

What the heck is CACDA?

Cazenovia's best kept secret flies under radar while getting things done

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After the Cazenovia Area Planning Project filed a report back in 2002, it sat on a shelf destined to collect dust.

"After the CAPP plan, no one was pursuing what the communities wanted," said Tom Clarke, CACDA Board Member.

What was needed was a catalyst, a mechanism to clear off the dust and get things moving.

"A catalyst takes things from the idea stage to a flow chart to a task list to maybe grants and an action item," said Dave Lucas, CACDA Board Member.

In 2005, the Cazenovia Area Community Development Association was formed to enhance economic vitality in the area while preserving the rural, historic character through education, consensus-building and implementation. In just three short years of existence, CACDA has compiled an impressive list of accomplishments, with little or no recognition from the community it has benefited.

"I think it's important for the community to understand what this organization has done for the area," said Barbara Henderson, CACDA Director.

What the heck is CACDA? It's an independent organization formed to offer full-time assistance and facilitation for local governments, organizations and residents. The 15-member board pursues grants, protects lands and waterways and acts as a catalyst for projects that require either expertise or, less delicately, a push.

"We're involved in so many things occurring that never would have been done before," Lucas said.

In three years, CACDA has leveraged about \$2.8 million for the area through grants, funding and support for projects.

"That's a pretty significant amount for this community from a start-up organization," Henderson said.

They've gotten money for the Comprehensive Plan, for farmland preservation, for shoreline resurrection, for visiting speakers and for various research studies. Yet people are still wondering...

"We're trying to get people to know who we are and what we do," Clarke said. "We're trying to get the word out."

The problem is, as the go-between with separate entities, they rarely take the credit for all the benefits that would not come to fruition without them.

"We're below the radar," Lucas said. "We don't want recognition. In all we do, we don't take top billing."

But neither is CACDA self-sustaining; they rely on volunteers and donations to operate.

"We are trying to establish a larger fee-for-service revenue stream," Henderson said.

The thing about grant writing, you get one, it makes the next one easier.

"We're just getting started," Henderson said.

In keeping with bringing together people with like purposes, CACDA presents Dual Delights: An Evening of Fine Wine and Food from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday Sept. 26 at the home of Jeff and Stephanie Hunt, 3642 Number Nine Rd. in Cazenovia - music by Soda Ash Six with a sneak preview of Jancis Robinson's "Wines Of America," along with special guest, producer Alan

Wright. Tickets are \$125 per person and reservations must be made by Sept. 15. Proceeds from this event will be used to further CACDA's mission.

Call 655-7651 or email director@cacda.net.

"We're here to make things happen for the betterment of the community," Clark said. "With the Comprehensive Plans, CACDA is going to be a driving force."

Currently CACDA has a grant proposal in the works for the rehabilitation of the CAVAC building. They are working on a farm book, similar to the informational lake book they made. And they have plans to create a volunteer match service on their web site at cacda.net.

"It's important that people know about us," Henderson said. "You'd be surprised at how many people don't know who we are."