

Opportunities for German speakers, students, immigrants and N S businesses abound

Learning another language enables you to see the world through a different lens."
Taimi Itembu, St. F.X. student from Namibia.

-by John Gillis

If there was one point made clear from the speakers and presenters at the German Day event last Friday at St. F.X. University it was that opportunity abounds for German speakers, students, immigrants and Nova Scotia businesses. Speaker after speaker shared personal anecdotes, experiences and opportunities from their daily lives and careers.

"If someone had told me twenty years ago that I'd be speaking German every day in my career I wouldn't have believed them, but it's true," said Suzanne Rix, an immigration lawyer and partner with the law firm of Cox and Palmer, Halifax. Rix said 75% of her clients are of European or German background, and many want to immigrate and live in rural Nova Scotia. "They're impressed with the friendliness of the Nova Scotia people; most have good business skills; and they appreciate when you make the effort to learn their language or something about their culture," she said.

Steve Smith, CEO of Central Supplies, invited German language students to consider a career with his company when they graduate. "There are many opportunities, particularly in sales, marketing and management," he said. "We currently employ two German-speaking employees in our Atlantic Division, and our German clients look for high quality products and services." Companies such as Finewood Flooring in Cape Breton have found



Angela MacDonald important export market for their products abroad in Germany while other Nova Scotia companies are exporting entire homes to Germany which are often assembled there by Nova Scotia tradespeople. Julie Marchand from Royal Bank of Canada in Port Hawkesbury told the audience that the growing number of German clients she sees "have very different needs, and they add so much to the diversity of our economic and social lives."

Many of the students added their personal reasons for wanting to learn the language, and some shared stories of their travels in Germany. Angela MacDonald of Inverness drives to St. F.X. twice a week for her German language course. "We had three German exchange students living with our family while attending school, and I just decided it was time to learn the language. It's challenging, but I'm really enjoying it, and I'd really love to incorporate this interest into a career opportunity as a tour guide," said MacDonald.

Patrick Lamey, lawyer with Evans, MacIsaac and MacMillan, told how Rolf Bouman, founder of Canadian Pioneer Estates, has created full- and part-time employment for at least fifteen people directly, including another 35 or so sub-contractors in various

trades and professions. Bouman first came to Cape Breton from Germany with his parents in the late 1970s. He loved it here and soon began his efforts to immigrate here. Initially, he was assisted in his stay by a number of local employers and friends, mentors and co-workers such as Buddy Timmons, the late Leo Coady, Al Downey, and Donald Fortune. "These were all hard-working, excellent role models who helped me get started in Canada when I began working at Evan's Coal Mine, in the forestry industry, and in my early forays into real estate," said Bouman.

Today, Bouman's company, Canadian Pioneer Estates Ltd., is one of the leading real estate and land development companies in Nova Scotia. It has also taken an active role in the promotion of Canadian art and culture abroad. It operates a Canadian

cultural centre in Auld's Cove, featuring the work of Canadian artists such as Charles Chisholm and Virginia McCoy. "I have two children now aged nine and ten and would like to see them have the opportunity to stay in Nova Scotia when they grow up," said Bouman.

"In the thousands of parcels of land Bouman has sold or developed, about 150 purchasers have already built dwellings, and more than forty of Bouman's customers have started their own businesses here," said Lamey, more proof that immigrants can create jobs and opportunities. Bouman told *The Oran* this week that he's also very much interested in contributing to the dialogue regarding immigration opportunities and policy. Bouman has participated in discussions with a number of present and past immigration ministers, deputy ministers as well as

the recent panel discussion on immigration and business in Port Hawkesbury.

"Rolf Bouman has helped build bridges in economic, social and cultural development between Canada and his European clients," said Patrick Lamey, who added that perhaps it's time many of our local recreation

departments consider offering introductory German language and cultural programs.

"There are a great many opportunities today and for the future. Young people, the future is looking at you. Don't blink," concluded Spaska Siderova of the Goethe Institut.