

All roads lead to Maynooth



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By Kristena Schutt-Moore

After a long summer season full of construction, Hastings Highlands held a grand opening of Hwy 62 North. On Saturday, Sept. 5, Hastings Highlands council and the Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association teamed up to celebrate the road reopening by hosting the All Roads Lead To Maynooth event.

The festivities kicked off at The Maynooth General Store with the official ribbon cutting. Deputy Mayor Tracy Hagar said a few words on behalf of Mayor Vic Bodnar, who was unable to attend the event, "We are here today to open the revitalized Maynooth downtown, a community with a long and historic past and hopefully a glorious future. Today we acknowledge all community members who have lived and worked most of their lives to make this a better place to live."

Council invited Vera Scott, who, with her husband Jack, owned and operated the Maynooth General Store and built the house that is now the Wildewood Gallery, to cut the ceremonial ribbon. Current owners of the general store, Carla and Bob van Balen Walter, were also part of the ceremony.

Council selected the Maynooth General Store as the place for the ribbon cutting because it has been at the corner of the community on Hwy 62 North since the hamlet of Maynooth got its start. They wanted to honour the work that went into the rehabilitation of the road and community that was done by both the township and the business community.

Having the highway repaired and benches placed along Maynooth's main street was the first phase of the beautification of Maynooth. Business liaison for the council, Linda Lang, says that there are three other phases. Lang gives her reports to Councillor Nancy Matheson and together they have worked to ensure that the area businesses have been heard throughout the road construction and beautification of Maynooth this summer by the township.

The railings for the sidewalks are part of phase two, but unfortunately due to restrictions with COVID-19 they are on backorder. The design for the railings and benches were voted on by the Maynooth businesses and they selected an artistic circular design that works with the railings of The Arlington Hotel.

The businesses selected these railings to showcase Hastings Highlands artistic side and honour the hotel which is part of Maynooth's earliest history. The next steps, once the railings are in, will be phase three which will include selecting items such as planters,

gardens and seasonal decorations.

Because COVID-19 made it impossible to host the annual Maynooth Madness event over the Labour Day long weekend, the business association decided to celebrate the opening of Hwy 62 North with the township and council by hosting the All Roads Lead To Maynooth event. Shops that were in the area of the construction all summer rolled out their inventory for sidewalk sales. The farmers' market was in full swing and kept busy with over 14 vendors in the front of Memories Bakery and Tea Room. Organizer of the farmers' market Chris Hass said, "It's crazy here today! Absolutely mad! We need that!?"

The United Church hosted their annual bake sale in support of the Maynooth and Area Food Bank, as well as the Maynooth Public School's lunch program and their mission work. They were sold out by the end of the day's events.

The Wildewood Gallery also hosted music on their front step with Suzanne Ballantyne. She played for donations for the Maynooth and Area Food Bank.

Lang and the business association are hoping that the railings and garbage cans that are ordered, will be in place by Thanksgiving. If so, they are looking into the possibility of another main street celebration.