

STAFF REPORT: Administration

REPORT TO: Council
MEETING DATE: August 8, 2011
REPORT NO.: CEDC.11.18
SUBJECT: Apple Promotion Initiative
PREPARED BY: Lisa Kidd, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

A. Recommendation

THAT Council receive Report CEDC.11.18, "Apple Promotion Initiative" and;

THAT Council approve funding of an Apple Promotion Initiative at an upset limit of \$3,500 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 to 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 working with various community partners to identify tangible economic development actions, including the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Thornbury Business Improvement Area (B.I.A.) and local agricultural groups.

In July, Staff met with the Thornbury B.I.A. Board to identify a promotional initiative to strengthen the connection between our commercial district(s) and the agricultural community. The BIA suggested the creation of a local, apple promotion to complement the Apple Pie Trail initiative and the Apple Harvest Festival. This concept was presented to the Agricultural Advisory Committee, The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and the Georgian Bay Fruit Growers by Town Staff. All expressed support for this initiative.

The general terms of the initiative are as follows:

- The apple promotion will take place 4 weekends in the month of October, highlighting 4 very good varieties of apples: Gala, Honey Crisp, McIntosh and Northern Spy. These were identified by representatives of the

Georgian Bay Fruit Growers as historical and popular apples which will keep the best at room temperature over the course of a day.

- Cedar, hand-made bushel crates will be available and delivered to all participating businesses. They will be on loan from Finch Haven Orchards for the month.
- The bushel crates will have three “pamphlet/card holders” on them: one for the Georgian Bay Fruit Growers brochure, one for the Apple Pie Trail brochure and the other for a promotional post card.
- The promotional post card will include a picture of the apple, a description of the apple, a recipe and a list of local growers and markets.
- The Town will also advertise this promotion on twitter, the Town’s website, the Town’s venue vision system and via a media advisory.
- Businesses throughout The Blue Mountains are free to participate in this initiative.

Staff is of the opinion that this initiative closely aligns with and meets objectives outlined in “Red Hot and Blue”, namely:

- Maintain and enhance prosperous sustainable agriculture.
- Connect agricultural operations with local food distribution.
- Investigate local and regional agricultural marketing opportunities.

C. The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Plan

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

D. Environmental Impacts

This initiative aims to encourage local food consumption, thereby reducing food transportation costs and green house gas emissions.

E. Financial Impact

This will have a potential budget impact of \$3,500 on the Economic Development Initiatives Budget. The Economic Development Initiatives Budget was approved as part of the 2011 Budget.

F. Attached

None.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Kidd
Communications and Economic Development Coordinator