

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER - 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Friday, January 29, 2016 was a historic day for the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce. On that day your Chamber purchased the property at 8276 Park Road in the Town of Batavia that will serve not only as the Chamber's headquarters but also as a new Genesee County Tourism Visitors Center.

For the past 15 years or so, the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce, in its role as the county's Tourism Promotion Agency, has been looking for a home closer to the Exit 48 Thruway Interchange. The reason for wanting to move is a simple one – location, location, location. While we feel our staff has done an excellent job in externally marketing Genesee County and all of its assets, we believe we can do a much better job of internally marketing the county to visitors at a location closer to the Thruway interchange.

There have been a number of near misses at finding a good location near the Thruway through the years. Last spring, the Chamber Board of Directors decided to put together another effort at finding a more strategic location for our tourism operations by forming a task force to look at possible locations.

The task force quickly identified the property at 8276 Park Road as a possible site for a new Genesee County Visitors Center. Many of you may know the location as the former home of Sports Plus Physical Therapy.

While the building is not in move-in condition it has the most important factor – location, location, location. There are over 800 hotel rooms within a ¾ mile radius from this location. There is Batavia Downs right down the street. There are the shopping centers on Veterans Memorial Drive. There are popular restaurants like Alex's Place and Applebee's nearby. There is the Palm Island Indoor Water Park right next door.

We feel that by hosting an attractive Visitors Center at this location we can do a much better job of marketing our assets to those overnight travelers at the hotels and the day-trippers visiting Batavia Downs, our restaurants and our shopping centers by enticing them deeper into the county.

We will be able to direct them to more shopping and more restaurants in our downtown areas throughout the county. We can tell them about the Holland Land Office and Jell-O Museum and other

historic locations in Genesee County. We can give them directions to Darien Lake and our many fine golf courses. We can tell them about the many events and festivals going on that they may not be aware of. This location would allow us to take Tourism marketing to the next level in Genesee County.

8276 Park Road is not without its challenges. The building is a house that was converted into a business. While the building has “good bones”, it will need a major overhaul to make it an attractive, appealing multi-purpose facility that can house the Chamber of Commerce offices and a Tourism Visitors Center that all of Genesee County can be proud of.

Fortunately, we have a Task Force and a Board of Directors who can envision how this property can be converted from former house to a Visitors Center. We also have a Board of business leaders from throughout the county that is fiscally responsible enough to realize that we must be able to afford such a project.

We now move into the second phase of this project – the renovation of the building. Ed Smart of smartDesign has been hired to design the renovation and a drawing of the new Visitors Center is shown above. If all goes well, we hope to be in our new home by early fall.

It is going to be an exciting year for the Chamber. I want to thank all of you for your support as Chamber members. It's a great time to be in the Chamber!

Sincerely,

Tom Turnbull

Chamber President