

KIWANIS CLUB SPEAKER

November 7, 2012

I've been asked to speak about the Heritage Building, the Industrial Park and Economic Development in Milo.

Economic recoveries do not begin in Washington, and they do not come from the largess of big business, millionaires and billionaires choosing to create jobs; they begin in small towns like Milo where people decide they have had enough of doing without and they want something better. They begin with the realization that we are all in this together and that the only way we are going to get out of it is by working together for the greater good.

If this sounds just a little familiar, it's because it's what we all grew up with and spent most of our lives learning over and over again.

In Milo we are blessed with a few small businesses that have grown successfully through the years and have replaced the job losses of the past. JSI Store Fixtures, Lumbra Hardwoods and Tradewinds are shining examples of what can happen when we work together as a community with small businesses that want to be a part of our community and want to work with us.

Where once stood Dexter Shoe, now JSI is ever growing and expanding. Where once stood the old railroad shops and farms, now Lumbra is steadily building one of the best quality, modern computerized sawmills in the hardwood industry. Both of these firms are leaders in their industries in the Northeast. The Town of Milo is rightfully proud of them and works with them as they continue to grow and develop.

Today, we are actively involved in working with another small business that has demonstrated its ability to start small here in Milo and begin to build a niche in another growing market. The Heritage Building went to construction on October 1st with an ambitious construction schedule that will be ready to turn over to its prime tenant during the Christmas Holidays this year.

Elaine's Basket Café and Bakery is that new tenant, and with her move into the new building, will re-focus her business from a breakfast and lunch café, with an attached bakery operation, to a full fledged bakery operation with an attached breakfast café. The change will be the critical step to giving Elaine the opportunity to demonstrate that her exceptional bakery products, hard work and business sense can take a commanding position in the bakery market in Central and Eastern Maine.

For those of you who may not be fully aware of the Heritage Building project, the building will be owned by the Town of Milo. It contains two business

leases, Elaine's at 1,800 square feet and a second one to be built out later on a build to suit basis. However, in order to do so the Town of Milo must produce a proposed lease that entails, not less than three and possibly as many as four, low-moderate income jobs committed for not less than two years each. For each low-moderate income job created, the Town receives \$ 20,000 of additional grant money toward the cost of building out the second leasehold which consists of 1,500 square feet.

Even as we are sitting here this morning, the framing of the Heritage Building is rapidly progressing with a fully enclosed, weather tight date of November 15th. Once they have reached that point, the schedule is far more predictable. Assuming that all goes according to schedule, the Heritage Building will be substantially complete by mid-December.

The Heritage Building is the fourth piece in the overall redevelopment plan for Downtown Milo. The first was the Riverfront Veterans Memorial Park which was completed earlier this year. The second piece was the full depth repaving of Route 16 from the Main Street Bridge to Billington Road. The third piece was the repair and painting of the Main Street Bridge. All of these have now been completed.

The fifth piece, scheduled to go to construction next Spring, is the Safe Streets Main Street Project that will include a reconfiguration of the traffic, drainage and amenities from the Main Street Bridge to just past the NAPA Store. It will also include the improvements to the Pleasant Street Intersection that will make it easier to use and, hopefully, a great deal safer.

A new element was finally added to the project this week. The Maine Department of Transportation, with supplemental funding from the Maine Community Development Block Grant Program, has finally agreed to add to the existing project the intersection improvements at Elm and Main Streets. At long last, the stone wall at the Camden National Bank will be pulled back in a wide radius to put a curve in place of the ninety degree turn that now exists. On the other side of Elm, the curb and sidewalk will be pulled back an additional four feet. When the project is completed, it should no longer be necessary for trucks to choose between mounting the sidewalk or swinging wide into oncoming traffic to pass through this intersection. All of this work is anticipated to start construction in the Spring and to be completed in the Fall.

The next piece of this work is scheduled to begin construction next Spring, as well. The Route 11 repaving project is setup in two pieces. The first in 2013, will include all of the underground work in preparation for grinding and repaving the highway surface in 2014/2015. This project is entirely an MDOT project similar to the Route 16 project. When complete, it should produce a new travel surface from the NAPA Store to the Brownville Town Line.

At the same time as the Route 11 underground work is being completed in 2013, the Town of Milo, through a joint project with MDOT, will be installing the intersections for the Milo Industrial Park. The one on the far side of the Park will be a heavy truck entrance with turn lanes. The one just past the Family Medical Practice Center will be a passenger vehicle entrance that will also serve as an emergency entrance whenever the truck entrance is not available.

The Town of Milo, through the Economic Development Incentive grant funding it received as a Congressional Earmark funding several years ago, will be building the balance of the initial roads for the Industrial Park in 2013 as well. The Milo Select Board has advised me to initiate engineering immediately to begin the process of completing the roads and to update the permits and the underlying restrictions of the Park, along with changing the name and mission of the Park to Eastern Piscataquis Business Park. The intent of these changes is to open the Park to a wider variety of uses that produce jobs and increase our tax base.

In conjunction with the need to serve both our Business Park, and our existing businesses and manufacturers, we have chosen to focus some of our time and efforts toward a goal of providing our residents, businesses and manufacturers in the Town of Milo, located within two miles of the newly installed fiber optic cables, with very high speed internet services now, not in 2015 as originally scheduled.

Our Select Board has asked me to announce this morning that Fairpoint Communications, who installed a very high speed optical fiber cable in Milo six months before the 3 Ring Binder Project cable was installed, have agreed to a marketing plan to provide very high speed internet service at extremely competitive rates, and with no installation costs. This will save our residents, businesses and manufacturers a great deal of money, both upfront and on a monthly fee basis. This will be one more step in bringing Milo, not just up to date, but moving forward into a better and brighter future. It is also one critical piece of other announcements expected by next Spring. This is a very big thing as it is a huge location factor in the business world.

Those of you who want the new service now may look at the Three Rivers Communities Website for the marketing brochures and details of these offers. At least at this time, we are being offered comparable prices to what are available in the larger communities and cities in Maine who always seem to get better service and lower prices than Milo. To order the new services, please contact Fairpoint Communications directly at the telephone numbers on the website.

Among all of these big things, a few other things have been going on in the background. MDOT has done an excellent job of repairing the bridges over the Pleasant River on Pleasant Street and over the Sebec River on Elm Street. Bob Hussey in his first year as Cemetery Foreman, and his crew, have done an exceptional job of getting the Evergreen Cemetery cleaned up and restored to the beautiful and peaceful place that it should always be. The kitchen renovation project in town hall has started the design phase with the goal of having it available for use for the 2013 Annual town Meeting. There are numerous other projects and improvements in progress or being put forward for the 2013 fiscal year.

Before I close my comments, I would like to remind you that nothing ever happens in a vacuum. All of these things take a great deal of time and effort from many people. I would like to thank the many people who served on our Select Boards and Committees, Jane Jones and Jeff Gahagan – the Milo Town Managers who labored long and hard to lay the groundwork for these accomplishments, the business community for daring to dream of something better, the USDA Rural Development Office, The Maine Department of Transportation, the Maine Department of Conservation, the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development - Community Development Block Grant Program, the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council, and our Congressional and Legislative Delegations, and the many unnamed others who have contributed to these accomplishments.

Economic recoveries do not begin in Washington, nor do they come from the largess of big business, millionaires and billionaires choosing to create jobs; they begin in small towns like Milo where people decide they have had enough of doing without and they want something better. They begin with the realization that we are all in this together and that the only way we are going to get out of it is by working together for the greater good. We have brought together a great many people from all walks of life to make Milo a better place in which to live and work; and we are only just beginning. Thank you.