

PRESS RELEASE



From: CFDC of Middlesex County

Date: January 13th, 2009

RE: Middlesex Tourism – Focus Group

A focus group was held on Thursday January 8th, 2009, to discuss the future of tourism in Middlesex County. There were 12 participants representing various areas within the county.

The group was advised, their input and suggestions would be part of the report currently being formulated by the research and development coordinator now working with Community Futures Development Corporation of Middlesex County.

After identifying what a “tourist” was in Middlesex County, the discussion then focused on the types of tourism a visitor could experience.

Heritage/Cultural tourism, Eco-tourism, Agri-tourism, Sports-tourism, and the “Rubber Tire Market” (*within driving distance of London, Sarnia and the US, without the need for an overnight stay*) were all identified as existing tourism opportunities in Middlesex County with potential for growth.

The participants were enthusiastic and soon identified the need for all parts of the county to work together. They also determined it would be necessary to establish communication with each other, in order to promote and encourage the growth of tourism in Middlesex County.

In essence, the question became; how do we expand, capitalize, and enhance, tourism in Middlesex County? Marketing, packaging, accessibility to information, tourist centres, maps, points of interest, a visitors trail and day trip concepts were just some of the suggestions that came out of the discussions within the focus group. Networking, coordination, and partnerships were reoccurring solutions to the questions posed.

The end result; tourism is happening in Middlesex County, we are not taking full advantage of what we have to offer, and in doing so we are missing out on the growth potential which would further the economic development of our county.

The group came up with several recommendations; one being the need for a tourism association in Middlesex County. It was interesting to note the suggestions and recommendations made by the focus group mirrored those of the consultant who prepared the *Draft Economic Development Strategy for Middlesex County in April of 2008*.

-30-