

**STAFF REPORT: Administration**



**REPORT TO:** Finance and Administration  
Committee  
**MEETING DATE:** May 24, 2011  
**REPORT NO.:** CEDC.11.12  
**SUBJECT:** Support for 2011 Tourism Initiatives  
**PREPARED BY:** Lisa Kidd, Communications and  
Economic Development Coordinator

### **A. Recommendation**

THAT Council receive Report CEDC.11.12, "Support for 2011 Tourism Initiatives" and;

THAT Council approve funding for Salsa at Blue Mountain Festival in the amount of \$5,000 through the Economic Development Initiatives Budget; and

THAT Council approve funding for the Apple Pie Trail in the amount of \$5,000; through the Economic Development Initiatives Budget and;

FURTHER THAT Council approve funding for the Fishway Webcasting High Speed Internet Connection in the amount of \$1,200 through the Economic Development Initiatives Budget.

### **B. Background**

In 2011, Council approved a budget of 20,000 for Economic Development Initiatives. The purpose of this budget is to fund initiatives which are aligned with "Red Hot and Blue", the Town's Economic Development Strategy. The strategy was endorsed by Council August, 2010.

Staff anticipates a future steering committee playing an instrumental role in identifying the needs of the community with respect economic development initiatives. This steering committee would work in partnership with Staff and Council to propose future allocation of these funds. In the interim, Staff has been approached by community partners for financial support, namely Blue Mountain Village (for support of the Apple Pie Trail and Salsa at Blue Mountain Festival) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (for support of the Fishway Webcast).

Staff is of the opinion that these three requests closely align and meet objectives outlined in "Red Hot and Blue". To follow is more detailed information relating to these tourism initiatives.

## **2011 Blue Mountains Apple Pie Trail**

The Blue Mountains Apple Pie Trail is a year round culinary and agri-tourism product experience celebrating our heritage, local food culture, agriculture, museums, art, attractions and related businesses from Collingwood, through The Blue Mountains and Beaver Valley to Meaford.

The Trail is an incredible experience on its own but packaged with hotel stays and a variety of adventure activities through the Blue Mountains from June-October, the Trail becomes one of the most unique travel opportunities in Ontario and one that has the attention of travel and culinary media.

Our Trail is ranked among the Top 3 Trails in Ontario alongside the Prince Edward County Taste Trail and Savour Stratford, an incredible accomplishment for a young tourism product with fantastic growth potential.

Financial support of this initiative will help deliver the following promotion:

- 20,000- 2011 brochures featured in the Ontario Travel Centres and throughout the area
- Apple Pie Trail website [www.applepietrail.ca](http://www.applepietrail.ca)
- Blue Mountain Village information centre, resort websites, email newsletters, Activity Central
- Blue Mountain Village summer festivals and events brochure
- Magazine advertising
- Public Relations activities

The future sustainability of the Trail requires partnerships with surrounding municipalities, BIAs, agriculture and related tourism businesses. Financial commitment has already been offered by The Municipality of Meaford, Downtown Collingwood BIA, Grey/Bruce ACA, Scandivave Spa, Scenic Caves, Blue Mountain Village Association and approximately 30 businesses along the Trail.

The majority of the Trail destinations and adventure experiences fall within The Blue Mountains.

Provincial funding and growth opportunities are very dependent on the municipal partnership funding.

## **Salsa at Blue Mountain Festival**

This tourism initiative is a market development strategy to introduce the Latino market, North America's largest growing tourism market and relatively untapped for our area, to The Blue Mountains and keep them coming back. It's a strategy that's working, growing and supported by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism & Culture.

2011 marks the third annual festival in partnership with Telelatino Television and the Salsa Festival Group. The partnership allows over \$1million in television promotion, targeted specifically to this market, for one month leading up to the June 24-26, 2011 event and for many weeks following the event through the Salsa on St. Clair festival and TLNtv website.

In 2010 the Salsa at Blue Mountain Festival was recognized as “Best New Festival in Ontario” by Festivals & Events Ontario and at the Grey/Bruce level, “Best New Tourism Initiative 2010”. It is also on the 2011 “Top 100 Festivals” in Ontario List.

2010 Survey Results (specifically at the event) were as follows:

- 80% were first time Salsa attendees
- 35% of all attendees (local and visitors) were born outside Canada (compared to 23% for the Georgian Bay Visitor Research 2009)
- 45% of visitors were born outside Canada
- 70% of visitors stayed in local hotels, 20% in cottage, 10% with friends and family
- Attendees rated the event 8 out of 10, very strong relative to other signature Ontario events

### **Fishway Webcast**

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) received federal funding to install an underwater camera at the fishway, located at the Highway 26 Bridge in Thornbury. This underwater camera tracks the size and number of fish and assists the MNR in their fish protection and conservation mandate. As part of this project, the MNR asked the Town if the “fishcast” could be uploaded to the Town’s website, as a public service and tourism tool. This required the addition of high-speed Internet connection, paid for by the Town. The uploading of the “fishcast” itself, to our website, can be done at no additional cost.

While staff does not have empirical data to identify the number of travelers to the area for Fishway viewing, it is apparent by viewing the pedestrian traffic at the Fishway that numerous people are interested in watching the migratory pattern of fish up the Beaver River. In addition, visits to our Fishway webpage are increasing, albeit nominally. It is practicable to suggest that uploading of the “fishcast” to the Town’s website would be of interest to visitors to our site and encourage visits to our area. The Town currently receives 20,000 visits monthly to its website.

Due to the timing of the project and in the spirit of partnership, the Town has already provided the high-speed connection to the MNR. While the costs for this could be allocated to another budget line, staff felt that the Economic Development Initiatives Budget was a preferred budget line for such expenditure. Therefore, the request for funding of the webcast tool is contained herein.

### **C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan**

3.0 Preserving and enhancing natural and environmental features, and cultural heritage of the community.

These initiatives also meet the following objectives outlined in "Red Hot and Blue":

- Create a sustainable, pre-eminent four-seasons tourist destination (Salsa at Blue Mountain, Apple Pie Trail)
- Market and brand collectively as the sustainable tourism destination in Ontario(Salsa at Blue Mountain, Apple Pie Trail)
- Promote...ecotourism as a major tourist attraction (Fishway Webcasting)

### **D. Environmental Impacts**

None.

### **E. Financial Impact**

This will have an impact of approximately 11,200 dollars on the Economic Development Initiatives Budget.

### **F. Attached**

None.

Respectfully submitted,

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Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

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Shawn Everitt  
Director of Recreation

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Peter McGee  
Event and Youth Coordinator