

Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls **COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

- FALL 2023 -

Join Us on November 29 for the Funders Forum

Information from our community survey indicated that businesses were looking for more information on the resources and supports available to them to help maintain and grow their businesses. When asked if they felt informed about the supports available to local businesses, and economic development initiatives underway in the Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls 42% indicated they were either very or somewhat informed, 27% were neutral or unsure and 31% indicated that there were uninformed about these initiatives.

In response to this, the Township, in partnership with LOWBIC and the Northwest Business Centre, is hosting a Funders Forum on November 29th from 10-2 at the Sioux Narrows Community Hall. This forum will include representatives from: The Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corporation (LOWBIC), The Northwest Business Centre, The Northwest Innovation Centre, Destination Northern Ontario, The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and more. Businesses are encouraged to come out and learn more about the programs available in the region to support them. There will be a second forum taking place in Nestor Falls. We will share that event information as soon as it is confirmed.



Community Survey Update

The Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls conducted our community and business surveys between September 1 and 15, 2023. These surveys were sent out to community groups and businesses via email, were advertised on social media and were advertised in our quarterly economic development update in September. In total we received 19 responses to the business survey (58% from Sioux Narrows area and 42 % from Nestor Falls area). There were also 57 responses to the business survey (79% from Sioux Narrows area, 19% from Nestor Falls area, and 2% from elsewhere).

Overall the responses were quite positive.

Here are some highlights:

- 25% of community respondents rated the quality of life in our community as excellent, 60% rated it as good, 15% rated it as fair. There were no responses that indicated it was poor.
- 9% of respondents indicated that quality of life in the community was much better than 3 years ago, while 35% indicated it was somewhat better, 40% indicated it was neither better or nor worse and 12% indicated that it was worse. There were no respondents who indicated it was much worse.
- 69% of local businesses rated the municipality as very friendly or somewhat friendly, with 32% indicating improvement in business friendliness over the past 3 years.
- 48% of respondents indicated that the Townships investment in the Highway corridor redevelopment plan has had a positive impact on their business, with 26% saying they were unsure of the impact and 26% indicating that there was no impact.
- Beautification and public space improvements were seen as very important by 47% of respondents in the community survey, while they were viewed as somewhat important by an additional 43% of respondents. The community is very interested in public space improvements all throughout the community.

Marketing Update

The Township undertook targeting marketing in 2023 to increase overall awareness of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls as a destination both for US visitors and domestic visitors within a days drive of our location. Specific attention was paid to increasing the awareness of SNNF as a winter destination as well as increasing awareness of our two Provincial Parks. We also undertook significant effort to sustain and grow regional visitation to the community. Some of the initiatives we participated in included:

Winter What a Ride

March 2023

Partnership between Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, City of Kenora, Destination Ontario and Destination Northern Ontario.

Total project cost: \$16,000 SNNF Contribution: \$2,000 (plus \$1,000 for hospitality related items)

Creation of a winter activities video showcasing snowmobiling, ice fishing, skiing and local businesses. Results: To date this video has had 201 views, however it has not been promoted extensively. Increased promotion of Lake of the Woods as a Snowmobile destination will begin in early December 2023. This campaign also included a considerable number of photographs that we were able to add to our photo library for future use.

Bridge & Falls Guide

May 2023

Total Cost: \$15,750 | Total printed: 19,832
Direct Mailed: (Kenora, Fort Frances, Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, Dryden) 16,022
Area News distribution: 2,500
local distribution through info centres etc 1,310

Results: over the past 3 years we have seen an increase in day-trip visits to our community from Kenora and Fort Frances areas. Visitor data shows that visitors to our community from Kenora has doubled in 2022 from 2019. It is strongly believed that this increase directly correlates with the direct mail distribution of the Bridge & Falls Guide.

US Drive Market Campaign

May-July 2023

This was a target campaign to promote Lake of the Woods as a driveable destination from Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Total Project Cost \$100,000 SNNF Contribution: \$12,500 (plus landing page development \$1,000)

This was a targeted campaign undertaken by Destination Ontario to promote Lake of the Woods as a drivable destination for visitors from Wisconsin and Minnesota. It featured a variety of digital ad tactics including both Google based and Meta purchases. This campaign was directed to the redeveloped experiencelakeofthewoods.com landing page.

Results: Overall this campaign performed very strongly, with over 430,000 referrals sent to the experiencelakeofthewoods.com landing page. This campaign was featured in the Destination Ontario address at the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit, as one of the highest performing partnership campaigns in the province.

Lake of the Woods Boating Campaign - What a Ride

June-August 2023

Partnership between: Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, City of Kenora, Destination Ontario, Destination Northern Ontario. Creation of a Lake of the Woods as a boating destination video, showcasing a variety of visitor activities in the region.

Total project cost: \$16,000 SNNF Contribution: \$2,000 (plus \$1,000 for hospitality related items)

Results: This video was promoted domestically throughout the summer. To date it has had more than 26,000 views. This campaign resulted in over 1500 photographs that we are able to add to our inventory to use.

Photo Contest:



Photo Credit: M. Anderton

This summer we ran the Live your Lake Life photo contest where we invited local residents, and seasonal residents to submit photos of themselves enjoying life in Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls for a chance to win one of the 3 prize packs. We had 34 people submit 82 photos which will be added to our photo library for future use. The winning photograph is shown here.



The collaborative marketing of Lake of the Woods as a Destination by The City of Kenora and the Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls was recognized at the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit in November 2023. This partnership was selected for the Industry Leader Award in the Marketing and Communications category.



Capital Projects

Nestor Falls Government Dock

The Township has received funding to repair and enhance the Government Docks in Nestor Falls. This work will include replacing the floats, new decking, and the inclusion of a shaded seating area. The majority of the work is completed. In the spring 2024, residents can expect some paving to occur on the entrance way and the creation of additional parking along with a new welcome sign at the entrance.

Cost: \$200,000

Funding: NOHFC \$180,000 (90%) Municipal \$20,000 (10%)

Sioux Narrows Government Dock

With the playground at the Northern Ontario Sport Fishing Centre (mostly) complete, we are moving our focus to the function of the Government Dock and surrounding landscaping. Plans are underway for the addition of a secondary boat launch, as well as other site improvements in the spring 2024. There will also be a couple of new additions to the features at the Playground.

Cost: \$500,000

Funding: NOHFC \$375,000 (75%) Municipal \$125,000 (25%)

Nestor Falls Community Centre Upgrades

After some delay, this project is now under way. The expansion to the facility will be worked on throughout the winter and is not expected to impact existing use of the hall.

Cost \$200,000

Funding NOHFC \$180,000 (90%) Municipal \$20,000 (10%)

Bridge Park

As outlined in our Highway Corridor Redevelopment Plan, planning is underway to upgrade Bridge Park in Sioux Narrows. The design process is taking place over the winter with construction expected to be completed by fall 2024.

Cost: \$200,000

Funding: NOHFC \$180,000 (90%) Municipal \$20,000 (10%)

Fall 2023 Grand Openings

This fall we celebrated the grand opening of 2 key capital improvement projects in the community. On October 12, 2023 Mayor and Council were joined by Minister Greg Rickford for the Grand Opening of the 4 season recreation facility. On October 21, 2023 community members came together for the inaugural ride on the newly completed Nestor Falls Bike Trails.



Photo Credit: Tom Thomson



Housing Update

Work continues to increase the Housing Stock in our community. We are looking at opportunities and partnerships that will increase all types of housing available in the community. Increasing housing in our community will take time, but we are confident that our actions to date will result in increased housing in the community within the next 12-18 months. Over the past year the Township has been working on the following initiatives aimed at increasing housing in our community:

- Council has implemented a new Short Term Rentals (STR) by-law, that restricts the conditions in which a STR can operate within our community. We believe this will reduce the number of homes for residents that turn into Short Term Rentals.
- At their August 2023 meeting, Municipal Council also passed a resolution calling on the Province to implement a regulatory framework for Short Term Rentals.
- Late in the summer we made an application to the Housing Accelerator Fund put out by the CMHC in the amount of \$645,000 for a number of initiatives that will provide developable serviced land in our community to build housing. We are waiting to hear on this application.

- We are currently working with the KDSB on a seniors housing project in Sioux Narrows. The end result of this work will be a 10 unit seniors housing complex in the heart of Sioux Narrows. Municipal Council severed an existing municipal property and gifted it to the KDSB to have the seniors housing built. The KDSB is currently awaiting funding approval to move the project along.
- The Municipality has an open RFP out for developers on a 5 acre piece of property that they may be willing to contribute for an appropriate housing development in Sioux Narrows. We are currently working with interested parties on this property.
- The Township is in the process of acquiring land from the Crown in Nestor Falls with the intention to have it used for housing.
- We actively participated in the KDSB Housing Study and have conducted 2 housing needs assessments in our community.

Sioux Narrows Public School Update:

Recognizing that our local school is a cornerstone to our community, Municipal Administration immediately reached out to the Keewatin Patricia District School Board, upon the announcement of the closure of classrooms in the school. The School Board was very clear that they have no intention of closing Sioux Narrows Public School. The Township and KPDSB are working collaboratively on initiatives that we hope will make it possible to attract the support that is required to operate the school at increased levels going forward.

Hoping to do work with the Municipality?

The Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls is mandated to follow our procurement policy. Please watch our social media and refer to the tenders page on our website regularly for all open tenders and requests for proposals. Our selection of successful proponents is limited to those who submit bids.
If you have any questions please reach out.

The Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls has adopted a number of plans and strategies that help to move our community forward. All of these plans and strategies including the Community Economic Development Plan, Highway Corridor re-development plan and others can be found under the Town Hall (community profile) tab on our website: www.snnf.ca

For questions or further inquiries specific to Community Development please contact:
Heather Gropp, Community Development Officer at hgropp@snnf.ca



*Sioux Narrows
Nestor Falls*