



TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

REPORT

Item No.

REPORT TO: Reeve Vincent and Members of Council
PREPARED BY: Kim Scholl (A) Director of Recreation and Denise Lockie
DATE: 17/09/2018
SUBJECT: Rural Economic Development (RED) Program Application
ATTACHMENTS: [Click here to enter text.](#)

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby authorizes staff to submit a grant application to the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program for \$16,000 to assist with the development and implementation of a 'North Huron Communication Project' in 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rural Economic Development (RED) Program funds projects that stimulate economic growth in Ontario's rural and Indigenous communities. Township staff and the North Huron Economic Development Committee have reviewed the grant program requirements and recommend an application be submitted to fund a "North Huron Communications Project".

DISCUSSION

Over the last year there has been a lot of discussion and consistent messaging from Township staff and community stakeholders (including residents) that the Township web site is difficult to navigate. It has also been noted that there is lack of marketing material promoting North Huron and information regarding community special events is difficult to find.

The purpose of the Rural Economic Development program is to fund activities that grow local economies and remove barriers to economic development. Examples include, but are not limited to, attracting investment, creating jobs and supporting entrepreneurs. The grant funds can be directed towards planning or implementing a project. The North Huron Economic Development Committee has identified marketing, branding and communication as a high priority and have passed a motion supporting an application to the RED program to fund a 'North Huron Communications Project'.

The 'North Huron Communications Project' will be a collective initiative between North Huron staff, the North Huron Economic Development Committee, the Wingham Community Connectors Committee, the Wingham BIA and the Blyth BIA. If approved, the project will support the development of the following initiatives: a new website design, a showcase display, a North Huron brochure, three display boards (Belgrave, Blyth and Wingham) and three videos that would feature tourism, businesses and community services. The goal of this project is to market and brand the Township of North Huron and strengthen communications between all of North Huron's stakeholders and residents. The project will also grow our local economy by removing barriers to economic development, stimulating new business opportunities, and attracting private sector investment in the Township. Furthermore, this project will strengthen existing businesses and attract new residents and visitors to North Huron.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The RED Program provides funding for up to 50% of the cost of the project to a maximum of \$100,000. Below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the 'North Huron Communications Project'. If approved,

the next term of Council will need to decide whether they wish to proceed with this project as part of the 2019 budget process.

The application deadline is **September 28, 2018** and successful applicants can expect an answer within four months of the deadline. The grant application is lengthy and involved but staff are confident that the application can be completed and submitted by the deadline.

Total Project Expenses:	\$32,000
Website Design/training/IT support:	8,500
Showcase Display:	5,500
North Huron Brochure:	2, 700
Display Boards:	6,000
3 North Huron Videos:	5,000
Printing:	4,300

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

If successful, funding from the Rural Economic Development Program will provide the Township with additional financial resources to proceed with this project in 2019, if that is the wish of Council.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Our local businesses and residents are aware of all community benefits.
Our community is attractive and welcoming to new businesses and residents.
Our administration is fiscally responsible and strives for operational excellence.



Dwayne Evans, CAO/Clerk