

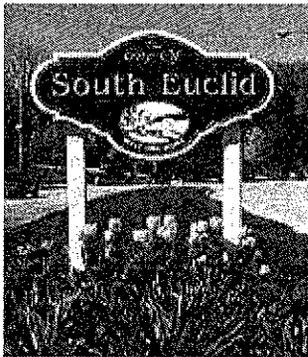


## South Euclid making itself into "A College Town for All Ages"

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**Jeff Piorkowski, Sun News**



SOUTH EUCLID "A College Town for All Ages."

That's the slogan Mayor Georgine Welo is seeking to build upon in coming years as the enrollment at Notre Dame College continues to increase and its students become an even greater presence around South Euclid.

"Being involved with Notre Dame as mayor and as a board member, every time I'm there I see different ages doing different things," Welo said, speaking of senior citizens taking part in a book club on one end of the spectrum, to trick-or-treaters seeking goodies on campus on Halloween night, and students in between.

Welo went on to refer to the college as South Euclid's "economic engine," referring to the taxes gained from salaries of what is now the city's largest employer, money derived by local businesses from having the college nearby, and rentals of homes.

"We once used to rent to families, and now we're renting more to college students," Welo said.

Last fall, the city's leaders decided to try and maximize the potential of the growing student body by asking the college's students to do a marketing study on behalf of the city's businesses. That study helped reveal some of the things students want to see provided by local businesses.

In February, the results of that study were shared with businesses who make up, with city administrators, the South Euclid Business Advisory Board, a group of business leaders who have three times since last year to discuss common problems and goals.

"They (students) most wanted a casual sports bar," said Michael Love, South Euclid development assistant, recapping the marketing study. "Also, they very much wanted some type of casual restaurant, like a Sonic drive-in.

"Third, they wanted an apparel store, something that sells re-usables, maybe like Plato's Closet. They also wanted a store that sells Notre Dame College spiritwear, a store that could maybe be combined with a college book store."

### **College takes active role**

Notre Dame College Vice President for Board and Community Relations Karen Poelking, who is a South Euclid resident, is part of the city's business advisory board. Of the meetings already held, Poelking said, "Absolutely it's been helpful. It's given us insights into what businesses need, and an opportunity to see their perspectives and what the economy is doing to them."

Poelking said that, as an offshoot of one of the meetings, college representatives met with those from Phoenix Coffee House, 4441 Mayfield Road, to try and determine how the coffee house can better meet student needs.

"There aren't a lot of places for students to hang out in the area," Poelking said.

Welo said she can envision a day when the South Green-Mayfield roads intersection becomes "Falcon Square," in reference to the Notre Dame College's nickname.

She tells of the owner of the Subway sandwich shop at 14419 Cedar Road in South Euclid electing to purchase another at Mayfield and Green roads.

"He knows that that's going to be a good store and he wanted to get it before someone else did, so he bought a second store (at 4549 Mayfield Road)," Welo said.

### **Official South Euclid uniform**

"It's sort of become the official uniform of South Euclid, Notre Dame hoodies (hooded sweatshirts)," Welo said. "Wherever you are in the city, you see them."

The start of this school year saw Notre Dame College, founded in 1922, set a new enrollment record for incoming students. Incoming freshmen totaled 369, while the college also added 88 transfer students at other levels, making the grand total 457. This number represents an increase of 11.8 percent above last year.

In all, the college has 2,162 students, 1,211 of them full-time. Notre Dame, formerly an all-female college, began admitting males in 2001. This year, it has added a football team and marching band.

### **Businesses working together**

As for the advisory board meetings, Development Director Ed Gallagher said the meetings allow the opportunity for business leaders to meet with each other, and city officials. The businesses discuss not only improving their customer traffic, but also how they can help each other.

"I made a presentation regarding University Suburban Health Center (1611 S. Green Road) and the kind of services we provide," said USHC Assistant Executive Director Greg McCarthy. "We're always looking to partner with other local businesses."

USHC, South Euclid's second largest employer, took the opportunity of the advisory meeting to tell other businesses that it can provide such services as annual physicals for employees

Further, McCarthy said, USHC would also like to work with Notre Dame College.

"We're trying to stay in touch with Karen Poelking so we can find what synergies exist between us."

Such possibilities include help with training of the college's nursing students, and performing required drug testing of members of its athletic teams.

*The South Euclid Business Advisory Board is currently made up of 25-30 local businesses. It's next meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Oct. 27. Any South Euclid business owner who would like to take part can call Michael Love at (216) 381-0400.*

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