

***HHCR Cultural Symposium Case Study
Tourism Ambassador Program
As of January 2010***

Status:

2009 Tourism Committee led by Town Councillor and Economic Development staff member
Committee size: 12 including Chamber of Commerce (Tourism delivery mechanism within community), businesses, BIA, Cultural Roundtable, Williams Mill, non-profit groups, and tourism operators

Years in Operation: 1 summer

Facility: None

Reports to Committee of Council

Primary Contact

Doug Penrice/John Duncan c/o Town of Halton Hills (THH)

Purpose / Vision

- To share community information with Tourists at major community events to increase the length/number of visits
- To gather information about tourism activity at major community events to better understand and be able to plan for increasing tourism activity

Revenue

We do not currently have a budget dedicated to this program and instead are using volunteers from the Tourism Committee and THH staff to be present at events as tourism ambassadors.

Funding

No dedicated funding; some dollars spent on marketing signs for summer 2009

Major Challenges

- Ensuring impact
- Linking to events and to broader tourism strategy
- Ensuring efficient and effective recruitment and use of volunteers

Current Projects

During 2009 events a visitor survey was conducted. Results were as follows...

Halton Hills Tourism Committee Ambassador Program

~ Survey Summary ~

1. Events Attended & Number of Surveys Collected:

- Data inputted for 292 individual surveys including:
 - Highland Games n=125
 - Classics Against Cancer n= 106
 - Canada Day Glen Williams n= 30
 - Leathertown Festival Acton n= 31
- Other Events attended with less than 20 surveys completed and therefore not inputted:
 - Rock & Roll Classics
 - Canada Day Acton
 - Acton Fall Fair
- Overall data represents approximately 800 event attendees within 4 events

2. Subjective Observations:

- Survey works well at event **entry point** for conversation about area
- Rock & Roll Classics, Canada Day Acton, Acton Fall Fair, Glen Williams Canada Day, and Leathertown Festival event attendees was mostly residents
- Residents and tourists both drawn to **large map** – we should laminate it for future use and it should be part of all major events
- Pathway **symbols** worked well for Highland Games and Classics events
- Many visitors are on **event email distribution lists** pointing to pre-marketing opportunity
- Many area residents expressed interest in **community website**
- “**Just Around the Corner**” and “**Also Close By**” lists were also useful
- Visitors don't know what they are missing about our community but are then happy to find out
- Bruce Trail information missing from resources and consistently most asked for piece of data

3. Data Analysis Across Events

- Highest % of number in group (n=38%) is **2 people**
- When children and/or teens attended it was usually with one or more parents and in **small groups/families** (i.e. few families had more than one child with them)
- **Adults attended mostly in twos** and seniors attended equally by themselves or in twos
- Overall people heard about the events equally by **word of mouth (25.8%)** or **newspaper (22%)** but just as often (55%) by another means e.g. through email lists/event pre-promotion/friends & family
- Approximately **half of respondents (52.3%) are residents of Halton Hills** with a wide range of other residences cited i.e. other Halton – 6.7%; Brampton 10.6%; Mississauga 6.4 %; other GTA 6%; City of Toronto; 4.2%; other Ontario 14.1%; other provinces 2.1%; International 1.1%
- Most visitors are **staying in the area from 2 to 9 hours** including 35.5% for 2-4 hours, 32.7 for 4-8 hours and 20.3% for 9-12 hours. Very few (11.5) are staying less/more than this range.
- Only **29.9% of visitors** are expecting to **visit any other activities/attractions/businesses** while they in the area

- Awareness of other activities/attractions close by varied greatly including:
 - Bruce Trail - 91.4%
 - Andrew's Scenic Acres – 74.7%
 - Downtown Georgetown Market – 74.7%
 - Fairy Lake – 60.8%
 - Lucy Maud Montgomery Gardens & Museum – 57.6%
 - William Mill Visual Arts Centre – 56.7%
 - Dominion Park & Splash Pad – 55.5%
 - Limehouse Kiln – 50.2%
 - Willow Park Ecology Centre – 41.2%

4. Data Analysis for Individual Events

- Highland Games (n= 125)
 - 75.2% of groups were 1-3 people including more with children and teens than other events
 - Word of mouth was highest means of hearing about event at 26%
 - Fewer Brampton participants (5.8%) and Halton Hills residents (47.5%)
 - Many respondents are on general highland games "circuit"
 - Respondents are generally staying longer at this event than other events (0/125 surveys are staying only one hour)
- Classics Against Cancer (n= 106)
 - Respondents are more likely to come individually or in 2s than other events with not many complete families attending
 - Respondents heard about event through word of mouth or road signs
 - After Halton Hills, Brampton and other Ontario places are most common places of residence
 - Only 5.7% of visitor respondents are staying in the area for one hour and none are staying overnight or for the weekend
 - Only 23.3% (lowest of four events) of visitor respondents are planning to visit any other attractions/events/ businesses in area while here
- Canada Day Glen Williams (n= 30)
 - Most respondents heard about event through newspaper (47.4%)
 - Most respondents from Halton Hills (65.5%)
 - Most visitor respondents staying for just 2-4 hours (42.9%)
- Acton Leathertown Festival (n= 31)
 - Newspaper is highest means of hearing about event (44%)
 - 16.1% of participants are from broader Ontario
 - Most visitor respondents are staying for only 1 hour (35.5%) or 2-4 hours (45.2%)

5. Further Considerations...

- How can this data be used? (background piece for Tourism Committee research, part of branding exercise data, tourism planning, by Chamber for tourism outreach background)
- How should we convey individual event data to groups?
- Should this survey be done again next year and with what focus and/or adaptations?