

# Vision developed for Picture Port Elgin initiative

By JOAN LEBLANC

STAFF REPORTER

The Village of Port Elgin is one step closer to having its own sustainability plan.

The Picture Port Elgin steering committee, comprised of community members including Port Elgin deputy mayor Val MacDermid and in conjunction with the Tantramar Planning District Commission, is overseeing the development of a sustainability plan for the community. The group recently completed a vision statement which will assist with the establishment of a sustainability plan.

"When we talk about a sustainable community, it's one that supports the people, uses fewer resources in that it is more gentle to the environment, lives within its means where it can support its people; and has culture, recreation, activities, places where people meet. This type of plan would focus on the needs of the community for at least the next 30 years," Tracey Wade, a planner with TPDC, said Monday.

Understanding where people have come from, what they value today and what they picture for Port Elgin in the future is the foundation of any community's sustainability plan, she noted.

The Picture Port Elgin plan envisions a

safe, accessible, friendly and close-knit community that boasts an exceptional quality of life for all. The village will also maintain a growing, diverse, local business sector based on sustainable development; its residents will be proud of their Maritime heritage. Port Elgin will be a clean, healthy community engaged in "green" practices and will be a place residents are proud to call home.

"This vision came out of all the work that has been going on over the past several months to get community members involved. The community engagement pieces were based on four questions: Why do you live in Port Elgin? When you think about the future, what concerns you? Imagine we are 30 years in the future and you are telling your grandchildren why Port Elgin is a great place to live. What do you see that makes it a great community? And, as a member of the community, what do you think is your responsibility to achieve this vision?" Wade noted.

A Sustainable Planning for Youth camp held in August in Port Elgin also brought about ideas and issues that contributed to the development of the vision statement, she added.

Over the past several months, the steering committee has also undertaken a number of initiatives to gain input from members of the

community, including several informal get-togethers with community members as well as community presentations and discussions with local service organizations.

Children at Port Elgin Regional School were also asked for their input and given a "sustainability checklist" to take home with them. Younger students drew pictures, many of which are posted around the village, at the village office, Pedvac and in the school.

Wade said more activities are planned for 2011 where interested community members can get involved. Information on the initiative can be obtained by contacting the Port Elgin village office, Tantramar Planning District Commission or by checking out the Picture Port Elgin website at <http://picture-portelgin.ca/>

She said the steering committee welcomes any input on Port Elgin's sustainability plan, noting people don't have to come up with a lot of ideas to participate in this initiative.

"If they have a thought or idea about what they'd like to see within the community in the future, we invite them to give us a call, send us a letter or send an email," Wade said.

"A sustainability plan is important. It provides the village council with information that helps them to plan more effectively for the future of the community."