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Connections in Local Economic Development: Real Time Initiatives to Strengthening Your Local Economy

“Food, Farm and Tourism Forum”

Presented by:

Thunder Bay & District Entrepreneur Centre &
Tourism Northern Ontario

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Food, Farm and Tourism Forum

January 19, 2016

Event Description:

This one day event will attract more than 100+ participants from the food, agriculture and tourism sectors in Thunder Bay and surrounding area. The objectives are to:

Strengthen culinary tourism in Thunder Bay &

Foster partnerships between farmers and chefs:

- Create relationships and increase revenue stream between farmers and chefs as well as with CEDC and Chamber of Commerce and build momentum.
- Expansion of existing projects on farms through more produce and/or expansion of available land.
- Expansion of restaurants – new and existing.

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Need

- Farmers market established in 1997 – established collaboration, increased demand for local food
- Culinary Tourism is identified as a priority for TNO
- City of Thunder Bay and TNO funded a Culinary Tourism event, brought in Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance to discuss Culinary Tourism in Northwestern Ontario (2014)
- Coalition of community partners dedicated to Culinary Tourism was formed, led by Ministry of Northern Development and Mines met to discuss future opportunities development of culinary tourism TNO, CEDC, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, Confederation College, MNDM, Food Strategy, City of Thunder Bay Tourism
- Identified a need for a follow-up event that would lead to a branding of culinary tourism for NWO, and overall culinary tourism strategy. At the same time, event would address need for increased B2B activities between local producers and restaurants/retailers..

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Program Delivery

Governance Model: Steering Committee co-chaired by Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Northern Ontario

Key partners: See previous slide

Roles and responsibilities: Fund development; RFQ and Hiring of Event Coordinator

Cash and in-kind contributions: Cash: TNO, Chamber of Commerce, Thunder Bay CEDC, City of Thunder Bay Tourism
Private sector sponsorships will also be sought

Media's role / benefit: Press release, media advisory

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Outcome and Results

- Results: Targets vs. Actual - TBD
- Key outcomes
 - Forum planned for January 2016 in Thunder Bay
 - Increased use of local foods in restaurants, caterers, carried by retailers
 - Long-term outcome will be expansion of businesses in the ag sector to meet increases in local demand
 - Infrastructure developed (i.e. Food Hub, increased channels of distribution) to support increased demand and supply of local food across NWO
 - OCTA will speak to culinary tourism- branding, market readiness
 - Clear path forward on a brand for culinary tourism in NOW
 - Component of a NWO Culinary Tourism Strategy will be completed – in 2016 following forum additional events will be held in 3 additional communities in Northern Ontario, outcome will be an overall strategy for culinary tourism
- Spinoff opportunities / initiatives (as a result of the initiative)
 - Economic benefits
 - Culinary tours
 - Co-creation and collaboration
 - Marketing Association?
 - New products – Farm to table experiences, communal dining
 - New partnerships
 - Increased job opportunities for graduates of the culinary and agriculture programs at the College
 - Filling gaps in the retail sector

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