

Artists have a new place to hang

LUKE HENDRY
OSPREY NEWS NETWORK

Prince Edward County artists have a new hangout — and so do their artistic creations.

The Arts on Main Gallery has been open less than two months, but already the people behind it say they're thrilled by its success.

It may have been vacant for more than a decade, but the building at Main and Ross Streets (across from the Regent Theatre) is now a bright, polished space filled tastefully with the work of 27 artists.

A grand opening reception was held last Friday evening.

"It's like a match made in heaven," said Judy Kent, an artist who chairs the Prince Edward County Arts Council, in an interview Friday afternoon.

She and gallery administrator Ann Wood said the gallery works because it's a collaborative effort from several different yet like-minded groups.

It began about six months ago, when building owner and county resident Alan Gratias was looking for a new use for the space.

Gratias already owns an historic building housing a gallery in Lunenburg, N.S., so when a local artist suggested the same concept for Picton, the owner agreed.

The next step was a grant from Prince Edward Lennox & Addington Community Futures Development Corporation.

Artists agreed to staff the gallery themselves, while the arts council created a small office area in the back. The gallery opened during the Victoria Day weekend.

"The arts council's been around for 30 years and never had a headquarters," said Kent. "It's moved around from kitchen table to kitchen table."

She added it's important for the organization to have a main-street presence.

"We couldn't ask for a better location," Wood added.



At the grand opening, Judy Kent, Arts Council Chair; Ann Wood, Arts Council, Alan Gratias, benefactor and Sandra Latchford, acting mayor, say the new gallery is a winning partnership for everyone involved.

Theresa Durning photo

"It (the gallery) has become a community. Every time artists are in town they pop in." And it's not just pretty or functional: the venture is also a commercial success for artists, Wood said.

"The sales have been absolutely extraordinary — far above all pro-

jections," she said. "They're flying off the walls."

She said the variety in art and prices are part of that success.

The Arts on Main Gallery is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The phone number is 613 476-5665.