



Staff Report

Report Title: November 2023 Business and Economic Officer Status Report

Prepared By: Amy Irwin

Department:

Date: Nov. 6, 2023

Report Number: BED-2023-11-43

File Number: C11 BED 23

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Attachments:

Recommendation:

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report Number BED-2023-11-43 prepared by Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer.

Background:

This report provides the Committee with an update from the Business & Economic Officer.

Discussion:

Economic Development

The Economic Development team continues to support local businesses by:

- Regular check-ins and communication with local businesses.
- Distribution of the business survey via newsletter and email to local businesses, with the goal of curating data for an updated business directory and promotional/marketing material.
- Planned for Business networking/celebration event, scheduled for Thurs. Nov. 23 at Pine River Mercato and Pizzeria. Invites have been sent to Huron-Kinloss' businesses. Event begins at 5pm and includes a tour of the Pine River Food facility, pizza and pasta buffet. Limited number of tickets at \$10 each are available.
- Staff are working with a graphic designer to create a business recruitment pitch kit, to attract businesses to Huron-Kinloss. Expected completion of design is December 2023.

- Business recognition certificates prepared for presentations later in November.
- Support on the Lucknow's Music in the Fields committee meetings
- Business and Economic Officer and Manager of Strategic Initiatives attended the EDCO and Ministry of Tourism Investment Dragons Den event in Toronto on October 5. We had the opportunity to present Huron-Kinloss as an investment opportunity to 10 hotel developers. Overall it was a successful day, with key takeaways received for tips to attract businesses to our area.

Holiday Shopping Pass 2023

The annual Holiday Shopping Pass returns on November 12th. Residents and visitors are encouraged to shop local this holiday season and pick-up a Holiday Shopping Pass at a participating business in Lucknow, Ripley, Pine River or Point Clark. The amount spent will be recorded on the Pass in \$10 increments. Once a total of \$150 has been spent, the Pass can be submitted to the Township of Huron-Kinloss (or to a drop-off location) for a chance to win one of THREE \$150 Huron-Kinloss Shopping Sprees. Passes submitted before November 30th will be entered to win 1 of 2 early bird prizes.

Participating businesses in Lucknow:

- Armstrong's Bakery
- Brooke Marks-RMT
- Cathy's Crafts
- Dollar Haven (drop-off location)
- Edgar's Feed and Seed (drop-off location)
- Everlasting Flowers & Gifts (drop-off location)
- Farmacia Health Bar
- Flame N' Bricks Pizzeria
- Green's Meat Market
- Halo Health & Wellness
- Hodgins' Building Centre
- Hodgins' Home Hardware (drop-off location)
- I Want That Bag
- Lucknow Pharmasave (drop-off location)
- Mani and Mane
- Mary's Family Restaurant
- Mayfair Training
- Me 2 You

Participating businesses in Ripley:

- All About Hair
- Bruce County Wine Seller
- Collective Co. Boutique
- FIG Studio Kitchen (drop-off location)
- MacAdam's Mini Mart
- Pollock Electric/Ripley Ace Hardware
- Ripley Variety (drop-off location)

- Shoreline Chic
- The Woodshop
- Mercato and Pizzeria by Pine River Cheese
- West 81 Restaurant, Point Clark

We will be advertising this promotion in local news outlets and on social media. You can also download a Pass from www.huronkinloss.com. Contest ends December 24th. Participants have until January 5, 2024, to submit their completed Pass.

Tourism

Secrets of the Back Forty 2023 recap:

Secrets of the Back Forty, Huron-Kinloss' new tourism website was launched in June with the goal of the first year of the initiative to educate locals and businesses about the initiative and start building brand recognition. This was accomplished through:

- Regular social media promotion on Huron-Kinloss Tourism
- Branded flags put at key locations – Pine River Cheese, Grassroots Wood Fired Pizza, Bruce Botanical Gardens, Point Clark Lighthouse, Farrell's Pick your Own and Lucknow Tourism office
- Branded sandwich boards at Holyrood General Store, Point Clark Lighthouse, Lucknow Tourism office and Pine River Cheese
- Staff attendance at 3 Drifter's Cruise Nights and the Ripley Food Art and Craft Festival to hand out postcards with QR code to Secrets of the Back Forty
- Branded postcards put in every camper bag at Lucknow's Music in the Fields and for pick up at various Township events (Food, Art and Craft Festival, Fall Fairs, etc.)
- Postcards for pick up at Fisherman's Cove, Lucknow Tourism Office, Point Clark Lighthouse and Grassroots Wood fired Pizza
- Launch event held on July 23 at Grassroots Wood fired pizza with approximately 150 people attending. Postcards were handed out to all attendees with explanation of initiative
- Paid display ad in Kincardine Tourist Guide, Grey-Bruce Escape and a 2-page spread in Huron-Kinloss Discovery Guide
- Social media Influencer (organized by County of Bruce)
- Charity cycling for pancreatic cancer made a detour to include some of the Back Forty route
- Photo shoot in September to update website and print assets for next year
- Integrated the online booking system for Point Clark Lighthouse within the page, resulting in 337 tickets sold online.
- Website views of www.secretsofthebackforty: 8099 page views thus far in 2023, with 2432 unique users.

The goal of promotion this year was accomplished by introducing the brand and concept and creating awareness with the operators and local business owners, in addition to a soft launch to the public. The closure of the bridge on one of the cycling routes prevented a lot of promotion of the cycling routes this year. We also wanted to get a baseline of website views so we can compare year over year and solicit feedback to enhance the site for robust promotion next year.

Plan for 2024:

- Highlight each business on Secrets of the Back Forty in social media posts and post regularly from May – October
- Promote the cycling routes and explore what it would take to host a charity cycling event, using the routes
- Post trail markers on cycling routes
- Bike repair stations and bike stands will be installed and promoted.
- Include a business directory of more businesses in “Eat, Stay, Play” format on the site.
- Include a section for farm gates (similar to original Secrets of the Back Forty map)
- Specific Secrets of the Back Forty promotions
- Printed brochures

Key indicators of success:

- Surrounding municipalities and organizations are aware of what Huron-Kinloss has to offer and tourism cross promotion bring visitors to the area.
- Secrets of the Back Forty initiative is built out further.
- Huron-Kinloss businesses feel supported and celebrated in our community.
- Ongoing business investment and retention in our community.

Financial Impacts:

Included in the current budget.

Strategic Alignment / Link:

The information provided in this report is consistent with and in keeping with the Municipality’s Vision and Mission. The recommendations contribute to our goals in achieving a prosperous community, a vibrant community, and a spirited community.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer

Report Approved By:

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer