



## Local News

## 'Baroda - Casual Country Charm'

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Baroda Village Clerk Diane Mensinger offers name tags to those arriving Sunday for the premiere of the promotional video "Baroda - Casual Country Charm" at the Baroda Tap & Grille. The video will be posted on the village's website.  
Jody Warner / H-P correspondent

***Township's marketing video attracts standing room only crowd***

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BARODA - Baroda dairy farmer Bill Shuler is on the road twice a day, hauling cow manure.

Even hauling manure, "You wouldn't believe how many times I've been stopped on the road by people from Chicago trying to find a local winery," Shuler told The Herald-Palladium after the premiere showing of the village's marketing video, "Baroda - Casual Country Charm."

The interest shown by those tourists from Chicago, most often "a very young and trendy couple," shows that Baroda has lots to offer and lots of potential, Shuler said.

The video's premiere at the Baroda Tap & Grille attracted a standing-room-only crowd of well over 100 people.

Shuler and his wife, Carolyn, who were part of the 15-minute video, were impressed with how the video turned out and not at all surprised by the big turnout of people at the premiere.

Shuler said the video "encompasses everything that Baroda is, the down-home time, the many varieties of things to do.

It's all about getting back to locally grown and produced food, and Baroda's got it all. And it's a great place to live."

Carolyn Shuler said the video "showed an eclectic group of people, and how we've all been about to come together and live together, and prosper and grow. This is a wonderful place to live. If you were looking for a spot to move, you couldn't have a better one than Baroda."

The low-key video shows scenes of Baroda's farming community, the six wineries in the area, and the improvements downtown from the village's big streetscape project last year. Those interviewed include business owners, vintners and farmers.

"This is overwhelming," said Baroda Village Council President Bob Getz as he introduced the video. "We never expected this kind of turnout."

Getz said the idea of making a video was conceived by the group promoting a Harvest Feast in the village.

He credited consultant Charles Eckenstahler with coming up with the idea.

The Harvest Feast did not come off as planned last year, but the video did, and is going to be an important marketing tool, Getz said.

Baroda's business in the recent past centered around the tool and die industry, Getz said.

But the village has seen "the loss of six of our nine tool and die shops," and needed to find another way to prosper, he said.

The answer "was right under our noses," Getz said - agricultural tourism.

Former village council trustee Claudia Brister said she enjoyed the way the video showed "what we're all about."

It's going to make others think about having "the opportunity to enjoy what we already enjoy daily," Brister said.

It's going to appeal to "anyone who cares anything at all for wine. ... That's what we do around here."

The video "is a great center piece to market Baroda and Berrien County and the Southwest" of Michigan, said state Rep. Sharon Tyler, R-Niles. "It's fabulous for agri-tourism. It's a great piece."

Tyler, a member of the House Agriculture Committee whose district includes Baroda, said agriculture and wineries are a huge part of the state's economy.

"That's \$71 billion in revenue each year for the state of Michigan," Tyler said. "It's our second largest industry in the State of Michigan. ... I think people need to be aware how strong this is, and not to neglect our agricultural businesses."

"As I've been telling other folks, Baroda's on the tipping point," said Greta Hurst, who with her husband, Bill, recently opened the Tabula Rasa Gallery in Baroda. "So I think this is going to help push us over a little more. I think it's going to open people's eyes to the opportunities we have here.

"I love being in Baroda. It's just the perfect size, and the people have been very welcoming, and I'm excited to be in this movement."

The video was produced and edited by Megan Erskine. Hurst said there's lots of footage left if officials decide they need more videos.

"This is only 15 minutes," Hurst said. "We have 30 hours of film."

Getz said the video will be posted on the village's website.

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