

MISSION STATEMENT: *Kennebunk@Work* is an electronic newsletter, published by the Town of Kennebunk for its local business owners. Our editor searches a wide variety of web sites for useful news about small business, forecasts, research, resources, case histories and other ideas that may appeal to our town's business owners. From each search, we publish a few snippets from each selected piece and provide a link to the full article. When appropriate, we include announcements and information of interest to local small business owners from the town. *Kennebunk@Work* should never be viewed as either endorsements or recommendations 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.

In This Issue: (I.) EDC/Chamber of Commerce event collaboration, (II.) Local Business Profile and (III.) Kennebunk Façade Grant Update and story of one owner (IV) News You Can Use.

I: November 17, 2011 EDC and Chamber of Commerce Event: "Business After Hours + PLUS"

The Kennebunk Economic Development Committee and the Kennebunk/Kennebunkport Chamber of Commerce have agreed to collaborate on an evening event that allows them to draw on the resources of both organizations to maximize the program's value to the entire business community.

Over the last two years the Kennebunk EDC has produced a seminar each year that has attracted about 75 local business owners. However, this **November 17th "Business After Hours + PLUS"** event will be a smaller, more targeted evening workshop. The plan is to schedule this program after the Columbus Day weekend but before Thanksgiving Week with an agenda designed for a maximum of 40 business owners—who will share a light supper while exchanging ideas on the whole issue of business sustainability in a weak economy. The program will demand strong participation as owners exchange ideas on how to maximize limited financial, marketing, sales, customer service and technology resources in these tough economic times. Research of those who have attended earlier seminars indicate that most of the attendees of the program will come from retail, service and home based businesses—with over 66% of them employing fewer than five employees. The discussion will address businesses of this size.



Mark your calendar for **November 17th 6 – 9 pm**. More details will be available shortly but if you are interested and want to register now, please contact Caroline Segalla (csegalla@kennebunkmaine.us) or call her at 207-985-2102 Extension 1341. You may also call Jim Fitzgerald, from the Chamber of Commerce (executivedirector@visitthekennebunks.com) at 207-967-0857 Extension 13.

II: New Business Profile: Seed & Bean Owner: Jassy Smith



At a time when many business owners in Maine and around the nation can only see the glass as half-empty – there are still a few exceptions, like Jassy Smith of West Kennebunk, who sees the glass as half-full and loaded with potential to be filled right up to the brim. Jassy is a profile in entrepreneurial courage.

Jassy Smith owns and operates the Seed & Bean—a specialty coffee shop on Alfred Road in West Kennebunk. Founded in August 2010 in what had been Jassy's grandmother's 19th century Victorian house, the [Seed & Bean](#) survived a tough winter but is still growing with all the expectation that this young business will be profitable by the end of its first full year.



Jassy is a superb example of the kind of guts it takes to start any new business regardless of the condition of the economy. A graduate of Kennebunk High School, she earned her associates degree at Southern Maine Community College and it was while she was in college and also working at Java Net Coffee Shop in Portland that she decided she would one day start her own specialty coffee shop. As she put it, her work at Java Net was "the most fun I had ever had!"

So while working at Pratt Whitney (where she still works full time), she started to structure a business plan for her own local establishment. Her research included attending a small business seminar sponsored by the Small Business Administration's SCORE consulting group in Portland which she felt had some value but was not specific enough for the kind of business she envisioned. She drafted several business plans and when she was finished she was able to work closely with The Bank of Maine on Portland Road (Kennebunk). She said that bank has been "awesome" in supporting her new venture throughout the start up phase with regular visits to the Seed & Bean by her banker to see how she is doing. Jassy added, "I couldn't be more appreciative with the time they've spent helping me through this whole process." She also described how throughout the entire process the town's code enforcement office was easy to work with and helpful in assuring that she met and complied with all local regulations.

Now open from 6AM to 8PM weekdays and 8AM to 6PM on weekends, Jassy's business is robust enough that she employs eight part time employees—which she estimates would translate into about two and a half full time jobs. Besides providing jobs for locals, the Seed & Bean serves an equally diverse market of customers. Opening at six in the morning the Seed & Bean catches the West Kennebunk commuter crowd as they head off to their workday. The second market is the flood of school children that stop in when school lets out about 2PM—which means in Jassy's words that, "we have to accommodate both their sweet tooth and their limited budget." The Seed and Bean's third market is what Jassy describes as a "late lunch crowd--which usually includes some stay at home moms and friends who want to relax and have an inexpensive lunch or business people who just want a quiet place to meet."

Jassy reflects today's savvy young business owner who knows how to take advantage of technology to promote their business. Using a template, she built out a very attractive and easy to use website (www.seedbean.com). She and her employees are also actively promoting the business on Facebook with daily menus and snapshots of customers coming and going. In fact, Facebook has been so successful that the Seed & Bean now has 514 customers following this businesses activity.

Reflecting on some of the most important lessons she learned in starting her new business, Jassy said, "If I had it to do it all over again, I would have opened my business last spring instead of mid August—to catch the summer crowd. And while our floor plan is fine—there are some things I might have done better with the space."

And when asked what she was sure she did right, Jassy replied, "I was absolutely right about the need for this kind of business in West Kennebunk and I priced our products according to the needs of the market."

Long term, once the initial start up is behind her, the next step will be to add "the seed" to "the bean" as Jassy plans to expand her business to include a plant nursery. But she also recognizes that the bean must work before she can plant more seeds. Stop in and meet this dynamic young business owner.

III FACE LIFTS: \$115,000 Matching Kennebunk Business Façade Grant:

Kennebunk has been awarded an \$115,000 matching State of Maine grant that allows both for-profit and non-profit organizations to give a façade facelift to their commercial buildings.

Grants have already been awarded based on a business owner's willingness to match the state's grant contribution while assuring that the work done would be based on a competitive bid, and assuring a contractor's ability to complete the work in a timely fashion.

Grants have been awarded to some of the following businesses: Kennebunk Inn (\$25,000), Kennebunk Library (\$25,000), Kennebunk Five and Dime (\$25,000), Owners Sal and Ann Gebbia of Andrews Milligan Real Estate (\$3,500), First Parish Unitarian Church (\$2,500) and the Kennebunk American Legion Post (\$5,489).



Clearly the most interesting façade investment will be in the old Five & Dime on Main Street which was purchased by Dorothy Gregoire of Arundel. The \$25,000 grant will be immediately invested in work that is slated to begin at the end of June. Dorothy explained that the façade is a priority—and that it will be started on immediately once she has the Selectmen's approval. Her strategic plan is to use about 10% of the existing floor space for a pottery painting business that will be open to the public to do their own pottery. She anticipates that the remainder of the interior will be "built to suit tenants" as

they are secured. Asked about her experience in working with the town—she replied that while the whole process was still new—the town officials she has encountered so far have been “absolutely wonderful.”

But wait! Just under six thousand dollars in grant money remains to be awarded to a deserving business. For further information please contact Caroline Segalla (csegalla@kennebunkmaine.us) or call her at 207-985-2102 Extension 1341

IV: News You Can Use:

(1.) **Local Utilities and Your Business:** The EDC had a first meeting in March with the three utilities serving Kennebunk as a starting point to create a closer working relationship between those utilities, the town, our local businesses and business prospects. We will have additional meetings with each separately. The EDC’s goal is to establish a mutual understanding of issues and opportunities for new and existing businesses while working with our local utilities. We also want to quantify where we have advantages and disadvantages when compared to other towns in the race to attract new businesses to the area.

(2.) **Is Your Business’ Website Linked with the Town?** Don’t forget a link to your business website may be listed on the town’s website. It is free and attracts attention and traffic as more and more residents and visitors visit it for community information. The important thing is to get your listing included now by contacting Caroline Segalla (csegalla@kennebunkmaine.us) or call her at 207-985-2102 Extension 1341.

(3.) **Meet Your Business Advocate:** Your Kennebunk Economic Development Committee’s Ambassador Program has been gaining valuable information from both business and commercial property owners by meeting to discuss their challenges and ways the EDC can help. If you would like to learn more about our activities or contribute some thoughts on how the EDC can better serve you specifically or the business community as a whole—please call Caroline Segalla (csegalla@kennebunkmaine.us) or call her at 207-985-2102 Extension 1341 and she will schedule a meeting with the EDC.

(4.) **TIF: The Basics and Status of Tax Incremental Financing:** The TIF funding allocation for year 2011-2012 has been presented to the Kennebunk Selectmen for projects and expenditures to benefit areas such as Rte 1 South, Downtown, West Kennebunk, and Lower Village. The Tax Incremental Financing Program is proving to be a superb economic development tool by allowing local taxes, which will otherwise go to the state, stay right here in town to be put to work for business economic development.

Here is how a TIF works. Essentially, TIF legislation allows the town to designate areas in the community as a TIF district (no more than 5% of Kennebunk area may be in a TIF district at any one time). As a result any increase in the State of Maine’s share in annual property taxes within those designated areas—will remain in the community rather than go to the state. And only so long as those funds are later used within the designated TIF district for economic development projects or purposes.

Voters approved the first TIF in Kennebunk in March 2006. Currently there are three TIF districts in town—which includes one in the Lower Village, a second on Alfred Road in West Kennebunk, and finally the largest and oldest which is along Route 1 — on both sides of the highway from Hannaford’s to just past Shield’s Meats on the way to Wells. Most of the funding realized by this TIF has gone towards the downtown revitalization project.

So far, approximate \$1,360,000 in TIF funds have been used to do the work along the Main Street corridor—with \$500,000 currently available in the Route 1 TIF and \$100,000 available in the West K TIF that will in time be invested in our infrastructure. It is estimated that this Main Street/Route #1 TIF alone, will generate approximately \$13,000,000 in funding over the thirty-year life of this TIF, while lowering our overall property tax burden by bringing in more State aid in education for RSU 21, more State revenue sharing for the Town, and fewer support dollars being sent to the York County government.

If you want to learn more about our TIFs contact Caroline Segalla (csegalla@kennebunkmaine.us) or call her at 207-985-2102 Extension 1341.