

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes

Economic Recovery Task Force Report

Report Number ERTF2020-003

Meeting Date: August 11, 2020

Title: Economic Development Marketing Updates

Description: An overview of the new Shop Local and Tourism marketing campaigns being developed by the Economic Development Division

Ward Number: All

Author and Title: Laurie McCarthy, Economic Development Officer – Tourism
Donna Goodwin, Economic Development Officer – Arts and Culture

Recommendation(s):

That Report EDTF2020-03, **Economic Development Marketing Updates**, be received;

Background:

In a municipal response to the economic fallout due to the shutdown of the Canadian economy as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis, two new marketing campaigns are being developed; Shop Local Kawartha Lakes; and a Tourism Marketing Campaign. These complementary campaigns are designed for different audiences and markets, with a joint goal of supporting economic regeneration in Kawartha Lakes.

Supporting the small business sector and local tourism industry through marketing was identified as an action in the Kawartha Lakes COVID-19 Business Survey and Economic Recovery Task Force Working Group Sessions. This essential role is supported by both the Shop Local and the Tourism marketing campaign. In both initiatives, the benefits of shopping, playing, staying and visiting our local businesses is encouraged in a strong and supportive way.

Rationale:

The tactics of traditional marketing have had to evolve to address the new shopping realities of COVID-19 and the evolution of information consumption. Social distancing and the move to ecommerce by consumers has changed the way residents and visitors consume information and activate their purchasing decisions. Both campaigns have a focus on digital marketing and are designed to the needs to the Kawartha Lakes resident and visitor demographics, scaffolded with the new realities of COVID-19.

The campaigns will recognize the best of Kawartha Lakes and will focus on activities, shops and services we are fortunate to have in our community. They are also designed to act as a communications tool to share with residents and visitors that when people are spending time and money in Kawartha Lakes, they can have fun, relax and get what they need all in a convenient, safe and memorable way.

SHOP LOCAL

The Shop Local campaign is intended to stimulate the local economy as Phase 3 of the provincial response occurs, and build local resident consumer confidence that local businesses can keep them safe while providing the goods and services. It also creates a Pride of Place campaign during these unprecedented times. Acting as a communications tool to share in the safety protocols put in place by our local business community, it will create a platform to share some of the ecommerce opportunities that local business has initiated over the last three months.

The campaign will encourage residents to shop local with a focus on specific sectors of Retail, Hospitality, Personal Service, Agri-culinary and Recreation. These sectors have been significantly impacted economically and have direct

contact with consumers. Messaging will focus on the new way residents can safely shop local - online, curbside, in person with all of the safety measures in place in a nostalgic yet practical way using the prescribed adage theme.

The Economic Development Division has partnered with the four (4) area Chambers of Commerce and the Lindsay BIA to deliver one (1) Shop Local campaign in the City of Kawartha Lakes. This collective response should ensure that a strong centralized message is disseminated to the local and seasonal residents of the municipality.

Due to this partnership, the campaign's digital focus is conducive to resource sharing amongst the partners. Digital campaigns are effective and both accessible and affordable for organization and local businesses to participate. They are an effective platform to measure the success of the campaign because of the metrics that can be collected in real time through the collection of Click through rates, views and shares. Importantly, it also allows for as needed changes to the marketing collateral to respond to changing government protocols related to our small business sector.

Local business organization social media channels and websites will be able to post and share the campaign. A Media Toolkit, with template marketing sheets, will be available for all organizations to post on their websites so that area businesses have easy access to marketing tools they can use to be included in our Shop Local campaign at no additional cost. This will increase the campaign's reach to our residents.

TOURISM MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The Tourism marketing campaign has been developed to support the recovery of the tourism industry in Kawartha Lakes. The focus for the campaign is promotion of Kawartha Lakes as the ideal summer, fall and winter destination through the message that people can safely enjoy the best there is to experience without having to venture too far from home. Residents and visitors can enjoy time with family and friends doing the outdoor activities they love and have missed such as hiking, cycling, boating, camping and paddling. The imagery throughout the campaign will focus on these outdoor activities and will direct to the tourism website where information accommodations, dining, attractions and shopping can be found. The campaign will have three focus areas; Summer, Fall and Winter.

The target audience for the campaign is local and seasonal residents'/cottage owners; visiting friends and relatives; and, Ontario based residents living within a 90-minute drive of Kawartha Lakes. The campaign will have a hyper-local component that will speak to local residents and cottagers to inform of all there to do and experience in their own backyard. This will support the development of Pride of Place within the Kawartha Lakes community while encouraging rediscovery of the region. The close proximity of Kawartha Lakes to the GTA being only 90 minutes North East of Toronto creates a competitive edge. Kawartha Lakes is an easy self-drive destination for those looking for a day-trip

or overnight staycation close to home. The target audience for the campaign are families and nature lovers looking to create memories and spend quality time together. These segments within the Destination Ontario Visitor Profile are referred to as the Family Memory Builders and Nature Lovers.

The Tourism marketing campaign is broken into two components: the creative advertising component and the supporting information component. The advertising will have a digital focus to align with current information consumption and trip planning trends. Digital ads will be placed in a variety of online platforms including Facebook, and Instagram; digital ads on Bell Media news websites, banner ads on the Culinary Tourism Alliance and Ontario by Bike website; LinkedIn and Google Ad networks; and YouTube. The digital focus to the campaign has multiple benefits including reaching the desired target audience effectively measurement of the success of the campaign. It also allows for changes to the marketing collateral to respond to changing government protocols related to the tourism sector and will inform the decisions for future campaigns.

The supporting information component includes updates to the Explore Kawartha Lakes tourism website, partner websites including Ontario Travel and blog posts. These supporting components are key to the success of the campaign as they will address the question of “how” a visitor can experience the appealing assets and activities in Kawartha Lakes.

The campaign message supports the recommendations provided through consultations that Kawartha Lakes is open, welcoming, and a safe destination. With wide open spaces, an abundance of natural assets and communities with businesses that are open with all the required health protocols in place, people can spend time in Kawartha Lakes in an enjoyable, memorable and safe way. The campaign message and tactics are created to be fun, light and clever with the call to action of visiting the tourism website for more information on what there is to see, do and experience in Kawartha Lakes.

Through direction provided by the Ministry of Sport, Heritage, Tourism and Culture Industries, the Summer component of the campaign will have a hyper-local focus as promotion of domestic travel is not yet being encouraged. As domestic travel opens up, the campaign geographic targets and messaging will be adapted accordingly.

Ultimately, the campaign will showcase Kawartha Lakes and the assets and communities in Kawartha Lakes to local residents and those in nearby communities while encouraging exploration and spending in our local economy. The campaign will contribute to revenue generation at Kawartha Lakes businesses throughout the tourism and hospitality sectors including accommodations, attractions, retail, restaurants and agri-tourism.

Timelines:

The Shop Local campaign is in the final stages of development to launch in early August and will continue throughout 2020. The campaign will adapt as needed to changes in the pandemic landscape as they arise.

The summer Tourism campaign launched the week of July 27, 2020. The Fall Tourism campaign is currently being developed and is anticipated to be launched in September 2020. The Winter campaign will follow with an anticipated launch of November 2020.

Budget Impacts:

Funding for the development and implementation of the Shop Local campaign is part of the approved 2020 Economic Development operational budget.

The Tourism marketing campaign is being funded by the approved 2020 Economic Development operational budget as well as through funding provided by RTO8 Kawartha Northumberland.

Relationship of Recommendation(s) to the 2020-2023 City of Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan:

The campaigns directly contribute to the City of Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan goal of A Vibrant and Growing Economy by stimulating local spending to support local business and encouraging visitation.

The campaigns also align with the Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Strategy by building awareness of the City of Kawartha Lakes as a destination, encouraging visitation in off peak seasons (the focus of the Fall and Winter tourism campaigns), engaging partnerships across the City, and supporting key economic sectors.

Consultations:

Both the Shop Local and Tourism marketing campaigns have involved input from with various stakeholders including members of the Economic Recovery Task Force, local Chambers of Commerce, local businesses, Regional Tourism Organization 8 (RTO8 - Kawartha Northumberland), Destination Ontario/Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and City of Kawartha Lakes staff in the Economic Development and Communications, Advertising and Marketing Divisions.