

Background

At the November 17, 2015 a report titled "P6M Initiative – Leisure Program Marketing and Advertising Strategies" was presented to the Finance & Administration Committee.

The report outlined the production requirements and costs associated with the City of Greater Sudbury Leisure Guide. The report also detailed alternatives to a print version of the Leisure Guide and considerations if Council was to consider not producing a print version of the publication.

The following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS the Citizen and Leisure Services Department presented details on Project 6 Million savings initiatives at the September 22, 2015 Finance and Administration Committee meeting;

AND WHEREAS as part of the Project 6 Million initiatives, a number of ideas have been submitted for consideration as operational savings;

AND WHEREAS one of the ideas submitted was to cease the publication of printed Leisure Guides;

AND WHEREAS the suggestion is in line with a new approach to marketing of leisure and recreation programs which has been under consideration in Corporate Communications and Leisure Services since 2013;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury support the cancellation of the existing print version of the Leisure Guide after the Spring/Summer 2016 Edition;

AND THAT this new approach towards promotion and advertisement is expected to yield efficiencies as well as an initial minimal cost savings of \$10,000 towards Project 6 Million savings, with the possibilities of realizing further operational savings once the marketing tools have been developed, implemented and evaluated.

The report also noted that Council would receive a report in the Fall/Winter of 2017 regarding the impacts of not producing a print version of the Leisure Guide.

Analysis

In order to measure the impact of not producing a print version of the Leisure Guide, data was collected on program registrations prior to the last publication of the document (Spring/Summer 2016 version) and since that time. The following summarizes registration numbers for all courses, classes, lessons, memberships and passes with an associated barcode in the City of Greater Sudbury's (City) program registration system, which were historically promoted in the Leisure Guide:

Program Category	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
Adult Programs	1067	1091	1320	1488	1395
Youth Programs	1074	1003	982	1016	1113
Summer Day Camps and Playgrounds	3298	3044	2861	2781	2522
Aquatic Lessons	11,186	11,488	12,089	13,015	12,071
Fitness Centre Memberships (HARC & Rayside)	3666	3582	3834	3212	3120
Ski Hill Passes & Lessons	916	896	914	1191	930
Totals	21,207	21,104	22,000	22,703	21,151

*projected registrations based on 2017 data to date

Overall it would appear that there has not been a significant impact on program registrations as a result of not producing a print version of the Leisure Guide. Overall registrations are projected to be down slightly (-3.8%) from the last full year of the printed Leisure Guide (2015) compared to projections for 2017. There are likely other impacts on the downward trend in program registrations such as a lack of free time due to busy lifestyles, competition from sedentary activities and other sports and barriers associated with affordability. These trends are evident across the recreation industry. There has also been an increase in recreation programs and services offered by others in the community.

In order to minimize the negative impact of not having a printed Leisure Guide, and to raise awareness of leisure programs, services and facilities available to residents of Greater Sudbury, the Leisure Services Division has worked with the Communications and Community Engagement Division to develop the following promotional strategies:

- Development of an annual marketing plan for all Leisure Services Division programs, facilities and activities.
- Development of an Active Living Guide targeting older adult programs and services distributed through local seniors clubs and targeted locations.
- Development of promotional materials distributed through elementary schools promoting summer day camp and playground programs.
- Utilization of the Bell Park Digital Board to promote programs and services.
- Development of targeted promotional materials for ski hills, youth programs, etc.
- As part of the corporate initiative to redevelop the City of Greater Sudbury website, focus was placed on revamping and improving information related to Leisure Services Division programs and services.
- Increased presence on the City's social media outlets including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, including paid advertising.
- Targeted mail out leisure program advertising.

Summary

The move from a traditional print Leisure Guide to a diverse, multi-faceted promotional strategy has resulted in improved information to residents, cost savings and environmental benefits without a significant impact on program participation and registration.

Next Steps

The Leisure Services Division will continue to work with the Communications and Community Engagement Division to refine and enhance marketing and promotional plans. The eventual replacement of the existing program registration and facility booking software will provide additional opportunities for the City to market and promote programs and services.

References

P6M Initiative – Leisure Program Marketing and Advertising Strategies, Finance and Administration Committee (November 17, 2015)

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=12&id=846>