



2018
Growing
Taste of Huron



History of Taste Of Huron

- As a strong agricultural producer within the province of Ontario, culinary tourism and agriculture has been a major pillar within the Huron County economy for many years.
- Local food has been a marketed product within the area for over 20 years. During the past six years it has become clear that a focus on making sure local food and drink businesses are ready for tourists and locals should be a priority.
- In the summer of 2015 four associations partnered together to start the Huron Local Food and Drink strategy, which had goals of assessing the local food landscape in the area, partnering chefs together, partnering drink related businesses together and forming next steps. The consultants delivered the final report in the summer of 2016.
- In March of 2017 Huron Community Futures received word that phase two of the Huron County Food and Drink strategy (Taste of Huron) would continue thanks to a Fed Dev grant and money from Huron Tourism Association.





Goals of Phase Two of the Taste of Huron

- Increase market ready businesses by the end of the project timeline.
- Have culinary customer service employees trained and certified.
- Have attendees at the Food and Drink Summit.
- Increase website and social media visits by 25%.
- Increase digital content (stories and photos) to 50 experiences.





Market Ready Criteria

- Website is current and includes contact information
- Social media sites are up to date
- Branded signage and wayward signs, if necessary, are in place
- Business serves / sells / produces local food and / or drink
- There are consistent hours and days of operations. If the business is not open year round, an email account is active and a phone message is current.
- Front line staff that are trained and knowledgeable about local food and drink





Increase Market Ready Businesses

**Readiness of Assets in 2017
were:**

17% Not Market Ready

42% Near Market Ready

41% Market Ready

**Readiness of Assets in 2018
were:**

23% Not Market Ready

13% Near Market Ready

64% Market Ready





Staffing and Service Quality

- In May 2018 we offered an OTEC Service Excellence workshop in partnership with the County of Huron.
- This was a day long service and training for businesses in superior customer training.
- Business were offered to attend at no cost and at the end of the training each participant received there OTEC Service Excellence Training Certificate.





Signage

- The County of Huron is working on a new signs strategy.
- With that in mind the Taste Of Huron was able to create a decal that each market ready Taste of Huron business received.
- With the decal the consumer can recognize immediately that they have been a vetted businesses that serves and sells local food.





Photography

- Our professional photographer was able to visit approximately 50% of the market ready businesses in 2017/ 2018
- The Taste of Huron program now has a fantastic array of photos of the market ready businesses on our new website.
- This will be an ongoing program throughout all phases of the Taste of Huron Culinary Strategy





Culinary Tours & Marketing

- The Taste of Huron committee arranged tasting tours with 24 market ready business in Huron County.
- It was agreed upon that we would do these tours as a trial for 2018 to test the market for them.
- The tours were marketed online and in some print locations.
- We will learn about these from the marketing report.





Food and Drink Summit

- The Food and Drink Summit was held in November of 2017 and was brought to you by South Huron Chamber, HMA and Community Futures Huron
- 22 farmers, 27 from the value chain – chefs, restaurant owners, buyers
- We were on CTV that evening, Exeter Times Advocate the following week and speakers were featured in the November and December Rural Voice
- Well received event – most received new and usable information – good networking – re-enforced the value of cooperation.





Additions to the Programming

- Handed out almost 10,000 Taste of Huron postcards
- We launched the Taste of Huron Tour program at the beginning of June
- Had a launch at the museum, in partnership with the Farmtastic Exhibit, where we received over 325 people attending and 20 local businesses handing out samples
- We have secured Goderich Tourism to sell the Tours for us.
- Created some surveys to receive some feedback from each food and beverage business in Huron County
- Worked with The Beach radio station this summer to promote Taste of Huron






Next Phase

We have applied for a RED grant and are hoping to continue to promote and market phase three of the Taste of Huron Programming.

Some of the highlights of phase three are:

- Business to Business Peer Networking
- New Product Development- broader range of products to the consumer
- Promotion, Marketing & Outreach
- Enhance the market readiness and competitiveness of 60 local culinary tourism enterprises
- 5 new culinary tourism products to market
- Increase social media traffic and market awareness by 20% year-over-year

A photograph of fresh vegetables including yellow onions, green onions, and a bunch of carrots, arranged on a white surface. The vegetables are partially obscured by a semi-transparent white banner that contains the text.

Our goal is for all the Local Food and Beverage businesses to continue to support and advocate for the Taste of Huron Program if they would like to see it continued.

Questions?