

the pulse

SAULT STE. MARIE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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ALTERNATIVE ENERGY: Solar announcement longtime coming but worth the wait
Pod set to construct massive solar energy farm in the Sault

Pod Generating Group secured financing and land for its massive solar energy farm in the city, the firm announced Jan. 7. The first 20 megawatts are expected to be in operation this summer and will power about 8,000 homes.

When complete, the 60-megawatt solar farm will be the largest of its kind in Canada.

“That it happened here is a great achievement for the economic development (spirit in the Sault), said Bradford Nordholm, CEO of Starwood Energy Group, which provided financing for the project.

Under its Renewable Energy Standard Offer Program, the province is purchasing Pod’s electricity at a guaranteed rate for 20 years. The goal of the program is to promote alternative energy production.

Along with its environmental benefits, Pod’s solar farm will also create local jobs in fields such as construction, electrical trades, engineering, operations and maintenance.

Meanwhile, the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation and its Development SSM division have been supporting Pod for a number of years on things like land acquisition and working through the government approval process.

John Febraro, the division’s Acting Executive Director,

used an iceberg analogy for his interaction with clients.

“Most of what we do is behind the scenes,” he said.

“With Pod, it took more than two years to get this project off the ground. During that time, we worked very closely with the company and government agencies involved.”

This help has not gone unnoticed.

“Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, they were available,” said Pod CEO David Livingston, who attributed the recent announcement to the “forward thinking” mentality of City Council, the City staff team, province, SSM Innovation Centre and Economic Development Corporation.

The solar farm will join the many Green projects already established in the Sault.

Councillor Steve Butland, Co-Chair of the City’s Environmental Initiatives Committee, is proud of the recent progress in the community’s Green sector. Pod’s solar announcement is another

link in the city’s alternative energy chain, he said. “This is part of a bright future for Sault Ste. Marie.”



TOP: Councillor Butland speaks at the solar announcement while Development SSM’s John Febraro looks on.



TOP (L to R): MPP Orazietti, Pod President and COO Glen Martin, Starwood Energy Group’s Bradford Nordholm, and Pod CEO David Livingston.



TOP (L to R): David Carroll and Boris Schubert, both from solar cell manufacturer Q-Cells International, with SSMEDC CEO Bruce Strapp, and SSMIC Executive Director Tom Vair.

2009: Year in Review

Though 2009 brought various economic challenges — caused by the global financial meltdown — the year also brought many opportunities.

With 2010 underway, over \$100 million in government stimulus investments are flowing through the Sault, including a:

- \$40+ million new federal bridge plaza
- \$28-million Alien Invasive Species Centre
- \$22-million new building for the Algoma Public Health Unit
- \$16-million Biosciences and Technology Convergence Centre at Algoma U
- \$16-million for a new wing at Sault College
- \$5-million expansion to the city's Waterfront Boardwalk

Meanwhile, for the SSM Economic Development Corporation's three operating divisions, highlights from 2009 include:



The pivotal event for the local tourism industry last year was the purchase of new coaches for the Agawa Canyon Train Tour. Facilitated by Tourism

PHOTO: Tourism SSM Executive Director Ian McMillan at the CARHA announcement June 9.



PHOTO: Greg Punch, EDC President/Board Chair, with Prime Minister Harper Sept. 2 during his visit to announce funding for a new federal bridge plaza in the Sault.

Sault Ste. Marie, the ongoing process to further renovate the attraction is eagerly anticipated by industry partners.

Tourism SSM was also involved in a successful bid on the 2012 Canadian Adult Recreation Hockey Association World Cup.

Involving 3,500 players from 120 international teams, it will inject up to \$15 million into the local economy and be the largest sporting event in the history of the city.

In 2009, Sault Ste. Marie was home to a variety of conferences and sporting events based on successful bids or other support from Tourism SSM. These include the Canadian Major Football League Championship and Franco-Ontario Games.

Other developments from last year include attracting a major movie production, Longfellow, to town and working to get new welcome signs at the city's entrances.



For Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, 2009 proved to be the year of the youth.

With summer jobs few and far between, a product of the recession, many of the Sault's youth decided to take matters into their own hands and start their own business.

ECSSM was there to help. The organization delivers the province's Summer Company program, which provides funding for students to operate a seasonal business. With 19 submissions receiving approval from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the program had one of its best years on record in the region.

Along with Summer Company's success, the Enterprise Centre helped 39 businesses start or expand operations in 2009, including Never Ending Games, Half-Pint Hooves and Phoenix Fire Protection.



In 2009, Development SSM continued to build on the city's Green sector.

One of its clients, Ellsin Environmental, secured \$2 million from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation and is constructing a tire recycling facility plant.

The facility will initially employ 25 people, with another 80 during construction, and process 900 tires daily.

Various other clients, in-



PHOTO: Andrew Ross (right), General Manager of ECSSM, with Paul Caputo, winner of the 2009 Summer Company of the Year Award for his business, Green Grass Lawn Care.

cluding Evolutiondeck Inc. and Black Loon Millworks, started or expanded as well.

With the goal of linking the local economy with countries around the world, Development Sault Ste. Marie also facilitated various trade missions in 2009. Delegates came from places far and wide, including India, Brazil, Israel, Spain, Dubai, Slovakia, Vietnam and the U.S.



PHOTO: Premier Dalton McGuinty visits the Sault July 16 to announce funding for Ellsin's tire recycling plant.

BUSINESS PROFILE: Local Friendly Gaming

New business offers top-notch board games

For as long back as he can remember, Chris Weatherby has been a gamer.

Whether it was a role-playing match or classic board game, he clung to the pastime at an early age, something many can relate to.

“Gamers usually enter the role-playing world starting at the age of 12, but many younger kids have explored it by watching their older siblings or parents play,” he said.

Recently, his passion for gaming reached a new level. Last year, he opened Local Friendly Gaming and now gives fellow gamers an opportunity to enjoy the hobby.

The Sault Ste. Marie business, located on Northern Avenue, offers a variety of role-playing board games. From beginner to the seasoned pro, players can access many of the top games around, including Lord of the

Rings and World of Darkness.

The firm also carries various miniature board game character pieces, magic cards and book lines like the very-popular Manga series.

The business can accommodate groups as well, said Weatherby. “We offer the use of two large gaming tables for our customers to book their group tournaments or to just have a friendly game night.”

Role-playing games have come a long way since the days of Dungeons and Dragons. Local Friendly Gaming is keeping this excitement alive and well in the Sault.

To help get his firm off the ground, Weatherby first took a trip to Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSM Economic Development Corporation. Its staff helped with business planning and other start-up matters.

Weatherby is now looking

to bring his business to new heights with the help of the Canadian Youth Business Foundation. The charity offers start-up loans of up to \$15,000, with an opportunity for an additional \$10,000, through the Business Development Bank of Canada.

“The CYBF program can help me with some of my business needs,” said Weatherby. “Areas like marketing, working capital and administrative tools would definitely benefit from the capital injection, and this would translate into better customer service and greater sales levels.”

Weatherby is working closely with Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie staff on the application process.

“Exploring a new idea can



PHOTO: Chris Weatherby at Local Friendly Gaming.

be overwhelming at times, and that’s where we come in,” said Zoltan Virag, ECSSM’s Youth Business Development Coordinator. “Local Friendly Gaming is a great example of diversity in business offerings for the city and region, and, as always, the Enterprise Centre will do everything it can to help the business succeed.”

For more information on CYBF, along with other grant and loan programs, contact Zoltan Virag at 705-541-7329 or z.virag@ssmedc.ca.

TOURISM: Olympic torch relay through the Sault nothing short of a complete success

Torch ceremony attracts thousands to Essar Centre

Nearly 5,000 Olympic fanatics packed Essar Centre — with thousands more cheering outside — for the torch-lighting ceremony Jan. 2.

Not only did the event fill up a few dozen hotel rooms, making it a success for the local tourism industry, it also provided one heck-of-a good time for Saultites of all ages.

Working with Olympic torch organizers, a Local Task Force, which included representatives from the City and Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, helped plan the party.

“It’s amazing what you can pull off when you have a great team working together,” said Task Force member Steve Hollingshead, Tourism SSM’s Coordinator of Special Projects and Sport Tourism.

The event, originally scheduled to be outside, was put indoors at the last minute. Severe cold weather caused the hydraulics on the portable stage to freeze up.

However, with a backup plan already established, the event was moved inside the Essar Centre with the help of

the facility’s workers.

“That really shows what City staff can do,” said Hollingshead.

The highlight of the evening came when local Paralympic swimmer Jessica Tuomela lit the torch.

Seeing that inspirational moment “made it all worth while,” said City Marketing and Events Manager Trevor Zach-

ary, who Co-Chaired the local Olympic Task Force with Councillor James Caicco.



PHOTO: Jessica Tuomela lights the Olympic torch while Mayor John Rowswell, MPP David Oraziotti, MP Tony Martin and others watch with pride.

VISION: Province's Growth Plan for Northern Ontario taking shape

EDC responds to Proposed Northern Ontario Growth Plan

In October 2009, the provincial government released a Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. Once finalized and implemented, the 25-year strategy will help chart the course of the region's future.

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation has been given an opportunity to provide a response to the Proposed Growth Plan, which will have significant influence on the future of the region.

With input from community stakeholders, the organization's Board of Directors and staff team have completed their response for the province, which is now available online at the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation's website, www.sault-canada.com.

"The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corpora-

tion is pleased to have been given an opportunity to provide input into this vital strategy," said SSMEDC President and Board Chair Greg Punch. "We believe our feedback reflects a wide-range of opinions while offering details that are more specific to the Destiny Sault Ste. Marie economic diversification strategy, along with the unique challenges and prospects that we face."

To go along with the feedback from its staff and Board members, the SSMEDC also held a public input session, where various people from local institutions were asked to attend and provide their own feedback. This information is incorporated in the SSMEDC's response to the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.

To read the Proposed Growth Plan, or to provide

your own input on the strategy, please visit www.placestogrow.ca.

Once the input session is complete, the final Growth Plan – which is being facilitated by the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, along with the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry – will be used to

chart the future of Northern Ontario. Again, the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation appreciates the opportunity to provide input into this vital strategy.

"The strat-

egy is very important for the future of Northern Ontario, and we encourage everyone to read the Growth Plan and provide their own input to the province, as it is important for all Northerners to be heard," said Bruce Strapp, CEO of the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation.



PHOTO: Bruce Strapp, Chief Executive Officer of the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, types away at his organization's Growth Plan public input session last month.

PROMOTION: Help secure a spot for Sault Ste. Marie on the upcoming Monopoly Canada board game



Saultites have an opportunity to help secure a spot for their city on Hasbro's new Monopoly Canada Edition. Sault Ste. Marie is one of 65 communities across the country on the ballot, with the top 20 taking home their place in Monopoly history.

Fans can vote online at

Advance to Sault Ste. Marie — Pass Go and Collect \$200

www.monopolyvote.ca. The deadline to cast a ballot is Feb. 7.

The city with the most votes will be placed on the highest rent property on the board, the spaces traditionally held by the always-lucrative Boardwalk and Park Place. Both residents and non-residents can vote, so spread the word to Sault Ste. Marie lovers everywhere.

"The final result of the Monopoly Canada Edition will be surprising, and only

time will tell how the vote will turn out," said Monopoly Brand Manager Michelle Sinclair. "We hope that fans will vote early and often for their favourite Canadian city."

Following the vote for the top-20 cities, a wild card stage will begin, where two lower-rent spaces — the ones traditionally held by Baltic and Mediterranean Avenues — are set aside for this second round of the competition. The wild card vote will take

place from Feb. 8 until Feb. 21.

Always looking for new ways to promote the community, the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation and its Tourism SSM division are here to spread the word: Vote today to help ensure the Sault is represented on this timeless and traditional family board game!

The new Monopoly Canada Edition will be available in stores this summer.

IN THE COMMUNITY: EDC Photo Gallery



SUMMER'S COMING: Zoltan Vi-rag, Youth Business Development Coordinator for Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSMEDC, explains the Summer Company self-employment program to a high school class at Ecole Secondaire Notre-Dame-des-Grands-Lacs.



DELTA DAZZLE: At the Jan. 20 grand opening for the newly-renovated Delta Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront Hotel are (L to R) Rosalie Graham, Coordinator of Meetings and Conventions for Tourism Sault Ste. Marie; Lindsey Errington, Tourism SSM's Administrative Assistant; Tara Lucarelli, Tourism Partnership Coordinator for Tourism SSM; and Hank Stackhouse, President and CEO of Delta Hotels and Resorts.



MC: John Febraro, Acting Executive Director of Development Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSM Economic Development Corporation, emcees Pod's solar announcement Jan. 7 while company President and Chief Operating Officer Glen Martin looks on.

January 2010

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Sault Ste. Marie
**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation recognizes the financial support it receives from the City of Sault Ste. Marie. As well, it recognizes the strong backing it receives from the Mayor, Council and City staff team. The SSMEDC also thanks the federal and provincial governments, and its many other partners, for their financial support.

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit organization, funded by public and private partners, whose goal is to be the community's leader in supporting and promoting an environment that generates sustainable employment in a healthy, growing and diversified economy.