This page was exported from - King Weekly Sentinel
Export date: Fri Oct 30 14:48:08 2026 / +0000 GMT

Township committed to tourism initiatives

By Mark Pavilons

King is poised to market itself as a tourism destination, and it's an exciting time for Township staff.

While the sky's the limit in terms of ideas and strategies, everyone has to be committed to the cause.

That's the message contained in a report by Jamie Smyth, King's economic development officer, as he updated councillors on the progress of the three-year tourism strategy.

Smyth sees his role as one that fosters connections in the tourism industry and monitors the economic impact. The strategy contains all the ingredients necessary for success, but it takes a concerted effort. He urged council to support ongoing implementation and refinements to the plan.

?Continued implementation will lead to a more cohesive and guided effort toward tourism advancement, and most importantly inject new money into King's economy,??he wrote.

Council budgeted a ?modest??$11,000 for marketing and promotion. This represents a portion of King's commitment and as we progress, the Township will leverage partnership funds through the private sector, tourism agencies, government programs and community groups.

King, Smyth said, could be the ?playground for the GTA,? and we need to promote the township in three areas ? tourism, hospitality and recreation.

There are some really neat little pockets of tourist destinations and the challenge is to bring them all together. Smyth noted the majority of council and staff do appreciate the economic impact of investing in tourism, hospitality and recreation promotion.

Together with Parks, Recreation and Culture, Economic Development will cross-promote and leverage internal partnerships.

They're almost ready to launch a micro website and tourism vignettes, looking at a mid-June debut.

The plan is to encourage visitors to come for the entire day or make it a weekend.

Moving forward, Smyth will monitor all financial and staff resources that are put towards tourism initiatives.

Tourism is directly aligned with King's economic development strategies. These include partnerships with Headwaters Equine Leadership Group to leverage awareness of the equine industry; pursuing opportunities to expand land uses that are conducive to tourism; developing a cultural plan and asset map to bolster arts, culture and recreation. The Township will continue to promote popular events such as the Holland Marsh Soupfest, Pumpkin Pie Trail and York's Farm Fresh initiative.

Smyth pointed out that analysis shows that tourism spending in King hovers around the $2.6 million mark annually. If we want to keep pace with the provincial average, we should grow another $739,000 of spending in King each year. The benefits of increased tourism could provide a domino effect.

Smyth offered some background in his report. King partnered with Central Counties Tourism back in 2013 to create their plan and the three-year strategy was approved by council in the spring of 2014. King did manage to acquire some matching funds from this destination marketing agency for this year's campaign.

The plan included five major components that concentrated on attractions, infrastructure, hospitality, business and promotion.

?Above all, there is a need for the Township to act as a unifying force by acting as an umbrella organization focused on tourism destination marketing within King. There are individual groups making their own efforts resulting in a very fragmented push and inefficiencies. There needs to be one entity that facilitates and coordinates all tourism efforts and initiatives that will also monitor, measure, and report on progress being made.?

Some tourism goals include establishing coordination and leadership in King; increasing tourism, and providing friendly and hospitable service.

Staff will continue to push forward and update council on the progress made.