

BOWDON NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

JANUARY - 2008

BOWDON DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC

The Board Members of BDCI received a refreshing boost of energy from the Horizons program this past year. Several ideas, which had been brewing over the last five years since the original strategic plan, are now gaining ground. In December, Horizons sent six community members to a Networking Luncheon in Bismarck. Upon returning, the six compiled a listing of the resources and knowledge they had gained. The Horizons Steering Committee, along with BDCI, will be using the resources for planning and raising funds. Fund-raising will allow us to proceed with projects in the school building; to work with the city council on beautification of the community; and to upgrade the water and sewer system.

BDCI applied for a Tourism Infrastructure Grant in September based upon the use of the school building during the annual DuckFest. The grant would have provided funds to add an "off peak" heating system to the newer part of the school building. The grant was denied, but work will continue on finding energy efficient ways to keep heating the school, and to add a renewable energy, environmentally friendly heating system to the old portion of the school.

Feasibility studies on using portions of the school for a commercial kitchen and lodging will also be complete as the Horizons program works alongside BDCI to bring people and new entrepreneurship to the community.

Six hundred tickets for the annual "Believe in Bowdon" Calendar Raffle have been on sale since December 24. \$4000. in cash prizes will be given away during March and April, 2008. Seventy percent of the proceeds will be used to fund BDCI costs and maintenance of the school building. The first \$1000. of the remaining thirty percent is being earmarked for the second Museum renovation and oral history project. The remaining proceeds will go to the Bowdon Locker and Grocery for new cooling equipment. Tickets may be purchased by contacting Freida Tebelius at 701-962-3080. BDCI is happy to have a volunteer group of community citizens bring back a form of "The Bowdon Guardian" to help the Bowdon-Chaseley-Heaton community stay in touch with each other and alumni and friends around the world. After much discussion on how to fund this quarterly periodical, which will include BDCI news, it was decided to raise membership dues from \$10. to \$15. per person. The change will require a vote at BDCI's Annual Meeting on June 16, 2008, and will take affect in 2009. BDCI's present membership is 117, with current membership dues at \$10. Many BDCI members generously send extra gifts of support. BDCI would like to triple membership in the next two years and have sufficient funds to support the paper without having to deal with cumbersome subscriptions. A no-advertising policy will put us in accordance with "nonprofit bulk" mailing rules. Please take time to fill out the membership form (on page 12) and pay your dues to show support to the many volunteers working to move BDCI

forward. Your involvement will help ensure our community a sustainable and thriving future.

by Patti Patrie

BOWDON LOOKS TO THE “HORIZONS” AND BEYOND

The success of any business, organization, or community today depends on its ability to envision its future and set goals and strategies to achieve it. The Bowdon area has the opportunity to accomplish this task with the financial support of the Northwest Area Foundation and its Horizons program. Bowdon-Chaseley-Heaton is the smallest community in the state to take part in the Horizons program, which began in the fall of 2006 and will celebrate its successes this coming July of 2008.

The community has already successfully completed the Horizons Study Circles and Action Forum segments in February 2007, and the LeaderShip Plenty® training in April and May. The Action Forum resulted in the identification of three areas of concern that the community is already addressing: promotion, utilizing the school building, and expanding food services.

Promotion Leads the Way

Promotion activities include a newspaper, which is expected to be published quarterly and sent to all alumni and community residents. In addition, brochures promoting the community, including the well-used and heartily praised RV Park, are to be found in rest areas across the state, leading visitors to come our way. In town, sign boards, which were built by volunteer Norman Remboldt, grace the City Park and the new cardrol gas station, reminding residents of upcoming events and visitors of services and accommodations available.

The internet is also being used to expand the visibility of Bowdon and the surrounding community. The community website can be found at www.bowdonnd.com and a new blog site, which you are invited to use, is <http://bowdon.communityblogs.us>. We here in the city of Bowdon love the internet, especially since we have received upgraded services from Dakota Central that include fiber optic high-speed internet, digital phone service with caller I.D. that is vocalized and flashes up on the TV screen, and expanded cable TV service. Yessir, we're running with the big guys!

Using the School

In the area of school building utilization, the committee is working on a feasibility study program, researching heating possibilities, and searching for funding.

One of the goals is to renovate the science lab in the newer part of the building for utilization as a commercial kitchen. This will enable the community to hold large group activities in what we now call the Auditorium, giving local residents the opportunity to do large scale cooking and baking for holidays and family activities outside of their own kitchen. Most importantly, a commercial kitchen would provide a venue for people to produce food products that are certified for wholesale and retail sales. We have great gardeners, great cooks, and great bakers in the community who could share the fruits of their talents with the world if they so choose.

Of course, with all of that good food, community residents could use some means to keep themselves fit and healthy. Accordingly, due to popular demand, the former music room

is now the Bowdon Fitness Center, with treadmills, cardio gliders, elliptical machine, bikes, ab lounger, abswing, rowing machine, and a bowflex.

The former library is, once again, the Library and Tech Center. Vivian Miller manages the library and provides twice-weekly Story Hour activities for our local pre-schoolers. Six computers are loaded with Windows XP and XP Office Pro and are connected to the internet. Winter classes in Office applications and using the internet effectively have started and are planned to continue on an as-needed basis.

Expanding Food Services

The third Action Forum goal, expanding food services, has led to discussions with the Bowdon Café Board regarding their needs and how BDCI and the community can be of assistance. The café is currently doing well, with both regular patronage by local people and hunters. To keep the café as a destination for travelers and hunters, the board foresees the need for a full time cook/manager.

In the near future, Laurel Jones is planning to open up an establishment serving a limited food menu and beverages in the evenings.

The Bowdon Locker and Grocery may be a small business, but it does a very good job of catering to the needs and wants of the customers. Just today, one could purchase fresh baby spinach, cilantro, and avocados. They are making it a point to fill requests for items if they can, expanding the community's choices.

Visioning/Group Decision Center

Continuing the Horizons Program process, the Bowdon-Chaseley-Heaton Community is embarking on such a mission as it surveyed 220 households and came together on November 4th to define the vision of its future.

Seventy-eight surveys were returned before the meeting. As thirty-five people entered the Bowdon Auditorium for the supper preceding the visioning activity, they were greeted by the sight of thirty-two laptop computers. The laptops were set up for the Interactive Group Decision Center provided by NDSU.

As the evening progressed, participants responded to nine themes that had been identified as important to the community by the analysis of the paper surveys. Via the computers, participants made comments, commented on others' comments, provided ideas for solutions, volunteered to help in specific areas, and identified other people who might want to help. Results were compiled by NDSU and sent to the Horizons Steering Committee. The nine survey themes are:

1. Support Local Business/Promote the Community
2. Encourage New Entrepreneurs/ Create New Jobs
3. Beautification
4. Build Industry—Tourism, Local Foods, Lodging, Green Energy Initiatives
5. Utilize the School Building
6. Improve Bowdon's Infrastructure
7. Build Community Support
8. Improve Senior Citizens' Services
9. Develop a Youth Program

If you wish to view the full Vision Statement that resulted from all of these activities, please go to the blog site, <http://bowdon.communityblogs.us>

The next step in the Horizons Program is Community Coaching and Action. During this final phase, we will have assistance in planning for and realizing our vision for the community. In addition, upon completion of successful blogging activities on the blog site, the Northwest Area Foundation will award us a computer and printer for use in community building. Finally, we are eligible to apply for up to a \$10,000 grant to aid us in our endeavors.

By Laurel Jones