



**The Corporation of the Municipality of Wawa
Staff Monthly Report**

Office of Community Services and Tourism

Prepared For: Corporate Planning Committee	Report No.: AP 2018-03
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Preamble

This report details the activities of the Department of Community Services and Tourism in the month of February, 2018.

General

In February, staff finished many improvements at the MMCC, and started work on preparing for summer projects. Staff also prepared for one of the largest events of the year – the Wawa Ice Fishing Derby.

Capital Projects

Olympia Ice Resurfacer

The Olympia Ice Resurfacer continues to be delayed, and has yet to be delivered. Staff are inquiring with other resurfacer builders regarding other options. Unfortunately, there is only one other manufacturer in North America, and no other Canadian manufacturer. This lack of competition in the industry makes for a frustrating experience for staff. Staff are also investigating a discount based upon the increased operating costs of the old machine and the issues that have been experienced.

Wawa Waterfront Project

The Wawa Waterfront Project is well underway, with the Engineer close to completing all drawings and plans necessary to begin the EA process. The project is currently on schedule and barring any major delays in the EA process ground will be broken shortly after the spring melt in April. Staff continue to wait on the NOHFC and FedNor to make funding announcements regarding the process, however these delays will not delay the EA process or the project as a whole.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Prepared By:

**Alex Patterson, Director,
Community Services and Tourism**

MMCC**MMCC Upgrades and Repairs**

Upgrades have been completed in the canteen areas and the lobby, with additional bench seating, boot racking, and eating areas all completed. These upgrades are have focused on improving the usability of the facility for members and parents waiting for their children who attend youth programming 7 days a week. So far, we have received very positive feedback from the community on these upgrades.

Arena and Curling**Mixed Curling Bonspiel and Youth Curling**

Another excellent community event in February, the Mixed Curling Bonspiel was a small, yet well attended event that marks the beginning of the end of ice season. After this bonspiel, there is little more than one month before the Ladies' Bonspiel and Old Timer's tournament, the largest of the three curling bonspiels. Staff have also observed that overall attendance in the curling clubs is dropping, and in response to this have begun a new program – youth curling. In conjunction with the Youth branch of the Community Development Committee, staff have begun to offer youth curling nights the last Wednesday of the month. These have been successful, and staff will now explore making this event a monthly, or bi-weekly event to encourage youth to pick up curling as an activity. We have also experienced higher use of the curling rink by schools, which is helping to encourage the next generation of curlers in our community.

Parks and Trails**Snowmobiling Signage**

Based upon a citizen request as well as Council discussion, staff have been pursuing the subject and have begun planning work for a fall implementation. Tourism staff have worked with IT staff on a standard map and format, as well as what content will be included on this signage. In the spring, tourism staff will explore several possible locations to determine quantity and final location of signage for installation. Staff will also pursue funding applications for this signage, and some funding has already been identified as a possibility for this type of signage. Staff will continue work on the project with a goal of final installation being complete in the fall of 2018.

Community Events and Recreation

Wawa Winter Carnival

The 2018 Wawa Winter Carnival saw great attendance in both volunteers and participants. The event's kick off included a parade, bonfire, fireworks, and children's dance. The kick-off did an excellent job setting the tone of celebration through the whole weekend. The theme of all things Canadian was reflected throughout the community, as local businesses and community members alike decorated and came out dressed in Canadiana. Science North saw numerous families experience their "Build It Up" activity centre and locals enjoyed an artisans fair, pancake breakfasts, Indian tacos, and countless other activities. Many thanks go to the Wawa Volunteer Fire Department, Wawa OPP, the Wawa Rotary Club, the Special Events Committee and the countless volunteers who made the weekend a great success.

Tourism

Wawa Goose Lighting Requests

With the popularity of the New Wawa Goose growing through media, staff are receiving more requests than ever before from special interest groups to light up the Goose in specific colours. February was National Eating Disorder Awareness Month, and as per a request from the National Eating Disorder Information Centre, the Goose had purple filters put on the lights to commemorate this event. Staff are in the process of creating a more simple and brighter system for these types of requests, and have been investigating LED technology with the goal of having an updated system installed before the busy summer season. This will allow us to partner with diverse organizations on the provincial, national and international levels to help both promote events and interest groups as well as increase the popularity and notoriety of the Wawa Goose.

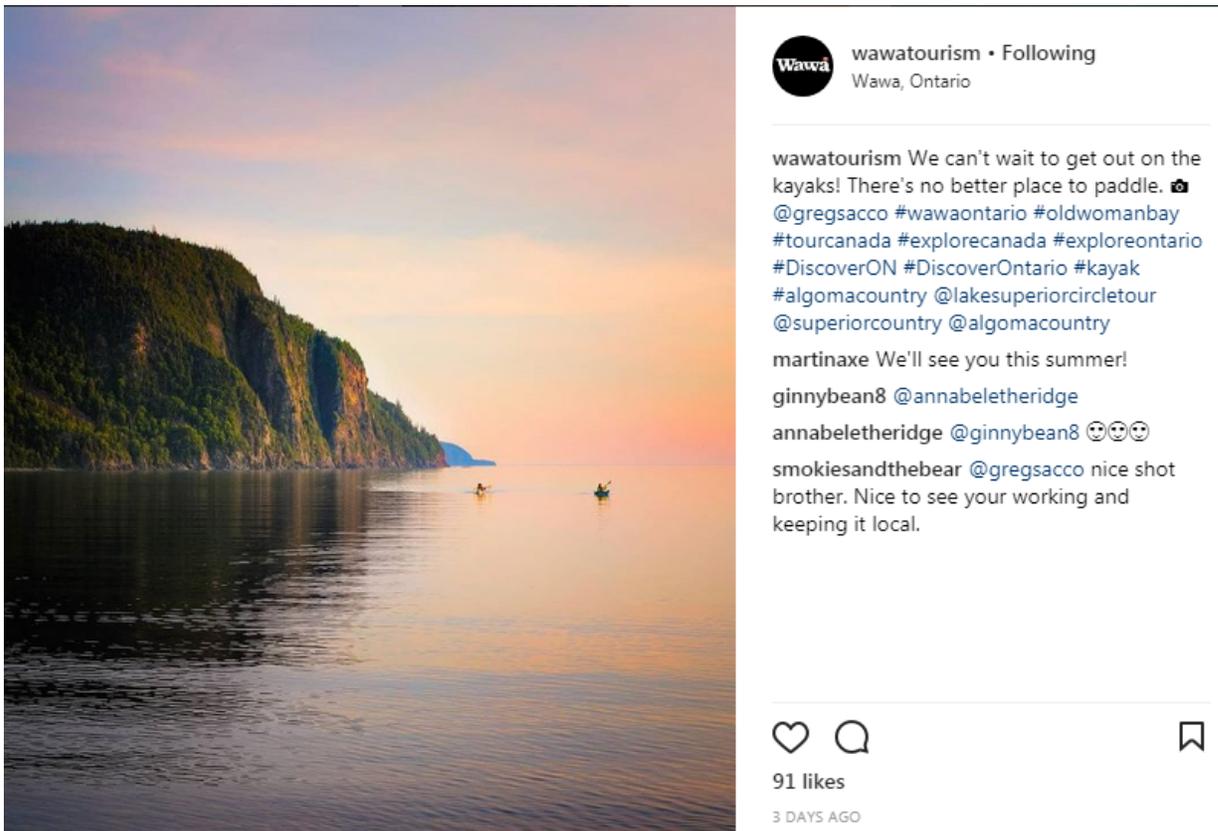
Wawa Visitors Map 2018

Staff are in the process of updating the Wawa Visitors Map for the 2018 tourist season. Staff are exploring a new technique to attract visitors to stay for longer periods of time in our community. The new Visitors Map will allow the Tourist Information Centre staff and visitors to create hourly, half day and full day itineraries. This will hopefully give visitors the opportunities to stay longer, be informed and enjoy the area. These itineraries will be themed around certain aspects of our community's attractions, such as waterfalls, mining history, or hikes, to name just a few. The new map will also contain sections that focus on Wawa's special events that include the Northern Nationals Drag Races, Wawa's Ice Fishing Derby, Canada Day Celebrations, the Wawa Music Festival, and the Wawa Salmon Derby. The map will also break down activities seasonally, to encourage tourists to return and experience all our community has to offer throughout the year. Staff expect this map to be ready in May for distribution throughout the community and region before the May long weekend that marks the start of the season.

Social Media – Instagram

As marketing is transitioning from traditional media (magazines, television) to social media, staff continually stays up to date on trends in these areas. Instagram’s primary demographic are persons in their 20’s and 30’s and the focus here is primarily on sharing images. This has allowed the Municipality to focus on sharing the natural beauty of our community as well as showcasing the many activities available to residents and tourists alike.

In May, 2017 the Department launched their own Instagram account – Wawa Tourism. Since then, the account has reached 283 followers and continues to grow as photographs of Wawa are shared. This not only is a free platform to assist us in our marketing, but it also gives an opportunity for staff to engage another audience on what our area offers. As this account builds followers and reach, cross promotion between other Municipal social media platforms and Instagram is possible for a greater reach across multiple demographics.



Auxiliary Services

National/Greyhound

February had 28 rentals, and we continue to see an increased use of the service relative to comparative months of the previous year. This adds additional pressure to staff as they try and keep pace with their regular facility duties and the operation of this service. This has been alleviated somewhat by the addition of maintenance students funded by the Youth Job Connect program.

Greyhound service has dropped in February, partially due to passenger trends and partially due to competition from Ontario northland. While passenger service is slower, parcel and freight services continue to be busy, with a small increase. Parcel service on the Greyhound is more competitive and does not suffer from the same issues as passenger services.

Other Projects

Tourism Strategic Plan

Staff is currently in the process of working with regional marketing professionals to create a five year plan as the successor to the 2002-2008 work plan for Wawa's tourism industry "The Trail". Previous plans will be evaluated and updated with the latest travel and tourism trends and insight from District Marketing Organizations (DMO). This will allow Wawa to shift our tourism efforts along with the shift in trends brought about by the new age of social media marketing and renew a focus on product development. Staff await the announcement of NOHFC Funding to supplement this priority with additional staff capacity to complete the Plan.

Funding and Grants

Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund

Staff have applied to the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund with an emphasis on Age Friendly Planning Outreach Initiatives. This grant focuses on programming, physical activity development in youth and seniors and accessibility for all age groups. Staff continue to wait for this application to be reviewed, and should have some news over the next few months.

NOHFC Internship – Tourism and Recreation Planner

Staff have received a set of questions indicating that this grant has moved on to the next stage of evaluation – a positive development. Staff will continue to work with the NOHFC for the success of this grant application. This additional staff capacity will help the Department complete the next set of tourism and recreation strategic plans. These plans are critical to moving our activities within our community forward and give staff a clear path to goals set by council, staff and the community.

Conclusion

February is the month of winter special events. From the successful Wawa Winter Carnival to the preparation for the much larger Wawa Ice Fishing Derby, this month is marked by a staff focus on providing support to events to ensure their success in our community. Staff continue these preparations into early march as the Wawa Ice Fishing derby approaches quickly.

Attachments

No Attachments.

End of Report.