

April 2009

SCCA NEWS

Seward's business community.

www.sewardbusiness.org



April Meeting

Presentation by City of Minneapolis Bike Walk Ambassador
on Commuting by Foot & Bicycle

Wednesday, April 15, 2009 / 11:45am - 1:00pm
at Seward Towers West Community Room / 2515 9th St S

Did you know that you can receive a tax deduction for each of
your employees who bike to work? A "Bike Walk Ambassador"
from the City of Minneapolis will share economic and health
benefits that you and your employees can derive from
biking and walking to work.

Lunch will be provided by Tracy's Saloon.

To RSVP, please contact Emily: 612.338.8729 x105 / emily@sewardredesign.org
lunch is \$10

March Meeting Notes

Presenters: Roger Howley (House Green)
Bruce Stahlberg (Affordable Energy Solutions)

by Emily Wergin

The streak of bustling SCCA membership meetings continued last month
with a Green-Businesses-themed meeting at Seward Redesign's office. With
at least 35 people in attendance, all of the bagged lunches from Seward Cafe
were quickly consumed! (Note - if you know you'll be attending a meeting, please
RSVP so we order enough food - we only order a few extras).

Seward Cafe helped provide SCCA's second consecutive "Waste Free" lunch
by re-using packaging and collecting all compostables. In other green news,
the Seward Cafe recently installed new double-paned windows and is re-
searching putting solar panels on their roof!

Presenters Bruce Stahlberg and Roger Howley, who work with businesses

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2009 Board of Directors

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Jim Welna

Welna II Hardware

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Chris Johansen

Crown Video & Tanning

Tracy Singleton

Birchwood Cafe

Hans Steege

Dero Bike Rack

MunHoe Sze Tho

United Noodles

Monthly Meetings are
held on the 3rd Wednesday of
each month from 11:45 - 1pm.

Upcoming Dates:

April 15th

May 20th

June 11th (Thurs!)

Sound Insulation

A-Craft Windows / 2223 Snelling Ave

by Emily Wergin

Russ Scott started A-Craft windows out of his home in 1979. The business that he now co-owns with his son, Alex, has expanded considerably over time and has operated from its own building on Snelling Ave since 1997. A-Craft manufactures wood replacement windows for older homes.

One of A-Craft's biggest recurring customers has been the sound insulation program for homes near the MSP airport. During the first phase of the program, which ran from 1995-2005, ten thousand homes near the airport received sound insulation measures, including replacement windows. A-Craft was one of the main suppliers; they worked with architects to create custom windows that matched existing windows and woodwork in each home. The window manufacturer looks forward to supplying windows for the program's upcoming 2nd phase. Experience with sound insulation and prior work with South Dakota-based Larson Storm Windows has landed A-Craft another large airport-noise related contract. A-Craft will be supplying windows for 15,000 homes near the San Diego airport.

A-Craft's shop buzzes with inventory, machinery and skilled workers that assemble window sashes, frames, insulated glass and jamb liners. Early on in its history, Russ found a great strategy to keep his equipment costs down: custom building much of his own machinery. His oldest trimmer, from the 80's, is still used today.



Russ explains the construction of the true divided light windows A-Craft recently manufactured and installed in their own building.

New Member Profile: HistoryCrafters

www.historycrafters.com

by Megan Sheridan

For the past 20 years, Linda Coffin has been working out of one Seward home or another. Her work as a graphic designer for publications, though, could not continue to sustain her interest. "After a while," Linda said, "it all started to look the same; I got bored." In 2004, her quest for something more captivating led Linda to Baltimore, where the annual conference for the Association of Personal Historians takes place. She fell in love with a new career: helping people document their personal history.

A personal history is something that any individual or group—family, church, community or even ethnic group—that has a story to tell can create. Because of Linda's background, she focuses mainly on print outlets for facilitating the documentation of these stories. The scope of her work depends on what the client is looking for. She does interviews and transcribes, she takes letters or diaries and turns them into a narrative, she studies genealogical material and turns that into a narrative as well, and she even records the stories of family heirlooms. Whatever it is a client wants to document, Linda will use the information available to make it into a story.

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The Seward Skyline

Featured Business: Seward Towers East and West

by Megan Sheridan

For five decades, the Seward Towers have, well, towered over Franklin Avenue. Once home to primarily seniors, the Seward Towers East and West now house one of the twin cities largest populations of East African immigrants. With elderly residents and new immigrant families, the Towers have also become an incredibly diverse community in and of themselves.

location: 2910 E Franklin Ave and
2515 S 9th Street
property manager: CommonBond
years in seward: 40

One hundred percent of the units are subsidized based on income. CommonBond, the non-profit property manager, has designed these housing units to be a stepping stone along their path to success. The community within the Towers, however, is so strong that many residents continue to live there at market-rate.

One of the reasons residents have grown so attached to this community is the services offered by CommonBond's Advantage Centers, located at both the Towers East and West. These social service centers offer programming for adults and youth living in the Towers. For adults, English language tutoring, citizenship classes and computer lessons are available. For youth, there is an after school homework center and study buddy program. But it is not all work. The Advantage Center also coordinates a sewing circle, garden club for both adults and children, and art classes.

Without the help of volunteers and key community partnerships, these social programs would not be a reality. The Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG) facilitates the sewing circle, which has helped women and men learn to make their own clothes and even buy their own sewing machines. The African Development Center offers workshops to train residents in home ownership. Seward Redesign coordinates entrepreneurship classes that take place in the Advantage Centers. The Seward Co-op has developed a program called "Shop the Co-op" that teaches residents how to grocery shop cost-effectively. This summer, teen residents from the Towers will be working with ArtiCulture on a community art project.

Needless to say, the community's involvement in the success of Seward Tower's residents has been extensive. These partnerships have not only brought the community into the Towers, but they have also brought the Towers out into the community. It is easy to let the Towers fade into the background of our skyline, but they are a permanent feature of our community, providing invaluable social and economic capital to the neighborhood.

Peace Garden

Saturday April 25th, at the Seward Co-op's CSA Fair, Birchwood and the Seward Co-op are partnering on a bake sale to raise funds to preserve the Peace Garden at Seward School. The bake sale will run 11-3, same time as the CSA fair.

FIP Deadline!

This is a reminder that any business interested in applying for a facade improvement grant must apply by April 15th.

Eligible businesses must be on Franklin Avenue or within 1/2 mile of the Franklin LRT Station.

To find out more, contact Emily at Seward Redesign:

Emily: 435-0277
emily@sewardredesign.org

Include your business in the Member Update Section!

If your business has news to share, we want to hear about it. Let us know if you've won an award, are offering a new product or service, moved your space, etc. and we'll share it here.

contact Emily: 435-0277
emily@sewardredesign.org

March Notes *continued from page 1*

and home-owners to improve energy efficiency, talked about their ongoing work and new opportunities that have emerged from the stimulus bill. Bruce is a Certified Energy Manager and owns Affordable Energy Solutions, a business that helps business owners develop strategies to save money (increase profits!) by making investments that improve energy efficiency. Architect, Roger Howley, started up House Green last year; House Green helps guide home and small-business owners through remodels and retrofits that improve energy efficiency. Both businesses share space with Close Associates at 3101 E Franklin Ave and often collaborate on projects; for instance, they are currently working to improve energy efficiency through replacements of roofing, mechanical, flooring and lighting systems at the Seward Child Care Center.

If your business is hoping to improve energy efficiency, Bruce pointed out how easy and effective it is to start with the low-hanging fruit; some of it is “so low,” he commented, “its off the floor.” As much as 10-15% of a typical business’ energy bill can be cut through strategies that are readily available without any major expense. Some of the low-hanging fruit include:

- Lightbulbs - Yes, you’ve heard it before - and for good reason. Only 10% of the energy consumed by your incandescent lightbulb creates light. Switch to energy-efficient bulbs.
- Maintenance - Improve the maintenance of mechanical systems. For instance, regularly replacing plugged up filters in an air-handling unit can greatly decrease that units’ energy consumption.
- Savers Switch Program - Sign up to have the utility company turn off your air conditioning during high-demand periods. This reduces your energy use precisely when it costs the most!

If you want to make the most out of your investments in improved energy efficiency, the place to start is an energy audit. Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy perform inexpensive, subsidized audits. There was significant discussion about people’s past (mixed) experience with these audits. Xcel’s is more comprehensive while CenterPoint only looks at gas. Affordable Energy Solutions also performs audits; these are not subsidized (like those from the utilities) but they do also perform that next step of helping outline building-specific strategies for improved efficiency in the short and long term.

The economic stimulus bill is injecting tons of new capital into this industry. For instance, \$131 million has been added to the Weatherization Assistance Program. It is anticipated that this will cause a tenfold increase residential weatherization projects in the next 18 months! This program awards grants of up to \$6,500 to homeowners that earn under 200% of the federal poverty level. The stimulus has also extended tax credits for many energy efficiency and renewable energy investments made in 2009 and 2010. These credits include: insulation, windows, high-efficiency HVAC equipment and renewables. For a full list of tax incentives, see: www.dsireusa.org.

There is money out there for both efficiency and renewables; if you are overwhelmed by all the options, here is a good filter from Bruce to help focus your efforts: “be very, very efficient first.” Invest in weatherization, lightbulbs and maintenance before you look into renewables.

Local Businesses in a Big Box/Online World

by Megan Sheridan

Last month, Augsburg hosted a panel discussion entitled “Local Businesses in a Big Box/Online World.” The panel was designed by Bruce Johansen, a freelance writer and SCCA member with a particular interest in local businesses. The panel coincided with a photography exhibit “Abandoned Spaces—Vibrant Places,” created by Bruce and photographer Kelly Povo. In both visual images and words, this exhibit explored the loss created in local communities with the disappearance of unique businesses. Black and white pinhole images of these desolate spaces signified the struggle local business communities face; in contrast, color photographs of places that continue to thrive displayed a light at the end of a dark tunnel.

It was around this beacon that Bruce brought together local independent business owners and advocates to discuss the challenges that one-of-a-kind businesses face today. Among the panelist were Kim Bartman (Owner of Bryant-Lake Bowl, Barrette, Red Stag Supper Club), Justin Dahlheimer (Research Associate at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance), David Unowsky (Magers & Quinn Booksellers and Founding Member of Metro Independent Business Alliance) and our very own Chris Johansen (Owner of Crown Video & Tanning and SCCA Board Member).

On the whole, the event proved to be a constructive forum for addressing the challenges faced by local businesses and generating ideas for progress. The event engaged a broad audience of students, marketing people and others in our quest to keep dollars in the community.

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Aside from the interesting methods of obtaining somewhat ancient information (after our interview Linda was off to a cemetery to take pictures of headstones), the best part about her job is that the work is truly meaningful. More often than not Linda’s clients are in tears when she presents them with their final product. For most, this is a chance to pass along the humanity of the people they love for future generations to enjoy.

This is a job Linda will never retire from. With age, she says, her skills will only improve. Plus, she told me, there is no need to retire from something that adds immeasurable value to your own life and the lives of others.



Linda poses with a display of sample printed work.

Seward Co-op Grand Opening

Sunday, April 26, 12-5pm
Seward Co-op Parking Lot
(2823 E. Franklin Ave)

SCCA and Seward Re-design have collaborated with the Seward Co-op to extend the excitement of their Grand Opening Celebration throughout the neighborhood

The Seward Co-op donated SCCA a 1/2-page ad in the upcoming issue of the **The Sprout**; the newsletter is distributed to 6,500 Co-op members. Seven SCCA businesses took advantage of this offer to advertise Grand-Opening-Day promotions.

Also during the celebration, **100 rain barrels** will be distributed at the significantly reduced-cost of \$25 each! This is made possible by a Mississippi Watershed Management Organization grant to Seward Redesign. The same grant is also helping fund the raingarden at the Co-op’s new location. The rain barrels are manufactured in Seward by Verde Strategies. Stop by the Grand Opening to win an inexpensive barrel for your home or business.

Thank you to SCCA members who have contributed in 2009!

A-Craft Windows * Acme Tuckpointing & Restoration * Allweather Roof
 At Last Gourmet Foods, Inc. * Beaupre Aerial Equipment * Birchwood Cafe
 Bruce R. Johansen * Buck Bros. * CaptionMax * CCI Properties
 Coastal Seafoods * CommonBond * Community Connection Partnerships
 Cushman Motor Company * Daniel Greuel Translations * Decisive Movement
 Dero Bike Racks * DigiGraphic Photos, Inc. * Employment Action Center
 Fairview Health Services * Hayat Beauty Salon * Hiawatha Metalcraft
 History Crafters * Imagin Studios * Infinite Real Estate Group * Jim's Barber Shop
 Kraus Anderson Construction Co. * Lehn and Posl * Los Campeones
 Minneapolis Speaker Company, Inc. * Mississippi Mud Works * Movement Arts Center
 Nguyen Architects * Northern Clay Center * Pizza Luce IV * River Realty
 Riverton Community Housing * Russell Dentistry * Seward Co-op & Grocery
 Seward Inc. * Shega Bakery * Sheldon Mains * Sierra Club Northstar Chapter
 Siewert Cabinet * Swirlygig Industries * Tracy's Saloon * Triangle Park Creative
 True Thai * Twin City Filter Service * United Noodle
 Welna II Hardware * Woodland Stoves * World Endeavors