

Destination South Colton

Town Puts Support Behind Initiative To Attract Tourism

By LARRY ROBINSON
SOUTH COLTON - A local entrepreneur who started a small business aimed at promoting the wares of artisans from throughout the region has received a green light from the Colton Town Board - and a check for \$4,000 - to hopefully bring even more economic growth to the community.

Linda Dunning, the owner of Adirondack Artisans in the hamlet of South Colton is a one-woman pep band when it comes to promoting the virtues of both living in and traveling to the tiny hamlet she calls home.

"Stay at the Heritage House Hotel, eat breakfast and lunch at the Sunday Rock Coffee Shop and dinner at Nikki's Place all for one weekend price,"

- Linda Dunning

Her success in opening and running the Adirondack Artisans store led to a larger vision of securing a Small Cities Community Development Block Grant that could be used to rebuild and refurbish downtown South Colton and Colton and to set up a revolving micro-loan fund that

could help local entrepreneurs like herself.

Her long term plan is to bolster South Colton's image as not just a nice small town to pass through, but as an actual tourist destination that people plan a short vacation to, spending a weekend immersing themselves in local cul-

tural activities.

Dunning recently made two presentations to the Colton Town Board asking for "seed money" so that she could hire the services of a grant writing professional to give the community a real shot at securing potential grant money totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars.

This week elected officials in Colton told Dunning they were sold on her idea, passing a resolution authorizing \$4,000 for Dunning to continue the initiative.

"I think it is a very energetic and promising idea," said Councilwoman Grace Hawley.

During her most recent presentation to the board, Dunning presented a sample brochure in which people are invited to spend an artistic and cultural weekend in South Colton while staying at a local bed and breakfast and dining at local eateries.

Some of the activities highlighted on the sample brochure included an Octoberfest weekend, leaf peepers get-away and mask carving workshops during the month of October; quilting, cooking and stained glass retreats in November; and celebrating an old fashioned Christmas in

See COLTON Page 2

Continued From Page 1

the hamlet during December.

"Stay at the Heritage House Hotel, eat breakfast and lunch at the Sunday Rock Coffee Shop and dinner at Nikki's Place all for one weekend price," explains Dunning.

Dunning had originally asked for as much as \$4,700 to begin the grant writing process needed to compete in the competitive small cities

block grant program but was offered \$4,000 by the Colton board instead.

"Thank you. I will make that work," she said.

If successful, Dunning's goal of making South Colton a weekend destination for travelers would fit hand in hand with a new initiative also launched by the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber officials said ear-

lier this week that the high cost of gas and traveling could prompt vacationers to stay and spend more of their money in the coming months and years.

The so-called "Close to Home" initiative focuses attention on events, accommodations and activities located with St. Lawrence County's borders, according to chamber officials.