

## Mayoral candidates pitch Rotarians

by Jennifer Hamilton-Charles  
The Nugget

North Bay mayoral candidates faced off Thursday at a Nipissing Rotary Club luncheon, pitching their visions and ideas. The speeches were among several public presentations the candidates have been making this week to community organizations. Jeff Marceau didn't receive a reaction from rival Vic Fedeli after he took a jab at the retired businessman. "I believe the city needs a leader with vision, not a salesman," Marceau told the audience of about 50 people at Branch 23 of the Royal Canadian Legion. "I believe the city needs a leader who understands that he has a moral obligation to the people of this city, not to whomever has the most money." Marceau criticized Fedeli's idea to sell surplus city land to businesses for \$1 an acre. "If North Bay is a place that big business wants to come to then we can sell them the city's excess land at fair market value and make some money instead of giving it away as others have said we should do," he said. Marceau, a 33-year old gymnastics coach and partner in North Bay Gymtrix Gymnastics and Athletics Centre, touched upon his inexperience. "I know that compared to Bennett, Wright and Fedeli I know I look out of place up here and I know I will not be as up to par as them on all the issues," he said. "But I've lived in North Bay all my life and I love this city and everything it has to offer. It's given me more than I probably deserve so all I'm asking for is a chance to give back."

Bennet tried to separate herself from her opponents by highlighting her experience in municipal politics. "After 18 years in municipal politics, I know being mayor is not about control or personal agendas. It's about debate," Bennett said, adding that she wants less talking and more listening.

*No yellow book*

"I don't have that little yellow book called 2020, but I do have a vision and it's my vision and I know you have a vision that's your vision. But what I think we need to work on is our vision."

Fedeli reiterated his 2020 Vision plan. With a copy of the plan in hand, he explained how a few ideas could get North Bay back to being the city people remember. "Don't worry because we will find great people to sit on boards and commissions even though we're not paying for them to do so," he said. "We have the good serviced lots that businesses are looking for, which is why I want to sell a ton of land for \$1 an acre providing businesses set up within 12 months." Fedeli wasn't able to expand on his third objective - the grant access program - because he was cut off by the moderator.

Wright, 37, was last to speak, focussing on alternative energy sources and health care for the less fortunate. The single father of three who is a financial adviser and co-manager of Clarica Investment Co., stressed the need for solutions. "The money we could make from wind power could be used to pay down the city's debt," he said, adding that the \$700,000 investment could pay for itself in five years and generate power for 250 homes. "I also am interested in developing an on-call system that would relieve pressure from the emergency rooms." The plan, in partnership with local health units, would allow doctors to make house calls.