

Education Village part of creative economy: CAO

By Tim Foran, Canadian Champion Staff

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In a time of economic uncertainty and loss of traditional manufacturing jobs, Milton is looking to prepare itself for a new creative economy with its plans for the 450-acre 'Education Village' at the southwest end of town, according to the Town's CAO Mario Belvedere.

Belvedere, speaking at the Milton Chamber of Commerce's annual Mayor's Breakfast last week, said the Education Village will follow the path outlined in the recently released report, 'Ontario in the Creative Age,' authored by noted urbanist Richard Florida and Roger Martin, dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

The report, commissioned by the Province of Ontario in 2008, states the role of government is to set the stage for the creative economy, Belvedere said. This includes educating people to a higher level and creating opportunities in municipalities for people to mix in a "physically attractive place."

"This is where we think the Education Village is the perfect place for this to happen," Belvedere told a packed crowd of 150 at the Best Western.

The Education Village, as currently envisioned, includes 150 acres for a campus of Wilfrid Laurier University, accompanying residential neighbourhoods and retail developments, and a research park.

The research park shows the Town is thinking beyond just the university, said Belvedere. "We want to be able to take that research and commercialize it."

Wilfrid Laurier has already applied for \$241.5 million in Provincial funding for the first phase of its campus proposal.

The Town of Milton plans to support that application by publishing an eBook in March to present to the Province outlining the full Education Village project plans. The Town is looking for local businesses to announce their support of the project by purchasing a hard copy of the eBook for \$500, with their names being included in the first page of the submission to the Province.

To participate, contact Andrew Siltala at the Town's economic development office at (905) 878-2152, ext. 2152.

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