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Unexpected Dundalk

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By **P. KENNETH BURNS**



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4:47

Unexpected Dundalk

For years, Dundalk has been the butt of jokes. Now, community leaders hope to attract a new generation of residents while changing its image.

The [Dundalk Renaissance Corporation](#) introduced a new image campaign Thursday at the Sparrows Point Country Club entitled “[Dundalk: Live The Unexpected.](#)”

Amy Menzer, the corporation’s executive director, says she recognizes the community has an image problem. And she hopes the campaign will mark the beginning of the end of the misperceptions and bad jokes that have dogged the Eastern Baltimore County community.

“If you’ve never been here, you may have this image that the entire place is just a giant steel plant. And that it’s polluted and the things that go along with that,” Menzer said.

It was probably a couple of radio wise guys who savaged Dundalk the worst.

Brian and O’Brien, the morning team on the old B104 from 1984 to 1988, had plenty of targets, but Dundalk seemed to be Brian Wilson’s favorite. A [2004 Baltimore Sun Article](#) noted a couple of his barbs.

“There’s a shortage of pharmacists in Dundalk. Apparently, they can’t figure out how to get those little bottles in the typewriter.”

On another occasion, Wilson announced, “It’s 7:48. Time for all you people in Dundalk to move your El Caminos to the other side of the street.”

But the campaign draws a different picture of Dundalk. It’s only minutes from the urban hustle of Canton and Fells Point, yet quietly suburban. The housing is affordable; there are 43 miles of waterfront and ample recreation activities.

And it’s a close knit community, says Joe Stadler who grew up in Dundalk. He met his wife, Sue, in high school, married, settled down and raised his family – all in Dundalk. They’re longtime residents of the St. Helena neighborhood, one of the 24 neighborhoods that comprise Dundalk. And he knows most of his neighbors.

“We probably have about 60 or 65 homes on my street and myself and my wife probably know over 50 of our neighbors, right on our street,” he said.

Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz said he hopes the new campaign will demonstrate that close knit feeling to the region. He described the people of Dundalk as warm, genuine and patriotic.

“That’s evidenced by not only the strong association with July 4 but also the pride associated with the War of 1812,” Kamenetz said.

It will have been 200 years in September since the [British landed troops at North Point](#), just down the road, as they attempted to capture Baltimore after setting the White House ablaze in Washington.

Kamenetz also said the county has spent \$113 million to upgrade county facilities and the infrastructure in Dundalk.

In addition, the state Department of Housing and Community Development is investing money to revitalize Dundalk through the [Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative](#), a program for developing communities inside the beltway.

The renaissance corporation is sponsoring a housing fair in September to attract new residents. Menzer said she is looking at future opportunities as well.

“Obviously you have the entire Sparrows Point peninsula that’s available for reinvestment but with Amazon coming, we feel that’s an opportunity very close by to Dundalk,” she said, referring to the new distribution center for the online retailer coming to Southeast Baltimore.

Menzer said she hopes that many of the new employees hired to work there will choose Dundalk as their home.

More information about the housing fair can be found at the corporation’s new website, [unexpecteddundalk.com](#).



(from left) Brian Sheppard from the office of Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz, David Janiszewski - president of the Dundalk Renaissance Corporation (DRC), state Housing and Community Development Secretary Raymond Skinner and Amy Menzer - executive director of the DRC pose around the new branding for Dundalk. The image campaign aims to attract new residents and change perceptions about the Eastern Baltimore County community.
 Credit P. Kenneth Burns/WYPR