

Employment service providers coming to Whitney

By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Holly Hayes, the former CAO/clerk-treasurer with South Algonquin Township, and now the senior project manager and change strategist with Trestle Consulting, is working with Agilec, an Employment Ontario service provider that offers personalized support to job seekers and employers, to bring employment service providers to Whitney on Oct. 25 at the Lester B. Smith Community Centre from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Hayes and Dr. Angela Pollak, chair of the South Algonquin Business Alliance comment on this upcoming opportunity to connect job applicants to employers in Whitney.

Hayes told Bancroft This Week on Sept. 29 that Trestle Consulting was working with Agilec to bring an employment collaboration open house to South Algonquin. She said that Agilec is an Employment Ontario service provider offering personalized job supports to both job seekers and employers.

‘They have tools and a network of service providers to assist job seekers and employers navigate a changing labour market. They are funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and as such, they can provide services at no cost within our community,’ she says.

Hayes says the objective of the event is to introduce employers and job seekers to both employment support service providers and start a discussion about local employment needs and solutions. Some examples of the support that Agilec can give employers, according to Hayes, include recruitment, hiring, on-boarding and retention.

‘They can also help job seekers find meaningful, long-term employment through one-on-one career planning, personalized employment and skills and upgrading action plans. In addition, they are also going to help us understand community resources available starting with this session,’ she says.

Hayes says their vision for the event is to have service providers and community agencies provide a short presentation about their organization, what they do and how they can help within the community. She says that they’re looking for employers to provide a summary of what types of skills they look for when hiring or what types of support they need and anything they’ve done to compete in the job market that seems to be working. There will also be coffee and treats at the event for attendees. If any employers are interested in sharing information about their organization and what they offer, contact Hayes at holly@trestleconsulting.org or at 613-332-8634 and she can add you to the list of presenters on Oct. 25. There is also a short survey she can send out to employers interested in participating in the event.

Pollak says that although they won’t be able to attend the Oct. 25 event as they have nobody to volunteer at this time, they applaud what Trestle Consulting and Agilec are doing. She says that SABA’s goal is to support a township where people can thrive while they live, work and play and they support all manner of economic development.

‘While skilling of workers and supply and demand labour mismatches are always part of these conversations, SABA recognizes that investment in lagging infrastructure like housing, transportation and internet access are also significant barriers to the skilling of workers and labour force participation. Workers and employers in our region will continue to struggle as long as workers lack sufficient transportation options to get to places of employment, as long as residents are excluded from access to high speed internet and as long as there isn’t enough housing for residents and workers who want to stay or come into this region. We encourage council to return to the table for an economic development committee meeting to address these issues. The last economic development committee meeting was April, 2022, almost eighteen months ago,’ she says.

Hayes told Bancroft This Week that Trestle Consulting is her company, ‘a bridge that provides support to rural communities.’ Their

main focus is doing project work for local government, agencies and non-profits.

?In the process of starting up, I began researching small business resources and service providers for South Algonquin. I'm aware that South Algonquin doesn't often get the level of service that other places do because of our geographic location and being cut off from the rest of Nipissing district. In discussing this with Agilec, I had offered that if they needed local connections or there is anything that I could do to promote economic development or other small businesses or home businesses in the area I would be willing. Since then, I've been working with other service providers and mentioning the idea of getting more activity here in South Algonquin and most are interested in coming, but don't know how best to do this,? she says. ?The idea with this event is to start a conversation locally and within the organizations coming to see if we can make some connections and get some more resources.?