

C-K chosen for immigration study

ORGANIZERS HOPE NEWCOMERS WILL BOOST THE ECONOMY

Posted By ERICA BAJER, THE DAILY NEWS

Updated 1 year ago

Chatham-Kent is one of two rural areas chosen to participate in a study of immigration.

The Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO) project is focused on developing ways to attract and keep immigrants in rural areas.

“Chatham-Kent’s very fortunate to have been one of the sites selected,” said Teresa Fysh, executive director of the Cultural Coalition of Chatham-Kent.

She said the municipality was chosen to participate because of its location, strong rural community, small urban centres and unique geographic size.

“This is truly a community-driven initiative that will enable Chatham-Kent to maximize its existing resources and increase our attractiveness to newcomers and new investments,” she said.

The CIRRO study is aimed at responding to the growing need to deal with declining populations in rural communities.

Fysh said a project kick-off workshop is planned for Jan. 29. It’s aimed at sharing knowledge, experience and ideas about how to make immigrant attraction, integration and retention a success locally, she said.

With the growing need for rural communities to deal with the issue of labour force and population decline, she said the CIRRO project will hopefully help enhance Chatham-Kent’s ability to get and keep newcomers thereby sustaining local economic growth.

“This will give us an opportunity to reverse our economic decline and increase our population and build a thriving Chatham-Kent,” Fysh said.

Highlights of the workshop include a speaker and panel discussion, brainstorming exercises, information about demographic challenges in rural communities and outlining an action plan for immigrant attraction and retention.

The other community selected by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to participate in the project is Brockville.

Fysh said from 2001 to 2006, Chatham-Kent attracted 1,025 new immigrants.

“We get a lot of newcomers who come to our area, but they don’t stay,” she said.

Fysh said participating in the project will help Chatham-Kent achieve one of its corporate strategic directions: diversifying the population by recruiting and retaining recent immigrants.

The kick-off workshop is being held from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Retro Suites Hotel. To register call 519-354-0430 or by e-mail at culturalcoalition@kent.net.

