

Local manufacturer receives grant for new product line



From left, Jeff Pickney from the Ministry of Economic Development; Melanie Wright, project manager for Community Futures; Jimmy Haythornwaite, the owner of Universal Seal; Blaine Shannick, Plant Manager of Universal Seal; Mary Lynn Rutledge, General Manager of Community Futures as they celebrate the plant expansion. Photo submitted

Universal Seal in Hastings Highlands just received a grant of \$100,000 from the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC). The grant (conditional on project completion) represents a contribution to the costs of equipment and training to support the development of a new polyurethane seal product line. The new line will be sold world-wide.

The new line is expected to increase the company's sales by \$100,000 in just its first year. Existing staff will get new training, and two new workers will be hired. The 50 year old company currently has 24 full-time and two part-time employees.

Plant Manager Blaine Shannick said this was part of a four-year expansion which will see over \$800,000 in total invested. CFDC Chair Jim Etmanski added: "This expansion is an excellent example of how small scale manufacturing can prosper in rural eastern Ontario by generating innovative concepts and developing them into a reality."

In total, the Eastern Ontario Development Program plans to spend \$48 million in the region over a five year period (2014-2019) in support of commercial and industrial innovation and economic development.

Submitted