

County throws support behind school moratorium

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sun media

The County of Huron is throwing its support behind a Community Schools Alliance-led resolution that

calls for a "smart moratorium" on disputed school closures.

In an unanimous vote at Huron County's Oct. 14 committee-of-the-whole session, councillors opted to support the Alliance's campaign

that is striving to put a halt to the current Accommodation Review Committee system in favour of a more open and accountable process that includes the input of the impacted municipalities.

WELL DONE

Coun. James Fergusson (Blue-water) took some time out to give thanks to the groups responsible for the recent Taste of Huron festivities that featured 17 events.

"It was an absolutely amazing event," says Fergusson. "We had chefs from all over the place."

Jenna Ujiye, Huron's Tourism Marketer, notes the event was made possible through an Ontario Market Investment Fund grant.

She reports its direct economic impact came in at \$63,177, and statistics show the festivities' participants were 60 per cent local and 40 per cent tourist.

"We even had a woman up from Georgia," says Ujiye.

She adds the county will be making a submission for another grant for another Taste of Huron event. Plus, she notes, highlights from this

year's activities are showcased

on a number of social-networking sites, including YouTube. It can be viewed at Taste of Huron.ca

Coun. Deb Shewfelt (Goderich) gave praise to organizers for aiming high.

"Set your standards high and you will get people to travel a distance," he said.

TOURISM FRIENDLY

Huron County's second edition of the successful Buy Local, Buy Fresh map is hot off the presses.

Cindy Fisher, of Huron County's Planning and Development department, reports the map features 57 Huron producers and 71 producers from Perth.

"It certainly raise the bar on their consumer awareness," reports Fisher, noting feedback from the first map was overwhelmingly positive.

She adds "another good news story" for the county is the Toronto Star's Aug. 26 feature profiling on the region.

Noting The Star's circulation sits at 450,000 for the day the feature was published, Fisher says, "Stats tell us an editorial or article is 8 per cent more effective than an advertisement."

STEP UP

Jane Muegge, regional-information coordinator for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, is hoping area residents apply for the Premier's Award for Agri-Food and Innovation given that 55 \$5,000 awards are up for grabs.

Noting the county had led the charge in a number of successful ventures including the Farm-to-Table program, Muegge says it is likely there are a number of potential nominees that could benefit from the program.

Muegge also notes work is under way to create a centre and community kitchen that will allow for storage and facilitation of food security for area food banks.

Further, notes Muegge, a website is being created, similar to Grey-Bruce's Foodlink program, which will list area producers as well as the products and meats required by area restaurants. The site will also highlight food festivals.

GROWING LIKE

Mike Alcock, civil engineering technologist for the county, reports staff will be tracking weed complaints in the year to come given the number of complaints registered this year.

Alcock says while the county's spraying program has been successful at curtailing the problem, there have been concerns expressed about road allowances monitored by the lower-tier municipalities.

The main problem with noxious weeds, notes Alcock, is they

"We plan on continuing our weed-control program," he says, noting the county is able to assist municipalities with programs that do not contravene the province's Cosmetic Pesticide Ban. "It's not illegal to spray road sides and it helps our agricultural residents," he says, noting the Weed Control Act supersedes the provincial ban if a weed problem is impacting agricultural or horticultural operations.