

BABTA's work seen as a valuable community asset



Destination Cape Breton awarded a Visitor Services Award to BABTA in recognition of the organizations outstanding contribution to Tourism on Cape Breton Island. At the 2011 awards luncheon held at the Membertou Centre on April 21st, Verne McIntyre (L) accepted the glass and wrought iron piece, on behalf of BABTA from Dr. Ruth Goldbloom (R).

by Jim Morrow

The Baddeck Area Business and Tourism Association (BABTA) is embarking on a recruitment drive. The community based organization uses its membership fees to operate, staff and maintain the Visitor Information Centre (VIC). "That little building is the anchor for all that we do as an organization to promote Baddeck and surrounding areas. Every local business, as well as all businesses around the Cabot Trail, would feel the pinch if the VIC wasn't doing its job," states BABTA president, Glen MacDonald. We need more of every kind of business to share in the responsibility that BABTA has taken on. Tourism impacts everyone."

But BABTA also sees the bigger picture. "The Baddeck area is not just a tourist destination, but a viable community for singles, young families and retirees alike to live or move back to, to establish their homes and earn a living," Mr. MacDonald said. "Successful tourism businesses, besides hiring their own employees, hire non-tourism related businesses to maintain their roads, do the landscaping, the design work, information technology work, do the painting, renovating, advertising, accounting and legal work," he points out.

The BABTA executive believe that a membership in BABTA as an invest-

ment in Baddeck's future and solid support for the work of BABTA which is carried out by volunteers.

BABTA is a partner with other organizations such as the Village of Baddeck, Baddeck Lions Club and Bras Yacht Club, among others in many community events such as the Christmas Parade, Canada Day Parade, advertising and marketing the area in print and on line. Celtic Colors depends on BABTA to help fund the free bus that gives Festival participants at the Gaelic College safe transportation to and from their accommodations.

Warden Bruce Morrison said, "The Municipality recognizes the important role BABTA plays within the County. It ties in nicely with the Municipality's development priorities and BABTA is not and should not be limited to tourism operations."

"We are encouraging all businesses in the area to become members of BABTA," secretary Verne McIntyre said. She sees the benefits of living in a community that is the envy of many and everyone has a responsibility to help maintain and build on the many assets the area has to offer.

Ms. McIntyre also wants to recognize the long standing members without whom BABTA's success would not have been possible.

Municipality can help attract new physicians

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doctors offices at the Baddeck Hospital would help attract doctors as they would not have to pay rent or purchase office space. This is being investigated for Victoria County Memorial Hospital. Buchanan already has doctors offices at the facility.

Dr Genge and Buffet agreed that most graduating medical students are deeply in debt and do not want the lifestyle that goes with a 70 to 80 hour work week which most rural physicians must endure.

"A rural doctor may have a case load of 1,200 to 1,500 patients. We presently have four doctors dealing with over 7,000 patients," Dr. Genge told council.

Chief Administrative Officer Sandy Hudson asked the doctors what the Municipality could do to help attract new physicians to the area.

Their response was to ask the municipality to collaborate with the other levels of government to create the environment which will attract new physicians.

"There is no one easy answer but we welcome anything the Municipality can do, but if the situation is not fixed we will see the grim reality in the near future," Dr. Genge said.

Dr. Buffet added, "We are a heart beat away from closing a facility in Victoria County as neither Baddeck nor Buchanan can operate with only one physician."

SAC to meet with Board and Deputy Minister

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to the Deputy Minister of Education on May 4th has two main focuses: 1 - to advocate for these additional spaces, and 2 - to advocate that (despite monetary restrictions) the elementary wing must be adequately renovated."

The SAC is scheduled to make a presentation to the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board (CBVRSB) members at the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting, which will be held Monday, May 16th at 5pm at the CBVRSB Central Office, Sydney. All these meetings are open to the public.



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