

**Henderson Harbor Area Chamber of Commerce
Economic Development Committee**

Galloo Island Wind Farm Project and Henderson Property Values

This is the first in a series of articles on a wide variety of issues that impact the economic life of Henderson's business community and the increasing number of people who visit here or have made Henderson their year round or seasonal home.

But first, the chamber would like to thank Karl Fowler and the Jefferson County Journal for the opportunity to report and comment on the important issues facing this unique corner of the world on the eastern end of Lake Ontario also frequently referred to as the Golden Crescent. Henderson and other nearby small towns are often overlooked in the mass media coverage of big television and big newspapers. The voice of small town citizens is frequently lost in the blizzard of state and national news. We are fortunate to have a truly grass roots newspaper that has for many years reflected the ideals and culture of our community.

Henderson, like so many other North Country towns is struggling for its economic existence. Issues of water, sewer and good government are the keys to our survival and future development. Preservation of our scenic attractions and natural resources are critical to our success. Local businesses and the citizens of Henderson and similar nearby communities are dependent on decisions made not only at the local town level, but at the county and state level. Overall policy, the laws that implement it and the agencies that administer those laws have a major impact on all of us. Local communities need to be heard.

Stony Point Wind Energy, LLC has announced that it is abandoning its current development of commercial wind turbine facilities in Henderson. If you were worried about your property values you were probably relieved. More likely you had no idea of Wind Energy's activities. It should be noted that the properties Wind Energy have lease options with to promote their development which is currently postponed, still have options that can be exercised at a later date, or transferred to another developer. The project can be reactivated easily by another developer, due to the rights property owners ceded to Wind Energy.

Similarly, we suspect that most Henderson residents are totally unaware of how far along the application process is for the Hounsfield (Galloo Island) wind farm project. This is an enormous project consisting of eighty four (84) commercial wind turbines approximately four hundred (400) feet high. Galloo Island is closer to Henderson than to Hounsfield, but is within the jurisdiction of Hounsfield. Tucked behind Stony Island, this large island presents a low profile on the horizon. That low visibility is now very much at risk.

The "Wind Turbine Impact Study" was published in September, 2009, by Appraisal Group One. It was an independent study done under contract for the Calumet County Citizens for Responsible Energy. Sometimes referred to as the Wisconsin Study, it is a

devastating read on the negative impact that wind turbines have on property values. The report also provides a general summary on the issues of noise, health, quality of life, tax implications, economic impact and overall effectiveness of wind energy. The report includes an extensive bibliography. It is a must read for anyone who wants to be informed about wind energy. A copy of the report is available at the Henderson Free Library. They will also download your own copy at low cost or you can retrieve the study at www.wind-watch.org/documents/wind-turbine-impact-study.

Galloo Island is about six (6) miles from Stony Point. The towers will be clearly visible in wide areas of Henderson during the day and the night sky will be dramatically lit by the towers' red warning lights. If you own property that has a view shed looking out towards Lake Ontario, be assured you will, if the Galloo Island project proceeds, now have a view shed filled with industrial machinery and blinking lights. This same dilemma affects lake facing properties in surrounding Townships of Hounsfield, Brownville, Ellisburg, Lyme and Cape Vincent.

In 2009, a complete revaluation of Henderson properties was completed. A review of the assessment rolls clearly shows that water front and water view property valuations had major increases and are the highest valued properties. Within that group it is also true that the most valuable properties face Lake Ontario. Properties on the water or with views of the water provide the vast majority of the total Town of Henderson tax base.

For most families, their home represents their highest valued single asset. The Wisconsin Study reported property value deterioration as high as 43% depending on how close the property was to the towers. From the report it is not possible to make an accurate extrapolation of what impact the Galloo Island project will have on Henderson properties. However, Henderson and Hounsfield residents need to think realistically about what the impact would be if they were about to purchase the property they currently own knowing that their current view shed will contain industrial size wind towers and blinking red lights. Again, similar affects may occur in the above mentioned townships facing the proposed Galloo wind project.

Our governments' tax revenue requirements will not decline based on declining property values. The tax rates will simply be increased to reflect lower valuations and our most valuable asset will reflect a lower price, a reduction in your total net worth. For those whose property values do not decrease, they too will pay a higher overall tax rate. This will further be complicated by a great unknown – how many taxpayers will just simply leave the area or not come to the area (thus tax base) to leave a bigger share for the remaining taxpayers to burden?

Future articles will comment on related issues and some of the anticipated benefits.

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Any questions please call me at 938-7024.