
2020 Business Plan & Budget

Communications

Prior Year Accomplishments

Sustainable Infrastructure & Services

- Collaborated with department leads to define communications objectives, develop strategies, and implement tactics to support successful deployment of 2019 projects and initiatives such as:
 - Publication of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan
 - Publication of the 2018 Annual Report
 - Publication of the Digital Strategy
 - Release of the 2019 Financial Framework Survey
 - Launch of the 'APPetite for Change' appathon
 - Implementation of the Emerald Ash Borer Replacement Tree Program
 - Announcement of the Elgin Park Redevelopment project
 - Coordination of 2019 Doors Open Northumberland events
- Monitored for, and identified, opportunities to secure funding from other levels of government and external sources for investment in County programs and services, and coordinated interdepartmental collaboration on applications; securing over \$250,000 in funding commitments and \$120,000 in interest-free loans in the first three quarters of 2019, for economic development, housing and County Forest-related initiatives.
- Consistent with the plan and timelines for redevelopment of the Golden Plough Lodge, finalized and began implementation of a communications plan for sharing key milestone information with residents and families, staff and Council, and the general public, including media relations activities; the design and launch of an internal newsletter for staff, residents and families; and launch of a website specific to redevelopment efforts.



Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Continued to expand reach of information about County programs, services, and initiatives through best-practice communications and media relations, as well as coordinating and marketing events promoting County programs and services.
 - Secured media coverage for over 50 County good news stories, and supported balanced coverage of sensitive issues, through development of compelling content designed to drive pick-up.
 - Developed over 60 sets of remarks for elected officials and senior staff for announcements and events throughout the County, ensuring clarity and consistency in the communication of County Strategic Plan and core value key messaging.
 - Coordinated logistics and promotions for approximately 20 media and community events, including the Roseneath Emergency Services Base Grand Opening; the Trent Hills Emergency Services Base groundbreaking; Oaktober in the County Forest; the Local Government Week 'Paint the Plow' contest; the Grafton EarlyON and Child Care Centre grand opening; launch of Northumberland Paramedics' partnership with Wounded Warriors Canada; paramedic donation of AEDs to community organizations, and; the annual Volunteer Recognition event.
 - Grew County Facebook followers by 20 per cent, Twitter followers by 10 per cent, and Council News subscribers by 10 per cent over 2018 numbers.
- In collaboration with Information Technology staff, delivered a new corporate website on-time and on-budget, marking a dramatic improvement in the County's delivery of online information and services for the public. Subsequently, this website was awarded a Gold 'dotCOMM' award from the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, and a 'Government Standard of Excellence' award from the Web Marketing Association.
- With Northumberland County engaging in collaboration with local health care stakeholders to form an Ontario Health Team for Northumberland, supported the goals of the Collaborative Planning Committee by coordinating and drafting the successful initial self-assessment application to the province, supporting the development of the final application, and providing communications and community engagement planning



and development support, including creating an online presence for the initiative through launch of a website and social media channels.

- Finalized a community engagement framework designed to facilitate a common understanding of the County's commitment to meaningful, intentional consultation with members of the public in support of municipal decision-making, and to drive consistency of practice across the organization.

Organizational Excellence

- Initiated development of a Corporate Communications Strategy to ensure alignment of internal and external communications goals and activities with Northumberland County's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.
- Coordinated the production of ten 60-second videos – designed for use during the County's employee orientation process, as well as for use as part of recruitment efforts – which highlight the scope of programs and services administered by the County, and promote the corporate culture of dedicated service to the community.
- Finalized a Crisis Communications Plan and tool kit for the organization based on the County's Hazard Identification Risk Assessment, defining crisis communications principles and processes, tools, scenario-based messaging and templates to facilitate rapid, clear and concise communication that meets the needs of the public and partner agencies in the event of an emergency.
- Awarded a '2019 Innovative Use Case' award from the national provider of the County's employee intranet solution, for piloting – during mock emergency exercises – use of the solution's 'discussion board' feature to facilitate real-time communication between the County's Emergency Operations Centre and the public call-centre.
- Continued to strengthen the corporate internal communications program by collaborating with Information Technology staff on the roll-out of digital signage in staff areas at County facilities, including development of a content management plan to ensure regular refresh of information shared with staff.



2020 Service Objectives & Initiatives

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Advance efforts to strengthen the Northumberland County brand, based on an initial assessment undertaken in 2018.

Sustainable Growth

- Collaborate with department leads to define communications objectives, develop strategies, and implement tactics to support successful deployment of 2020 projects and initiatives.
- Monitor and identify opportunities to secure funding from other levels of government and external sources for investment in County programs and services, and coordinate interdepartmental collaboration on applications; delivering a minimum of \$80,000 in funding commitments in 2020.

Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Continue to expand reach of information about County programs, services, and initiatives through best-practice communications and media relations, as well as coordinating and marketing events promoting County programs and services.
 - Grow corporate Facebook and Twitter followers and Council News subscribers by 20 per cent (each platform) over 2019 numbers.
- Support the launch of a Participatory Budget pilot, increasing awareness about the scope of programs and services administered by the County, and obtaining key insights for strengthening annual budget development and administration.
- With the new County website approaching its one year anniversary, undertake a website effectiveness assessment to identify any accessibility and navigation adjustments required to ensure a positive user experience.
- Support the community collaboration to form an Ontario Health Team for Northumberland, by contributing to the development and implementation of effective communications tactics and meaningful community engagement measures that lead to improved local services.



Leadership in Change

- Explore the development of a public dashboard for tracking corporate performance metrics, improving access to – and visibility of – key insights about the County's progress towards fulfillment of Strategic Plan objectives.
- Leverage team-wide LEAN yellow-belt training to plan and implement new communication and grant development project intake processes, improving efficiency and delivering enhanced value to the organization and community.

Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Leveraging research from the 2018 brand assessment, coordinate development of a Communications & Marketing Master Plan, which will build momentum around the answer to the question: Why choose Northumberland?
 - Refreshed visual identity system: revisiting the corporate logo, fonts and colour palettes to ensure consistency of application across all assets, while enabling flexibility based on purpose:
 - Retaining main logo elements, while considering how to incorporate various departments/services;
 - Reintroducing County Crest for council-related business;
 - Strengthening use of 'swoosh' for marketing materials
 - A wayfinding strategy: ensure creative, memorable, and consistent signage throughout the County at main travel gateways, that links communities together under the broad County banner. Specific focus will be placed on implementation of new 401 gateway signage in 2019.
 - A marketing and public relations plan: strategies and tactics to increase awareness and positive perceptions of, and action related to, the brand among target audiences, delivering both tangible and intangible outcomes for the benefit of the community.



Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- In collaboration with the Information Technology Department, implement an online community engagement platform to supplement traditional public consultation activities, expanding the reach of community engagement efforts for the purposes of improved municipal decision-making.
- Continue evaluating opportunities to expand corporate customer service to incorporate best practices for connecting with and serving residents and stakeholders, such as a municipal 311 service that would deliver a single point of access to local government non-emergency services.
- Advance public engagement and business intelligence practices by:
 - Strengthening use of audience research to align communications efforts with the information needs/desired delivery mechanisms of residents/stakeholders, and to measure the effectiveness of these efforts.
 - Leveraging insights from the trend of 'Gamification' (applying game-playing elements (e.g.: point scoring) to non-traditional areas to stimulate participation) to foster public interest and engagement in municipal policy/strategy/service development and delivery.

Leadership in Change

- Continue to expand the corporate marketing mix by maximizing the use of technology to deliver effective communications, including new social media channels, website aps, SMS technology, and other web and mobile-focused tools and solutions.
- Pursue best practice strategies and tactics to ensure ongoing strength of corporate culture and employee engagement in order to maximize performance and achieve the Organizational Excellence pillar of the corporate Strategic Plan.