

Brightenview: Why I'm a little skeptical

by Ward 6 Candidate Karen Robinet

When a \$45 million investment in your community is announced just a month before an election, with corporate kudos going specifically to the mayor and one councillor in particular, you might be a little skeptical.

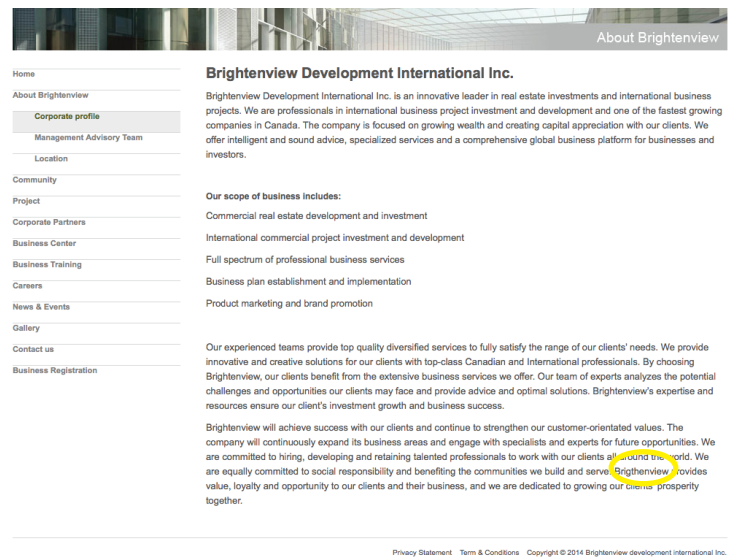
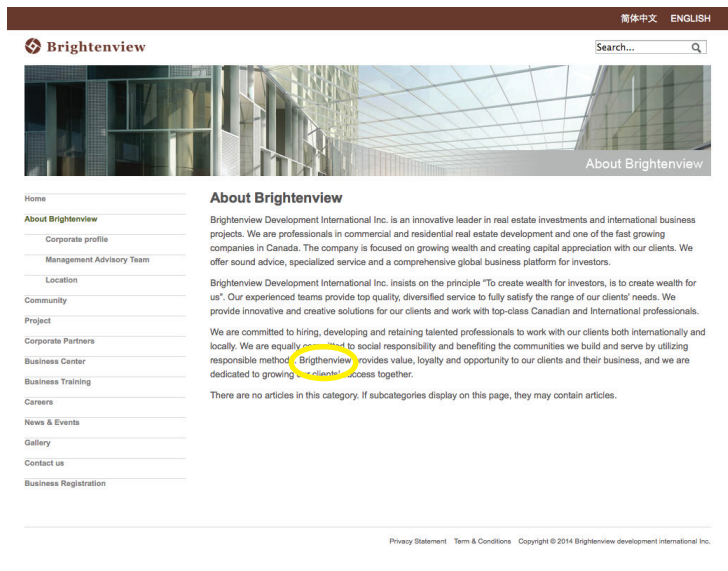
But, I guess that's politics.

However, in the rush to make an announcement, I do hope council and administration did their due diligence on this project after signing away 34 acres of primo Chatham-Kent land for an as yet unknown sum of money. After all, with Canada's brand spanking new trade deal with China, we may not be in a position of strength down the road.

I didn't want to be a 'negative Nelly,' right off the bat. Heaven knows we have enough of those already! Instead, I decided to do some research. It wasn't hard to figure out where to start. I started with Brightenview. Who/what was this company?

There's not a lot of information to be found, but what I did find raised a few red flags, starting at the very beginning.

One of the things I've learned over the years as a journalist, is that big corporations are very concerned about their public image. You can imagine my surprise, when I found not one, but two typos on Brightenview's own website, in their own name. Not very professional.



But who hasn't made the odd typo?

Undaunted, I soldiered on in my quest to find out more about this company and its projects.

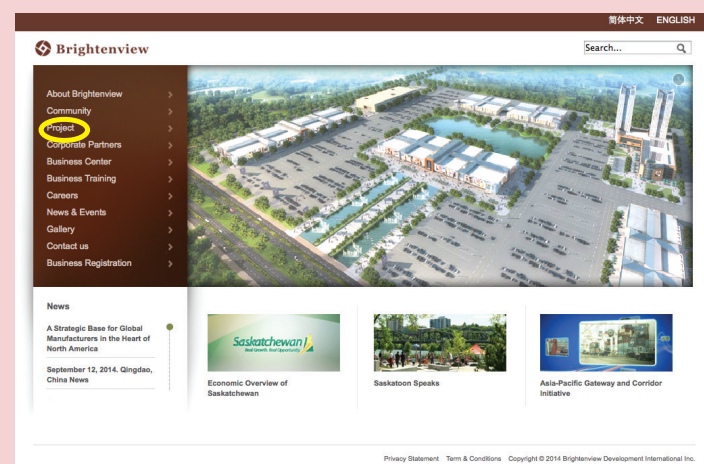
Make that project. To date, the company has only one other project on the go, at least according to its website, which, as of October 1 had not been updated to reflect its second project, in Blenheim.

If you want to keep reading, you'll find out a lot more about the other project, mostly from online newspaper accounts of it.

If this company had a bunch of projects under its belt, I wouldn't be overly concerned that the Dundurn International Exhibition Centre wasn't built, or even

started yet, even though it was announced in 2012.

However, Brightenview has no other projects.



Ripped from the pages of the Internet...

CBC NEWS, December 7, 2012

Massive shopping complex proposed for Dundurn

A massive shopping complex is being proposed for a small town south of Saskatoon that's projected to create 1,000 jobs and house 350 businesses.

It's being called the Dundurn International Exhibition Centre. Brightenview Development International Inc., a company that calls itself a leader in real estate, is behind the project.

The project would act as a showroom for Chinese companies selling building materials and home decor items, so retail companies such as Home Depot and Wal-Mart could take a look at the latest products and order them wholesale. Regular shoppers would also have the chance to buy items factory-direct.

The shopping centre would cover 607,028 square meters of land just outside of Dundurn, which is located 40 kilometres south of Saskatoon. It would be home to 350 Chinese businesses.

The company's website said it chose Dundurn because it's

close to Saskatoon and Regina, next to the highway and has access to utilities such as natural gas and water.

The Mayor of Dundurn, Doug Narraway, told CBC News he's excited about the project.

"It means that we're going to grow," said Narraway. "It's a big project and it'll be very good for the town."

CBC News was told there are similar business complexes in many places in China, but this would be the first of its kind in Canada.

"I'm feeling 100 per cent sure that they're legit," said Narraway.

"We have had several meetings with them and they're very up front with what they want to do and yeah, this is big business."

Brightenview officials held a town hall meeting in Dundurn this week. Narraway said the development is projected to create 1,000 jobs. Construction would start in the spring and take about 18 months to finish.

Brightenview officials declined to comment Friday, saying the company was planning a news conference for January.*

The saga continues...

THE STAR PHOENIX, March 16, 2013

Dundurn megamall 'little behind,' says CEO

A gigantic wholesale mall planned by Chinese investors for Dundurn is a "little behind" but a date has been set for the project's official launch, the company behind the project says. Since late December, Brightenview Developments has been promising a splashy news conference to provide details of the largest-in-Canada project - the Dundurn International Exhibition Centre - to the press and public.

The event will take place the evening of Thursday, March 28 at Prairieland Park, said former Member of Parliament Lorne Nystrom, who does public relations work for Brightenview.

"We're inviting business people, local players, and the mayors and reeves of all the cities and RMs," Nystrom said.

While he would not answer any substantive questions about the project's progress during a brief interview Friday, CEO Joe Zhou acknowledged the project is slightly behind schedule.

"As you know, this is happening a little behind when we initially thought the timing may be," Zhou said. "We just want to be prepared and consistent as we move on to the next stage."

A spokesperson for Minister of the Economy Bill Boyd said provincial government officials will not attend the launch event.

"Based on the meetings that provincial government officials have had to date with the developers, the project is still pretty early in the planning phase," the spokesperson said.

"We don't feel the project is yet at a stage where an announcement including the provincial government is warranted.

"The communications channels are open and we look forward to further updates on their progress."

The multimillion-dollar project plotted for a field on the outskirts of Dundurn, a bedroom community of some 700 people, would have more square footage than the West Edmonton Mall.

Ultimately, the 6.4 million-square-foot complex would be home to 350 shops and create some 1,000 jobs, according to Brightenview's promotional materials.

Rural Municipality of Dundurn Reeve Fred Wilson said although the flow of new information from Brightenview has slowed to a trickle, plans seem not to have changed.

"As far as we're concerned everything is still a go," he said.

"They have pushed their timelines back a little bit, but things are still moving along."

Local business watchers remain skeptical about the viability of the project.

Tim LeClair, president of the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA), said he is constantly being asked about the project due to the "scale and grandeur" of the megamall.

However, he said, he has no idea what progress the project is actually making.

"It seems we're still kind of in a holding pattern," he said.

"I'm not sure what they're doing behind the scenes."

LeClair said he remains concerned that the project may suck up scarce infrastructure dollars, especially if it never actually happens.

* The words in red have been marked by me, with the aim of drawing your attention to things I think are important!

And things start looking up...

GLOBAL TORONTO, March 27, 2013

Dundurn megamall to open within two years

SASKATOON – Construction of a massive wholesale mall in Dundurn will begin in late fall, and the mega-facility will be open for business 18 to 24 months later, according to the CEO of the company behind the project.

Many in the Saskatoon area have expressed skepticism that such an ambitious project – which would be among the largest malls in the world – could actually happen, but Brightenvue Development CEO Joe Zhou says there is no reason to doubt his company.

“We are committed to moving this project ahead,” Zhou said in an interview on Tuesday. “Take a little bit of time and watch, and see how it works out.”

“We are here for good,” Zhou added. “It’s based on a solid business plan.”

The company plans to start construction with the 300,000-sq.-ft. Dundurn International Exhibition Centre, which is expected to contain 350 shops, followed by another two buildings covering 300,000 and 400,000 sq.-ft.

The 350 showrooms will go up for sale “like condos,” Zhou said, to owners of small-to medium-sized factories in China and other Asian countries. Once they buy in, Brightenvue will help them build their businesses with marketing, accounting, web and translation services, he said.

Brightenvue also has plans for marketing its space to corporate buyers from across North America, Zhou said.

All shops in the first phase will sell products related to construction and home improvement, in part because so much construction is planned for the regional economy, he said, predicting local construction firms will flock to Dundurn for

deals on bulk items like lighting and bathroom fixtures from Chinese factories.

“It will be the first direct-buy option,” Zhou said. “We will have all the up-to-date, trendy products.”

Zhou would not name the investors behind the project’s \$130 million initial phase, but said they are all Canadian citizens, some of whom immigrated from China.

“Our owners are Canadians,” he said. “We’re not talking about foreign investors who said, ‘Go do this.’”

Zhou said at least two jobs for locals will be created for each of the 350 shops, in addition to the foreign entrepreneurs themselves, who will move to Canada to establish companies. Dundurn was selected because of its road and rail links, the province’s favourable tax regime, and the long-term economic prospects of the region, Zhou said.

Another major factor that pushed Brightenvue to choose Dundurn is the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP), which makes it relatively fast and easy for foreign entrepreneurs to immigrate to the province, he said.

To qualify, applicants must have a business plan, a net worth of at least \$300,000, and a “good faith” deposit of \$75,000.

Zhao said hundreds of Chinese and Asian business people and their families will move to the Dundurn area in the coming years. **As a gesture to the citizens of Dundurn, he said Brightenvue will help pay for the construction of a \$7.5 million community centre in the town, including a new hockey rink, a library and other facilities.**

Zhou said he understands why people may have trouble believing the Dundurn mega-project will actually happen, given its ambition.

In the meantime, here are a couple of snazzy websites to look at, for the same project...



www.nadiec.com



www.nadiec.com/nadiec/index.php/en/

They're both nice, but the first one is my favourite!

No, I don't know why the police were called...

THE STAR PHOENIX, March 30, 2013

Province backs megamall

The Dundurn International Exhibition Centre has the official blessing of the Saskatchewan government, says Labour Minister Don Morgan.

"We want to make sure it has every opportunity to succeed and we'll do everything we can," Morgan said Thursday at a VIP reception at Prairieland Park to publicly launch the venture. "We think this is a wonderful initiative."

Morgan praised the project for its planned creation of 1,000 jobs and the \$30 million in annual tax revenue it's projected to generate.

"This particular project is being done solely by their own initiative," he said. "They have not approached the province and asked for money."

Brightenview Development will break ground on the \$130-million project in the fall and it will take 18 to 24 months to complete, CEO Joe Zhou said.

"The train has left the station," Zhou said. "There is no turning around."

He expects the mall to link Chinese and other Asian manufacturers to wholesale buyers in North America.

About 125 people attended the reception, including members of the local business community, the reeves and mayors of all surrounding communities, the commander of the Dundurn military base and several Chinese business people.

The company showed a video it intends to use for promotional purposes in China to entice factories to set up a storefront in Saskatchewan.

Zhao said many of the 350 commercial suites have already been "spoken for."

Brightenview's director of distribution, Michael O'Bright, said the project will make Dundurn into a global brand.

"When a factory says they're involved in Dundurn, it's going to mean quality, reliability and that the products are the state of the art," he said.

The Dundurn International Exhibition Centre will only sell the best manufactured goods from Asia, and will start with construction and home improvement items, O'Bright said. "We're not just taking anyone. We're going to be very selective with the quality of people we bring back to Canada."

O'Bright said he is confident corporate buying agents from across North America will flock to Dundurn, since it's so much easier and cheaper to visit than China.

"Our goal is to make Dundurn a trade show and buyer destination," he said. "We're redefining the concept of factory direct." Zhao said the project has gained broad support during the past nine months.

"The project would not have made it this far without what we regard as the unanimous support of the Dundurn community, municipality governments, provincial agencies and local businesses," he said.

Fred Wilson, reeve of the RM of Dundurn, said the initial skepticism some people had about the project is fading.

"I'm feeling more confident all the time now," he said. "Every day it's progressing a little further."

Wilson said the project is creating an atmosphere of excitement in Dundurn and local residents are looking forward to opportunities to work in their hometown instead of travelling to faraway jobs. The social and recreational life of Dundurn will also get a boost, he said, from a new \$7.5 million community centre that will be paid for with help from Brightenview.

Brightenview contracted Saskatoon police officers to guard the entrance to the event in case protesters or uninvited guests showed up. None did.



It looks quite nice after all.

It's always a good day in the news industry when you can say 'questions swirl...'

WESTERN INVESTOR, June 12, 2013

Questions swirl as mega-mall proposed for tiny Dundurn

The largest shopping centre in Canada is being proposed for diminutive (population 640) Dundurn, Saskatchewan, as China-based Brightenview Development plans to bring hundreds of Asian manufacturers to the North American heartland. Questions, however, are swirling about the scale and location of the Dundurn International Exhibition Centre, which is designed to cover 6.4 million square feet - about three times the size of West Edmonton Mall - with 350 outlets in a town situated approximately 40 km. south of Saskatoon.

According to Saskatoon real estate sources, the plan "came right of the blue."

The official announcement for the new mega-mall was made March 28 at a gala news conference held in Saskatoon Prairieland Park. The event drew 120 guests, including provincial government officials, mayors of all surrounding communities, local businesspeople, Chinese and Indian business groups, international delegates and the media.

Brightenview's CEO and senior executives, the reeve of the Rural Municipality of Dundurn, the mayor of Dundurn and Labour and Advanced Education Minister Don Morgan all spoke at the event.

The gigantic project has the official blessing of the Saskatchewan government, according to Morgan, who said, "We think this is a wonderful initiative."

Plans call for a \$130 million retail and wholesale centre that

will link Chinese and other Asian manufacturers to wholesale buyers in North America. It's being done without any government incentives at all, though the developer projects the creation of 1,000 jobs and even plans to donate funds for a new \$7.5 million community centre in Dundurn.

Brightenview will break ground this fall and take between 18 and 24 months to complete the project according to CEO Joe Zhou, who dismissed the many skeptics.

"The train has left the station," Zhou told reporters. "There is no turning around."

He said that many of the 350 commercial suites, sold as condos rather than leased, have already been "spoken for," and projected that hundreds of Chinese and Asian businesspeople and their families will move to the Dundurn area in the coming years (Saskatchewan has an immigrant nominee program that allows relatively fast and easy immigration for entrepreneurs).

Local real estate brokers estimate that Brightenview likely paid from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per acre for the approximately 160 acres of Dundurn-area farmland that's set to house the project. They also note similar prices can be found much closer to the Saskatoon airport, which lies north of the city. Announcement of the proposal has spurred some hopeful local landowners to test the market, with one 100-acre parcel now listed at \$500,000.

Serviced residential building lots are being offered at an average of \$50,000.

And then it looked like shovels were about to hit the ground...

SASKATOONHOMEPAGE.CA, October 28, 2013

Construction about to begin on massive Dundurn Exhibition Centre

Shovels will be put in the ground near the end of fall this year for the Dundurn Exhibition Centre espoused as a model never before seen in North America.

The Centre, being built by Brightenview Development International, will house 350 wholesale businesses from around the world with the intent of saving local businesses the hassle of traveling to countries such as China to purchase wholesale items.

Vice-President of Government Relations Lorne Nystrom says the model being used is the first in North America. He adds that it is a lot more efficient than businesses having to head to China or Dubai to purchase wholesale goods.

Nystrom estimates several hundred jobs will open up in the Dundurn area, and depending on the success of the Dundurn Exhibition Centre, Brightenview will construct a community centre as well.

The first phase of construction is expected to finish in March of 2015.



But council had some concerns...

TOWN OF DUNDURN, April 14, 2014 minutes:

"Community planning department requests that Council submit a letter concerning the pending Brightenview Project and outline and concerns or questions. Mayor (Doug) Narraway will draft a letter outlining Council's concerns and questions."

I'm guessing council's request prompted this, but that's just a guess on my part...

THE DAVIDSON LEADER, April 21, 2014

Dundurn Centre faces delays

Construction of the Dundurn International Exhibition Centre will not begin this spring and no firm start date has yet to be presented.

Fred Wilson, Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Dundurn, said negotiations between the RM and Brightenview Development International Inc., which is building the massive wholesale outlet, are ongoing. He said they spoke to Brightenview April 8 and the company did not indicate when construction would begin.

"Everything is still progressing," said Wilson. "It's a multi-million dollar project and there is a lot of things that have to fall in place."

Construction on the 155-acre site located a half-mile north of the Highway 211 and Highway 11 intersection on the east side of the highway was slated to begin in the fall of 2013 and last for 18 to 24 months. **Once completed, the centre would potentially house 350 Chinese businesses that would sell wholesale products to buyers in North America and employ**

over 1,000 people.

"Everything is moving along," said Wilson. "I'm not starting to get buck fever or anything. I think it is still going to happen, but it's just taking a little longer maybe than what originally the plans were. Whether they'll get started this summer, I can't really (say). But I still feel quite confident that the project is still going to happen."

In addition to the Exhibition Centre, Brightenview also pledged to help the community build a multi-million dollar community centre in Dundurn that would house a skating rink, swimming pool, hall and office space through a donation towards the costs of the project. Wilson said the new community centre is still in the plans.

"We've had some preliminary discussions on it, but we haven't come up with all the financing on it yet," he said. "It's still part of the project."

Wilson noted there are many people saying 'I won't believe it till I see it,' but he is still confident the centre will become a reality. He said they are just not in a position to "put an exact date or timeline" on construction of it as of yet.

If you build it they will come, hopefully...

THE STAR PHOENIX, August 2, 2014

Dundurn mega-mall 'moving along'

After months of silence, the CEO of the company that has promised to build a giant wholesale mall in Dundurn says plans are "moving along" and development of the first phase of the project could begin as early as next spring.

When Brightenview CEO Joe Zhou spoke with media last year, he said construction of the \$130-million phase 1 building could start in the fall of 2013, but that never happened, and speculation about whether the massive project will ever get underway has been rampant.

In an interview with the Star-Phoenix this week, Zhou said he's "very confident" the Dundurn International Exhibition Centre, which would allow wholesale businesses from Asia and around the world to offer their wares to retail buyers here, will come to fruition in time.

"However time it may take, we're good. We're working on it, and working on it involves a lot of things," Zhou said, adding that "next spring shall be achievable" for the company to start construction. An international exhibition centre like the one Zhou is trying to bring to Dundurn has never been attempted in North America, but the wholesale markets are popular overseas, particularly in China.

Zhou, a Chinese Canadian, said he is convinced a wholesale market in Canada has been "longwaited" and that, once one's built, it will benefit both Asian businesses and the local economy. He said many businesses in Canada send buyers to markets overseas to purchase goods and that bringing the products here will make dealing with Asian companies cheaper and easier.

"Asia is not an option, it is an imperative today," Zhou said. The exhibition centre will generate numerous direct and spinoff jobs in and around the town of about 700 people, Zhou said.

"We'll be able to bring a whole lot more people. This will be a

good job attraction."

Zhou said his company has been working to surround itself with "an elite group of business service groups" and has recently contracted the engineering services of All North and the building services of EllisDon.

Jim George, interim CEO of the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority, said he was "excited" to hear about Brightenview's progress.

"Landing on an engineering firm and contractor is a good sign," George said. "These are big companies and they are smart and they know, so having companies like that involved adds credibility to the project, completely."

He said he's not concerned by how long it's taking Brightenview to put shovels in the ground at Dundurn, and that such delays are "fairly common."

Not everyone is so patient. Zhou said his company regularly receives calls from developers in the area who want a better sense of the company's timelines so they can make decisions about when or whether to buy land.

"We are responsible corporate, but don't necessarily want to be responsible for people's financial decisions locally ... that's kind of part of the reason that we wanted just to be low-key, without making any comments one way or another," Zhou said.

The first phase of the project, expected to be completed 18 months after construction begins, would boast 350 units for overseas companies to purchase. Zhou would not comment on how many of those have already been sold. He suggested he would not rush to open until all units are off the market.

"I like to see a grand finale that is open 100 per cent," he said. He said he's confident that once the first phase opens, finding businesses to fill units in additional buildings will not be difficult. "A lot of attention, eyes and interest will actually follow without having to map out exactly Phase 5 or 6," he said.

But enough about them. Let's look at what we're getting...

Global Development Centre

- Business Services
- Business Offices
- Manufacturing
- Warehousing
- Logistics



CHATHAM DAILY NEWS, Friday, September 26, 2014 Potential for \$100 million development unveiled in Blenheim

Chatham-Kent has sold its industrial park in Blenheim. And with it, is pinned plans for a new one-of-a-kind business development to attract international investment and jobs. Potentially, lots of jobs.

Joe Zhou, CEO and executive director of Brightenvue Development International of Saskatoon, told invited guests during Friday's sod turning, the Global Development Centre (GDC) will have a combined space for up to 100 small to mid-sized businesses, in turn requiring a total workforce of about 500 people.

Companies in China and Europe will be wooed to look at the new way to do business offshore, thanks to Chatham-Kent's location, its skilled labour force and support from the municipality.

Zhou said other locations across Canada were considered, but Chatham-Kent had the right mix for his company to invest here.

Though no contracts have as yet been signed with business interested in taking up tenancy in the massive single storey design, unveiled during the announcement, Chatham-Kent mayor Randy Hope told media he is currently in discussions with more than one interested party.

Hope confirmed the entire parcel of the 34-acre industrial park at the end of Hyland Drive is sold, but said the price won't be divulged until Oct. 6 during a municipal council meeting.

The cost to design and construct the GDC is estimated at \$45 million.

Zhou said the centre will have 400,000 square feet, with 250,000 square feet of warehouse space and another 30,000 square feet of office area to service tenants.

The concept is new to North America according to Lorne Nystrom, who served 25 years in the House of Commons. Now a director at Brightenvue Development International, Nystrom said while domestic wages remain higher than places in Asia, when one factors in multiple layers to do business in places like China, North America becomes more attractive. Nystrom called the concept the "right thing to do and (Blenheim) the right place to do it."

He first met Hope in Shanghai and discussions flowed from there over the last "few months," Nystrom said.

Officials predicted similar projects to follow in North America's competitive market to attract new jobs.

Hope described the concept as a turn-key operation, with support available in key areas like communication and help to understand local customs, to lead business to the doorstep.

CHATHAM VOICE, Friday, September 26, 2014

Blenheim development, updated

In one fell swoop, the municipality suddenly ran out of industrial land in Blenheim, and the South Kent community will soon be home to a massive industrial condominium project. Municipal economic development staff say there is nothing like it in the country. Brightenview Development International, of Saskatoon, Sask., is going to build a \$45-million, 680,000-square-foot facility in Blenheim's industrial park, chewing up 34 acres; all remaining municipally owned industrial land in that community.

"The thing I like about this is no one else in Canada has this. It is absolutely unique," Michael Burton director of economic development for Chatham-Kent said.

The municipality hosted an unveiling at the Hyland Drive site Friday.

The huge building – which is being called the Global Development Centre – is hoped to eventually be home to as many as 80-100 different offshore businesses. The concept, according to Burton, is for Brightenview to build the structure and supply support for offshore small- and medium-sized businesses to the point that all they need to do is bring their manufacturing knowledge with them and they'll be able to begin operations.

"It's almost a condominium kind of thing," Burton said. "It will be for companies abroad to come in and establish operations. The businesses can bring their technology, set up shop and 30,000 sq. ft. of support services will take care of everything else."

The centre will have 400,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing space, 250,000 sq. ft. of shared warehousing, and 30,000 sq. ft. of office space that Brightenview will use to provide support to companies to deal with various levels of government, as well as providing numerous other areas of operational assistance. "When we go talk to a company, we can say we have a site that can take care of all their business services," Burton said. "All they have to know is how to make their widgets."

Joe Zhou, Brightenview's CEO and executive director, agreed. "The idea is to let international manufacturers do what they do best – manufacture," Zhou said. "Strategic development, business development, marketing, communications, after-sales service, and buyer matching, we will help them with all of it. The new GDC will provide a full spectrum of support."

Zhou credits the proactive leadership of the municipality, crediting Mayor Randy Hope and South Kent Coun. Art Stirling, as well as the economic development team, for attracting his company here.

"They have made a very significant effort to actively seek out global investment," he said. "They understand what it will take to attract that business."

Zhou said the municipality has "all the important factors" in what he wanted in a host community – a pro-business environment, a welcoming community, having a good quality of life, with an available skilled labour force, and a close proximity to the U.S. market.

"It all makes this location very desirable," he said.

Burton said Zhou looked at numerous other Canadian locations, including the Niagara region, Windsor and Vancouver, but opted to come here.

Zhou admitted the search was coast to coast.

"But this is almost the perfect solution."

In regards to the timing of the announcement, Burton said this is not some project that has been in the works for years, only to come to fruition just prior to an election. He said talks only began in earnest in the spring and the project quickly came to life.

Lorne Nystrom, a former federal MP, is the vice-president of government operations for Brightenview. He said discussions over the concept began some time ago between the mayor and himself in Shanghai, of all places.

"The team from Chatham-Kent liked the platform Mr. Zhou had," he said. "It's a new vision that will diversify the economy in Chatham-Kent and provide jobs. We think this is the right place to do it and the right thing to do."

Burton said the hope is to have as many as 400-500 people working in the various businesses when the centre is at capacity. He anticipates that would mean another \$60 million in outside investment.

Burton said there are similar and even larger industrial condo sites elsewhere around the globe, but nothing in Canada, and perhaps North America.

As for setting up shop in Blenheim, he said it is because the industrial park is located in that community.

"It is in a nice community that these folks can be a part of," Burton said.

He and the economic development team are rubbing their hands in anticipation over the centre.

"We've talked to 80 companies in china that would be excellent candidates for this," he said. "They've got the cash to expand into North America, but they don't speak the language and aren't familiar with what they need to do to establish themselves here."

He added Zhou, a Chinese-Canadian, has leads of his own as well.

"They've got some people lined up," Burton said. "We'll start to farm our contacts too."

Those contacts are overseas in India, China and Europe, he said.

Stuart McFadden, deputy director of economic development for the municipality, sees the centre as a magnet.

"This is a huge tool for us from an attraction standpoint," he said.

Burton believes the centre will funnel business to Chatham-Kent, and much of it could eventually pour out of the centre into other parts of the municipality.

"If these companies are successful, they will branch out into their own facilities, and new (companies) will come in," he said.

Zhou hopes to have construction complete by spring of 2016.

What I don't understand is, if we've lost much of our manufacturing to offshore plants because our wages are too high, how can offshore companies manufacture in Canada and be profitable?

A strategic base for global manufacturers in the heart of North America

Asian and European manufacturers can soon go direct to North American production and distribution through a first-of-its-kind, strategic base in the heart of the North American market. The new Global Development Centre (GDC) in Chatham-Kent, Ontario, will provide space and a full array of support services to up to 100 small and mid-sized companies as they set up their manufacturing. It is estimated that the project will attract up to \$100 million (Canadian) in investment and create up to 500 jobs at full capacity. Design and construction of the centre are scheduled for completion in spring 2016.

Brightenview Development International Inc. and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent announced the creation of the GDC in a news conference this morning (Friday September 26) at the GDC site in the Blenheim Industrial Park. Based in Saskatoon, Brightenview is a leading developer of international business projects. The company is investing in, developing and will be operating the Global Development Centre. The cost of development and construction is estimated at \$45 million (Canadian).

The company's CEO and Executive Director, Joe Zhou, said, "Brightenview was attracted to CK by the proactive leadership of the municipality's Mayor Randy Hope, Councillor Art Stirling and the Economic Development Services team – their work was invaluable. I also want to acknowledge the support of all Chatham-Kent Council members, particularly Councillors Karen Herman and Frank Vercooter, in securing this project for the community. In addition to the welcoming community and pro-business environment, access to the U.S., the readiness of the business park, a highly skilled labor force, and the community's quality of life have made this location desirable. We are also very pleased with the encouragement and support from the Government of Ontario to

the GDC project initiative. Chatham-Kent is located on a strategic hot spot, in terms of logistics, on the country's Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative."

Brightenview plans to build up to 400,000 square feet of workshop, 250,000 square feet of warehouse distribution, and 30,000 square feet of service office space. The Global Development Centre will allow international manufacturers to do what they do best – manufacture – while the centre provides the needed Canadian support services such as strategic development, administration, logistics, financial services, legal services, labour law support, marketing communications, and after-sale services.

"Brightenview's advanced business model offers an integrated professional service platform so that global manufacturers can establish turnkey business operations. This model mitigates the risk of starting up a business in North America and successfully accessing the market," said Zhou. "We work with new business arrivals to overcome the barriers of entering an unfamiliar market. The manufacturers can focus on what they do best and have a real fighting chance."

"The GDC project has been a real collaboration between the municipality and Brightenview," said Chatham-Kent Mayor Randy Hope. "Members of Council and economic development staff members were ready for this opportunity. We had all the information at our fingertips, and were able to demonstrate to Brightenview all the advantages of locating in Chatham-Kent. We are very pleased by this large step forward for our community, and we will work continually with the new Global Development Centre. Not only will the incoming international companies provide jobs, but they will also bring capital, entrepreneurship and management expertise that we can expect will lead to other developments. We invite newcomers to call Chatham-Kent home and work to prosper together."

Mayor Hope welcomes the new Global Development Centre

"We invite newcomers to call Chatham-Kent home and work to prosper together," said Chatham-Kent Mayor Randy Hope, speaking at a sod turning ceremony this morning at the Blenheim Industrial Park.

Mayor Hope welcomed Saskatoon-based Brightenvue Development International Inc. and its new Global Development Centre (GDC). The first-of-its kind centre will provide manufacturing space and a full array of support services to up to 100 small and mid-sized manufacturing companies from Asia and Europe. The project is expected to attract up to \$100 million in investment and create up to 500 jobs at full capacity.

"Brightenvue chose Chatham-Kent because we have created a competitive environment to attract new international business investment and jobs as well as position the community for growth," said Hope. "We worked long and hard to demonstrate that we are a warm, welcoming community with a skilled workforce, excellent communica-

tions and transportation links, serviced land and a determination to provide the community support that business people deserve. I know our entire community will welcome our newcomers as friends and neighbours, as well as for the capital, entrepreneurship and management expertise they bring."

In his remarks, Joe Zhou, the CEO and Executive Director of Brightenvue Development International Inc., said, "Chatham-Kent has made a significant effort in actively seeking out global businesses to invest in Chatham-Kent, and has developed a keen understanding of what it will take to attract international businesses. Mayor Hope and his team reached out to Brightenvue - and the GDC in Chatham-Kent is a direct result of those efforts. We are also grateful for the support of all Chatham-Kent Council members in securing this project for the community."

The cost of designing and constructing the Global Development Centre is estimated at \$45 million. The centre is scheduled to open in spring 2016.

Should the Municipality of Chatham-Kent really be doing this? It doesn't seem quite right to me.

BLACKBURN NEWS, Sept. 29, 2014

Brightenvue Development International is going to start lining up contracts in the next few weeks for the different jobs it needs as part of its \$45-million investment in Blenheim.

Company Vice President Lorne Nystrom says they're looking to hire engineers, architects and more to get the newly announced Global Development Centre ready by spring 2016.

"The municipality will be making recommendations to us. They provide a list of, say three legal firms or

three builders or developers, three architects," says Nystrom. "They don't choose favourites, but they provide us with a list."

Nystrom says the centre in Blenheim will represent \$500-million in investment when fully developed.

He describes the GDC as a way to ease the transition into the North American market for foreign companies while creating local jobs by having product assembly done at the facility in order to classify the product as Canadian under NAFTA, opening up the product to the Canadian, US and Mexican markets.

Here are a few more questions I'd like to see answered:

What kind of liability does the municipality have under the Canada/China FIPA?

Will the Global Development Centre be built before all of its tenants are in place?

Has this company actually completed any projects in Canada?

Who actually owns Brightenvue?

What happens if the project doesn't go ahead? Is Brightenvue required to sell it back to us?

How much time and resources will our economic development department be putting into this project?

A side by side comparison of both Brightenview projects.

**DUNDURN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION CENTRE
Dundurn, SK**



Announcement Date:
December 7, 2012

Acres Purchased from Municipality:
160

Cost per Acre:
Estimated \$1,000 to \$2,000

Projected Cost:
\$130 million

Number of Condo Units:
350

Annual Projected Tax Revenue:
\$30 million

Projected jobs created:
Up to 1,000

Anticipated construction completion:
18 to 24 months after construction start

Actual construction start:
~~Spring 2013, Fall 2013~~, Spring 2015

Business type:
Retail/wholesale condos for overseas buyers

Additional Services Provided:
Marketing, accounting, web & translation services

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE,



Announcement Date:
September 26, 2014

Acres Purchased from Municipality:
34

Cost per Acre:
To be announced October 6

Projected Cost:
\$45 million

Number of Condo Units:
Up to 100

Annual Projected Tax Revenue:
Unknown at this time

Projected jobs created:
Up to 500

Anticipated construction completion:
Spring 2016

Actual construction start:
Unknown at this time

Business type:
Industrial condos for overseas manufacturers

Additional Services provided:
Strategic development, business development, marketing, communications, after-sales service, buyer matching

That's it from me!