

It's smooth sailing for new centre

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by **Stephannie Johnson**

PARRY SOUND - Construction of the new Sail Parry Sound Centre on Belvedere Wharf Point is well underway, guests at the Mayor's Breakfast learned earlier this month. The first phase of the project is expected to be completed by the end of this summer.

Sail Parry Sound vice president Larry Woolner also outlined the fundraising initiatives the group currently has on the go, as well as plans for its upcoming sailing season.

Since its inception in 1998, Sail Parry Sound has supported economic growth in the area and has offered high-calibre sailing training for children and youth, Mr. Woolner said.

"We have 40 students per week, for eight weeks of the summer," he said. "We've developed a successful race team that competes in Ontario and Quebec and we're among the first to start a dedicated basic sail program for children aged seven to nine years old."

The sailing school operated from the New Town Beach for many years. But this summer, even though the project is not yet complete, they will be able to sail from their new location at Waubuno Beach, or Belvedere Wharf Point.

"We've been doing it all in the early years on borrowed property, using borrowed ramps and now we've got quite a fleet," he said.

"All employees are graduates of Sail Parry Sound and we now have a long-term lease with Town of Parry Sound for the site of the new Sail Parry Sound Centre. It's taken a lot of support from individuals, business, and government, and a lot of imagination and hard work by our volunteer committee."

The \$525,000 project has received considerable funding—\$375,000 from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, FedNor and the Trillium Foundation. Locally, \$95,000 has been donated to the group, but it still needs an additional \$55,000 to complete the project.

The concept for the sailing school is quite unique, Mr. Woolner said, because the new facility will not only house a training centre, but also a public park.

"Today at the site you'll see the wharf which is over 100 years old. We'll be building a multi-purpose ramp to launch canoes, kayaks and windsurfers. And we'll be improving parking, and creating the Sunset Trail, or the Sunset Promenade, that eventually will connect seamlessly with the Fitness Trail."

Over the next several weeks, and in time for the Dragon Boat Festival, lighting will be installed at the site, along with the gated boat storage, dock hardware and the Sail Parry Sound sign.

Soon after phase one of the project is completed at the end of the summer, construction of the remaining elements of the project will begin. This will include construction of the boat storage building, sail loft



Above, Phase one of the new site for the Sail Parry Sound Centre on Belvedere Wharf Point is expected to be completed by the end of the summer. Phase two of the project could start later in the fall.

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and workshop, as well as landscaping, and connecting the Sunset Trail to the Fitness Trail.

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