

MISSION STATEMENT: Kennebunk@Work is a quarterly newsletter, published by the Town of Kennebunk's Economic Development Committee for our local business owners. The mission is to publish useful news about small business, forecasts, research, resources, case histories and other ideas that may appeal to our town's business owners. When appropriate, we include announcements, conduct surveys and provide local information. Kennebunk@Work should never be viewed as either an endorsement or recommendation made by the Town of Kennebunk but taken simply for what it is: information we have found that may be of interest to a local business owner. For questions about local business or the KEDC, please contact KEDC@kennebunkmaine.us.

Local Business Owners Who Attended the "Simple Marketing Tools for Your Small Business" Seminar Report A More Positive Business Climate

At the close of a January 30th small business seminar produced by the Kennebunk Economic Development committee—attendees were asked to complete a program survey. From the approximate 175 attendees, the KEDC received and tabulated 90 completed questionnaires.

Here are some highlights: Among attendees there is a far higher use of websites in their business as compared to all businesses in Maine. In early January, the Portland Press Herald reported a study which revealed that only 40% of Maine businesses have a website. However, this research from a KEDC sample of local Kennebunk businesses reveals that 83% of attendees have websites. What is equally impressive is that more than 64% are using social media—like Facebook—as a business tool.

The KEDC was not surprised to find that 53% of the attendees worked alone while another 19% have 2 to 5 employees. In other words 75% of the businesses represented were very small. The survey also revealed that 89% of attendees were in retail or the service sector.

Going forward, 62% of respondents asked the KEDC to develop future seminar programs in marketing, while 36% requested more on sales and 33% favored technology as a seminar topic.

The local economy continues to improve:

Today: We believe that the seminar's audience fairly reflects a cross section of our local business community. From this survey we found that 61% of respondents described their business conditions as either "excellent" or "good", while 32% describe it as "average". Only 5% described their business condition as "poor".

Five Years ago: Similar research conducted at a 2009 KEDC small business event revealed that only 38% of owners described their business as "excellent" or "good", while 21% reported their business as "poor" or "very poor." We can only conclude that the local Kennebunk business environment in general is much stronger. For The Full Research: Call Caroline Segalla, Community Development Coordinator at town hall (207)-985-2102 Ext. 1341 or email: csegalla@kennebunkmaine.us

The KEDC to Survey Local Businesses to Create an Ongoing Dialogue

Mat Eddy, Kennebunk's Economic Development Director, has been developing a Strategic Economic Development Action Plan (SEDAP) for Kennebunk. One mission of this newsletter is to keep small business owners in town better informed about that

project's progress. We will also be using the Internet research capabilities of "Survey Monkey" to reach out to business owners for whom we have an email address with the objective of researching them to confirm and supplement what information SEDAP has

already uncovered. Those survey results will be shared in subsequent issues of this publication: Kennebunk@Work. For more on SEDAP or our research, contact Mat Eddy at meddy@kennebunkmaine.us or (207)985-2102. Ext. 1366.

(OVER)

Business Savvy + Smart Retailing + Technology = Means More Customers “From Away”

LeAnn Hodgson, a veteran of Wells Fargo Bank made her successful leap from large bank to successful start up—“Camp Wool”—simply because she was able to combine her business savvy and technology with a passion for rug hooking. LeAnn’s banking job allowed her to be based anywhere in New England so when her husband’s job relocated to Maine in 2003, she brought along her vision of Camp Wool and opened her store in 2008 in Wells. She quickly outgrew that space and moved to Kennebunk lower village. The lower village store was a spectacular success but when she moved to Main Street it was because as she said, “I am still a retailer and while my former landlord was great, I found that my customers had a hard time finding our shop.”

Many of the customers that visit Camp Wool are “from away”

with most coming from throughout New England. Some come from as far away as New York, New Jersey and Canada. But as LeAnn puts it, the interest in rug hooking in the Northeast is not surprising since “the roots of this folk art are primarily in New England although earlier similar examples have been found in England and Scotland.”

This almost uniquely American art form first made its appearance in the mid 19th century for the simple utilitarian purpose of covering cold New England floors. That family tradition remains alive today, as LeAnn spoke of a mother and five daughters who travel annually to Kennebunk to spend a weekend hooking rugs and learning more about this art form.

But knowing full well that not every family has this tradition, LeAnn offers classes at her shop which allow new enthusiasts to learn the basics with a starter rug hooking kit and lesson for about \$130. This has allowed LeAnn to continually add to a growing list of over 2,000 customers who have visited her shop over the last five years and specifically asked to receive the Camp Wool Newsletter.

The newsletter has become a valued resource for these artists as it not only promotes the store’s own classes but also provides information on other classes, vendors and resources for wool rug hookers. LeAnn then explained, “These classes, whether they are with me or somewhere else, are designed for all aspects of this craft and skill levels.”

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LeAnn has been so successful in reaching her constituent of customers that each spring

she hosts a Wool Hooking Festival for two days at the Coastal House in Wells that will attract as many as 400 rug hooking artisans. LeAnn Hodgson has obviously applied many of the skills she learned from her days at Wells Fargo which combined with some savvy use of technology has leveraged them all in her retail business to create an even more robust business than one would normally find with a small town retailer. For more information on this story or other questions about local business please contact KEDC@kennebunkmaine.us

(This article has been condensed from a longer piece, which appeared in the York County Coast Star in 2013).

**Is Your Business Listed
on the Town’s Website?
And if so...Is it Correct?...**

**What about the
Kennebunk
Mobile App?
Is it listed there?**

Is your business one of the almost 400 local Kennebunk businesses—large or small, service, retail or otherwise that is **LISTED FREE** on an easy to use business directory on the Kennebunk Town Website (www.kennebunkmaine.us)? View the Business Directory in the “Doing Business” section of the town website.

To be listed free or make any correction to information already listed there, please email Caroline Segalla, Community Development Coordinator, at csegalla@kennebunkmaine.us.

Another easy venue for marketing your business is the Kennebunk Mobile App. Please check out www.kennebunkmaine.us/mobileapp or www.experiencethekennebunks.com