

Subject: **Future of Growing Kneehill Event Discussion**

Meeting Date: Wednesday, August 2, 2023






Prepared By: Fallon Sherlock, Acting Manager of Parks and Agriculture Services
Jenna Kester, Economic Development Intern

Presented By: Fallon Sherlock, Acting Manager of Parks and Agriculture Services
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RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee of the Whole requests that Administration provide options for future Growing Kneehill Events to Council for consideration as discussed.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)

	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Provincial (cite)- NA

Council Bylaw/Policy (cite)- NA

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

The Growing Kneehill Event is an initiative stemming from the Agricultural Service Board in conjunction with Economic Development. It has occurred in different forms with different results over the years.

Review of Past Events:

2016

Starting in 2016, the original event was a field/bus tour for local agriculture producers to learn more about best management practices and see first-hand some of the projects Kneehill County was working on. It included a catered lunch at Swalwell Dam and featured stops on Grazing Principals, Honey Production, Acme Creek Phosphorus Monitoring Project, Sunterra Farms and discussions on County projects along the way from operations, ag services and planning.

2017

2017 brought the first Long Table Dinner featuring locally sourced food overlooking Horseshoe Canyon in conjunction with a bus tour making stops at Good Knights, Farm Basket Local Foods Store, Orkney Look-out, Dancing Goats, Solterra d'Italia, Village of Carbon and the Three Hills Hutterite Colony. The event was directed as a networking opportunity for local entrepreneurs with an opportunity to experience some feature businesses.

2018



2018 changed the format from a bus tour to a Country Market due to lack of locations for the bus tour to visit and the intent to open the event to more of the general public and tourists as a promotion of local food and agriculture. The market featured 10 local food, tourism and artisan vendors, local music and family activities such as face painting. The Long Table Dinner wrapped up the event at the end of the day as a feature of locally produced food for participants to enjoy.

2019

2019 continued with the shift towards more of a tourism/local agri-food promotions with the same Country Market and Long Table Dinner format at Horseshoe Canyon. 24 vendors participated in the market with similar experiences to the previous year of music and face painting. An additional feature of a canyon top guided walk before dinner was added as an option for guests to learn more details about the location.

2020-2021

No events were held due to health restrictions on large gatherings.

2022

The Long Table Dinner and Country Market returned in 2022 to Horseshoe Canyon with the Dinner taking place on the Friday and the Market on the Saturday. Continuing with the tourism/agri-food direction the Long Table Dinner had a political shift with dignitaries receiving complimentary tickets to come experience Horseshoe Canyon. At the Country Market 12 vendors participated, including one closed-sales alcohol vendor made possible through a change in license regulations and the afternoon featured live music from local artists. A new addition to the market was a display on local agriculture hosted by Ag Services to encourage questions and interaction from public visiting the event.

2023

2023 again hosted the Long Table Dinner and Country Market at Horseshoe Canyon with the perceived direction for promotion and celebration of local agri-food and tourism to an expanded audience.

This was the first year a general contractor was hired to coordinate the hosting of the Long Table Dinner. In previous years Kneehill County staff acted in the role of coordinating the various components of the dinner working with Food Tourism Strategies as a consultant in connecting with top chefs and menu development. In 2023 Food Tourism Strategies took on the contract to plan, coordinate and host the dinner including sourcing local food, chef and kitchen staff, serving staff, site rentals (tent, decor, kitchen, serving ware, washhouse, etc.) and implementing on-site delivery of the event including the evening agenda.

This provided the ability for both the Country Market and the Long Table Dinner to again be hosted on the same day and opened capacity for Kneehill County staff to conduct daily duties as well as pursue more vendors and sponsors and expand promotions for the event. 23 vendors participated in the country market including fresh food vendors, and entertainment was expanded to include live music, Dinos and Dollars Sand Dig, and Inflatable bouncy barnyard and maze. Marketing was also expanded to include the newspaper, community newsletters, posters, flyers, social media, and radio. An effort was made to include local community in the event and a silent auction item was added to benefit the local FCSS Youth Leadership Project.

This event has changed and evolved through the years. The original event focused more specifically on highlighting best management practices and programs of agriculture and Kneehill County to and for local agriculture producers and community members. It then shifted towards agri-tourism and tourism development through more of a networking and marketing blended event for entrepreneurs and local



vendors. The event has moved heavily towards a promotional event for displaying and celebrating all things grown and created in the area to dignitaries and the public. Most recently the perceived direction has been for the promotion and celebration of local agriculture and food to an expanded audience.

Table 1: Event Cost

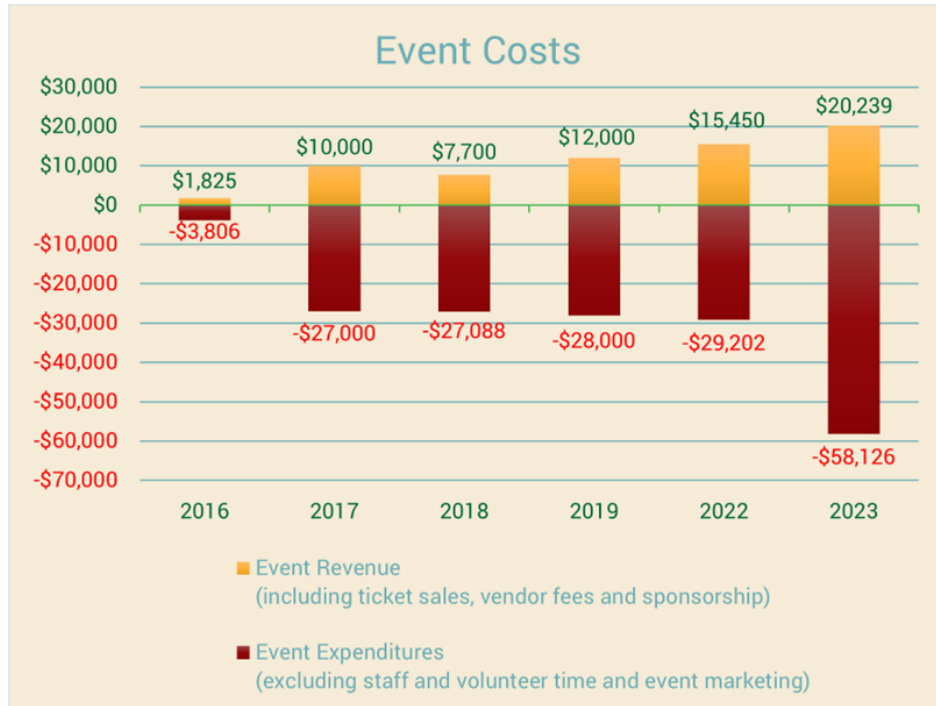
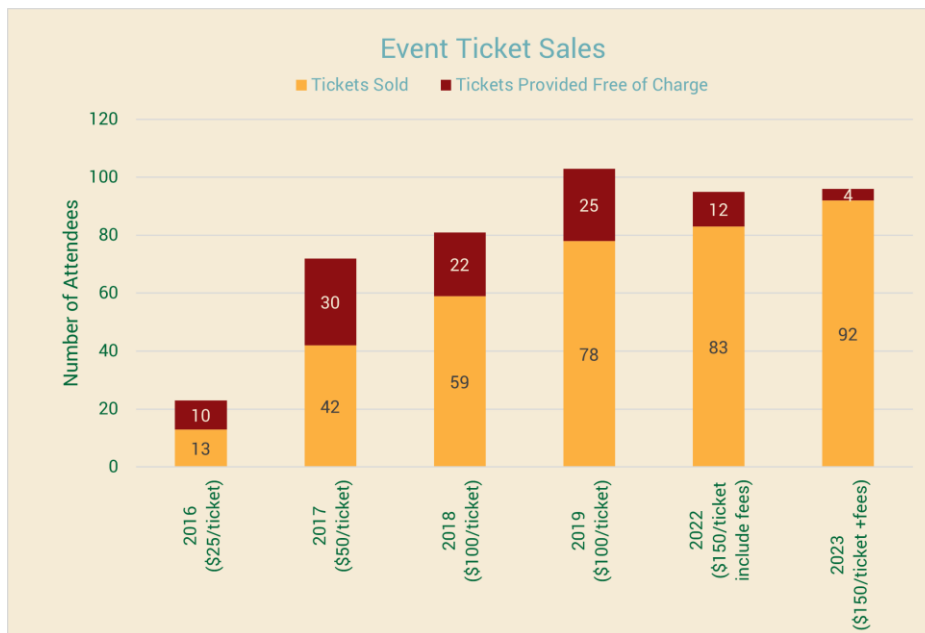


Table 2: Event Ticket Sales





DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

This event has evolved considerably over the past 7 years and as such so has the level of investment required by Council. Administration would like to take this opportunity to align with Councils’ strategic direction to determine the intent and beneficiaries of the event and the level of commitment required by admin to meet Councils expectations.

Questions Administration would like Council to consider and provide direction on include:

1. What is the intended purpose of the event?
 - Event intent and direction through the past has included:
 - Ag practices and project promotion for ag producers
 - Networking and experience tour for local entrepreneurs
 - Tourism and Local Agri-food promotion to the public
 - Promotion of Horseshoe Canyon and local food for Dignitaries
2. Does this event fit more with Economic Development or Agriculture Services?
3. Should this be a service level included in the regular operating budget or continued as a special project?
4. What does success look like to Council?
5. What event formats would Council like to see options on?

FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

The anticipated staffing impact and associated costs for researching and designing future event options based on the information gathered through this RFP with the Council are expected to be minimal.



ATTACHMENTS:

Future of Growing Kneehill.pdf

APPROVAL(S):

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved-

Kevin Gannon, Director of Community Services

Approved-

