

# ***New citizens group formed***

In response to the new Bedford Township building and zoning ordinances, several members of the community have banded together to form a new citizen's group to help advocate for Bedford businesses.

Gene Stock, a member of the Bedford Advocates Association (BAA), said the group wants to send a message that Bedford is a great place to live, play, work, learn, shop and own a business. The group's slogan is "Bedford Yes!"

The BAA, like the newly formed BICA (Bedford Industrial and Commercial Association), came together after the passage of three ordinances in August of last year.

The ordinances establish guidelines for outdoor lighting, landscaping and architecture as well as limiting the size of commercial business buildings.

"With the passage of the recent commercial/industrial growth prohibitive ordinances, it has made it much more diffi-

cult and expensive for many people to achieve the 'American Dream' of business ownership or expansion," Stock said. "Some of these ordinances even make it difficult to sell their property and/or business. The attitude of some of our residents seems to be a double standard one of 'Build as many houses as you wish, but if you want to open a business we suggest you go to Toledo.'"

"I believe the business owners in Bedford have always

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been the backbone of this community," Stock continued. "They continue to be supportive members community members. Just look to see who the major donors are to the new YMCA. Some residents forget who helped build and support this community."

The BAA, like BICA, which Stock is also a member of, wants to be a positive force in the community. Unlike BICA, the BAA will comment on the Wal Mart issues, he said.

"We are trying to show the positive side of both sides of the debate," said Stock. "BICA does not want to show their opinions on Wal Mart. The BAA, on its web site, not only shows supportive information on Wal Mart but also contains a link to Bedford Watch's web site. We want to take a more positive and pro-active approach to business and residential concerns."

Stock said that since the word has gotten out on the BAA, the web site has had approximately 500 to 600 hits a week and he has received many positive phone calls.

"I kinda feel like we are the silent majority here," said Stock. "What the township did by passing these ordinances was awake a sleeping giant. We are not opposed to ordinances or restrictions, let's just make them with a little more common sense."

Stock said he likes seeing the new homes and subdivisions that have been built in the 56 years he has been a Temperance resident but he is tired of the negative attitudes he feels and hears from some residents.

"I welcome the new homes and people here but let's not have the attitude that we do not want business here," said Stock. "It bothers me to hear the negative attitudes especially from the new

people here. It is like they are saying 'Now that we are here let's shut the door.' When Lewis Avenue was widened in the 1970s we were told that the commercial growth would be concentrated there. That did not happen and a lot of growth happened on Secor. Now, all of a sudden, we are going to say we don't want any more growth. We need to be positive and move ahead. We want to see downtown Temperance come back and we should keep the tax dollars, and sales tax dollars here in Michigan."

To learn more about or to become a member of the Bedford Advocates Association, contact Gene Stock at (734) 847-6358, (734) 847-9512, or at [www.bedfordyes.com](http://www.bedfordyes.com), or Nancy Tienvieri at (734) 854-6920.