run jointly. Now, EMC has more than 1,000 member companies across Canada who can connect online and through peer-to-peer networking.

"It's all about getting manufacturers to work together and share best practices," she said.

Coristine said the municipality has seen a recent influx of new businesses, including Mirage Décor, Penetangear, Little Beginnings Daycare and Learning Centre in Kincardine and Patz Pizza in Tiverton, as well as the soon to be constructed Marriott hotel and convention centre.