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Halifax Regional Council
May 3, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Bob Nauss, Acting Director - Recreation, Tourism and Culture

DATE: April 18, 2005

SUBJECT: Greater Halifax Visitor Guide Publishing Process

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This information report is in response to agenda item 9.2.1 (i) of the April 5, 2005 Council meeting. Councillor Adams moved that staff prepare "a report to determine what process is followed to ensure accuracy of the Greater Halifax Visitor Guide, who is responsible for printing and publishing the guide and what database is used to obtain the information".

BACKGROUND

This report is being written in response to questions raised by a member of Council at the April 5, 2005 Council meeting. Councillor Adams expressed concerns with an inaccuracy in the 2005 Greater Halifax Visitor Guide. He indicated he wished to know what the process is for determining the accuracy of information, who is responsible for printing and publishing the guide and what database is used in preparation of the guide. Councillor Streach requested information as to whether or not HRM provides any funding for the publication. Councillor Smith asked for information on the availability of maps and other information outside of visitor information centres.

DISCUSSION

The Greater Halifax Visitor Guide (GHVG) is privately published, on an annual basis, by Metro Guide Publishing of Halifax. As the publishing company, they determine the desired content of the publication, solicit and place all advertising, carry out all design and layout functions, and contract for the printing of the guide.

Halifax Regional Municipality participates in the Greater Halifax Visitor Guide in two ways. First, HRM places a total of three full pages of advertising in the guide. This represents the only financial impact for HRM in the production of the guide. The annual cost for advertising in the guide is approximately \$25,700. The annual print run for the GHVG is 240,000 copies which Metro Guide Publishing makes available to HRM, in its entirety, for distribution to visitors and potential visitors to HRM. This represents a per copy cost of roughly 11 cents.

Second, HRM provides assistance to Metro Guide Publishing by acting as the conduit for the detailed information contained in the various listings incorporated into the publication. Recreation, Tourism and Culture maintains a database of information for use on its website. As the website information must be updated at least annually, the information is also available for use in the Greater Halifax Visitor Guide. Accommodations, tour operators and museum operators are contacted by HRM staff to confirm the details of their property/business listing. These listing confirmations are done by fax and email with confirmation required from the business operator. Other information in the guide is confirmed by HRM staff and/or Metro Guide Publishing staff depending on the originating source. Some photos are provided by HRM and others are sourced directly by Metro Guide Publishing.

In regard to inaccuracies in the Greater Halifax Visitor Guide, every effort is made to ensure the complete accuracy of the Guide. This is an international award winning publication highly respected within the industry. The publication is a 124 page, full colour, glossy magazine with a heavy weight cover. It includes information on 199 accommodations and campgrounds; 64 museums, galleries and historic sites; 78 tour operators; and more than 190 festivals and events. It includes 84 photos, 5 maps and countless references to places and spaces within HRM. Drafts and proofs of the publication are read and re-read by staff at Metro Guide Publishing and HRM. Quality and accuracy are highly valued and are considered constantly during production. However, with the high volume of information included, and in spite of all efforts, errors do sometimes occur, as was experienced in

the 2005 edition with the incorrectly labeled photo. These are identified through any and every means possible, documented, and corrected in the next year's publication.

The Greater Halifax Visitor Guide inventory of 240,000 copies meets the needs of Visitor Services in responding to requests for the Guide. It is distributed through all Visitor Information Centres in Nova Scotia, by direct mail in response to inquiries, to convention delegates and cruise ship passengers. The quantity of guides available does not support distribution through an expanded network of outlets.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications to this report.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES


None

ATTACHMENTS

Greater Halifax Visitor Guide

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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490-7395