

Heritage Centre closer to reality

Everyone's talkin' about it! What started out, in the community of Watrous-Manitou Beach, about six years ago as quiet whispers and wide-eyed speculation is now beginning to look much more realistic. The sparkle in the eyes of Board of Directors chair Kathy Bergen and vice-chair Lionel Sproule tells it all, the Watrous Manitou Beach Heritage Centre is more than the wild dream it seemed almost six years ago.

Approximately a year ago the Heritage Centre board and fundraising committee members set a goal of raising a minimum of \$550,000 to purchase and renovate the SaskWater provincial building (located on Main Street, Watrous) as the future home of the Watrous Manitou Beach Heritage Centre.

"As the initial step in the actual capital campaign fundraising process, the Heritage Centre fundraisers have spent the past few months approaching businesses. Not only were our volunteers offered wonderful encouragement for driving this worthwhile project forward," noted Bergen, "but they also came away with financial support." Once word filtered out that the fundraisers were actively seeking funds some community-minded individuals also stepped forward with much appreciated financial donations, Bergen added. It was announced at the June 13th Heritage Centre board meeting the capital campaign is half-way to achieving its goal of \$550,000.

With the Watrous-Manitou Beach Homecoming occurring this weekend, the decision was made to publicly open up the capital campaign to the general public. People realize, talk alone won't create much of anything. Board vice-chair Sproule stated, "It will be necessary to garner financial support from the general public before our community's long-held dream of having a heritage centre becomes a reality." Sproule feels strongly that a heritage centre will prove to be a tremendous asset to the local community.

Volunteers will be present at the curling rink as well as the Watrous Civic Centre during the Homecoming celebrations to provide information about the Heritage Centre and to accept donations. Speaking on behalf of the board members, Bergen said, "We truly thank those who have already donated, and look forward to meeting new donors during Homecoming and into near the future." The Heritage Centre will have a display set up at the Watrous Civic Centre during Homecoming. Those who miss seeing the display, are urged to check out the Heritage Centre's website at www.WatrousHeritage.ca.

The local community could give themselves a huge pat on the back, if the Heritage Centre capital campaign could achieve its goal by this fall. Raising \$550,000 in one year would be a real feather in the cap of the community – it would speak volumes about the kind of community Watrous-Manitou Beach is.

Sproule acknowledged the Heritage Centre board intends to recognize each donor to the capital campaign, recognition will be somewhat reflective of the level of the donation. Knowing each business, family or individual has a charitable donations budget, the Heritage Centre board, at its most recent meeting, officially established the levels of financial support as follows:

Heritage Founders Club - \$50,000 or more
Heritage Benefactor - \$25,000 to \$49,999
Heritage Protector - \$5,000 to \$24,999
Heritage Patron - \$2,500 to \$4,999
Heritage Friend - \$1,000 to \$2,499
Heritage Fan – under \$1,000

For those donors who want to contribute financially, but prefer to make the donation through a couple payments rather than one lump sum payment, Bergen said the board does have a payment plan to accommodate a donor's budget and financial pledge. The board hopes individuals, families and businesses will be able to dig deep to show their financial support for the Heritage Centre. While every single donation cannot be featured in the newspaper, the pictures in this and previous issues indicate some donors who have led the way.

Yes, with each additional donation excitement grows about the potential of our community developing a heritage centre. Let's make it happen!