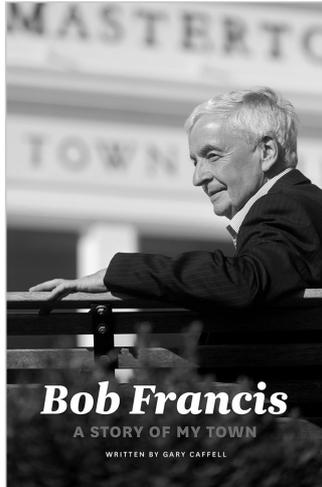


Business growth for Greytown



Learning from experience

From both an economic and employment point of view, the opening of the JNL sawmill and laminated veneer lumber plant in 1992 by then Prime Minister Jim Bolger was an “absolute godsend” for the Wairarapa says then Masterton Mayor Bob Francis.

In the recently published “Bob Francis, a story of my town”, the community leader says “Lets face it, we weren’t in good shape before they came along, we desperately needed something to fill the void created by

the closure of the Waingawa freezing works some three years earlier”.

Bob Francis, alongside others with Japan New Zealand business experience, worked to make the Juken Nissho (JNL) sawmill and laminated veneer plant idea into a reality.

Attract people with skills

Lessons can be learnt from success and failure frankly reported by Bob Francis in the story of his town. Masterton and its neighbourhood. The region could benefit from growth. Forward looking locals talk of the town’s potential. They see the region with land based successes and water based and other prospects. They talk of the local need to attract people with skills.

There are positive signals, some visible in a close reading of the Bob Francis story. Other writers and publishers can help mobilise ideas for development – complementing multi-sector initiatives, including arts, sports and other features of tourism.

Central government has regional development programmes, as Steven Joyce and other ministers periodically say. Central and local government plans can complement each other. Wairarapa mayors, local members of Parliament and Wellington regional council representatives can advocate for aspects of ten year and annual plans.

Asian convenience food markets

Research institutions such as Massey University, and its vice chancellor Steve Maharey, suggest Asian convenience food markets are open for local business. Established food businesses, not only dairy, beef and sheep meat, wine, pizza and other food services offering a taste of New Zealand can be grown. What can be achieved with horticulture lines such as apples – fresh and processed? What more can be done with mushrooms, with organics or well-seasoned vegetables for the Asian ethnic domestic and export markets?

Service industries, needed for such enterprises, and for accommodating people with skills the region can attract, offer other business opportunities – from housing to ageing in place personal services.

The basic infrastructure for Wairarapa business matching and development is in place.

Contemporary political, business and community leaders should display the political will to turn big and small business ideas into reality.

In the 2016 Talking business series we will look for the political will and ideas for Greytown and its neighbourhood.