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BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

APRIL 21, 2017

COMMISSION MEETING

Research & Development

- Culinary Services Managers and Chefs have been researching trends and local products in preparation for 2017 Menus.
- Culinary Services Managers and Chefs attended the CRFA Food Show in Toronto in February.
- Legends hosted an in-house food show with Sysco Food featuring manufacturers to promote new ideas to our Culinary Services team.
- Heritage staff have assisted with the movement and recording of the Niagara Parks Archives.
- Emerald Ash tree removal and clean-up is continuing at Legends on the Niagara and Whirlpool.
- An organizational restructuring occurred within the golf turf departments at Whirlpool and Legends. This will standardize procedures, facilitate resource sharing, knowledge, communications and create efficiencies.
- Pollinator Exhibit – A new pollinator exhibit was installed in the redeveloped Butterfly Conservatory's main auditorium as part of the multi-purpose space. This first phase will also highlight the redevelopment of interpretive display spaces to enhance the educational message of the Butterfly Conservatory. This phase introduces the newly developed Importance of Pollinators exhibit within the renovated auditorium.

Human Resources

- Human Resources staff attended department meetings to provide support of business partners for organizational design, succession, performance management, investigations, and employee engagement.
- Human Resources staff assisted the Parks Department in coordinating a planning and team-building workshop for 90 staff members.
- The 2016 full time staff appraisal process was completed.
- A number of union meetings were held with OPSEU to discuss a variety of labour issues.
- Staff reviewed submissions for the procurement of the Employee Assistance Program.
- Staff commenced training for re-certification of staff in CPR/First Aid.
- Staff attended a number of meetings as part of the Safety Group Advantage Program (SGAP).

- Human Resources staff participated in external training related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder for First Responders in response to an update to legislation.
- Staff undertook a review of a number of proposed changes to legislation relating to employment.
- Assistance was provided to the Chair and CEO's office for the recruitment of the Chief of Police and Executive Assistant.
- NPC hosted its annual job fair at the Niagara Falls campus of Niagara College. It is estimated that over 300 applicants attended the event.
- NPC staff participated in 9 job fairs at local high schools.
- Meetings were held with department managers regarding an improved seasonal pooled hiring model for 2017.
- The Executive Team commenced its Park Tour program for 2017 to meet with staff across the organization and discuss issues of importance to them.
- Human Resources staff conducted a number of orientation sessions for new and returning staff.
- New modules related to Accessible Standards were added to the Learning Management System to enhance staff knowledge and responsibilities under the AODA legislation.
- A number of meetings were held with managers and employees related to workplace accommodation requirements.
- NPC and OPSEU scheduled meetings with a Conciliator to address outstanding grievances.
- Staff are meeting with representatives from the Brock University Goodman School of Business to plan the next Supervisory training series.
- Recruiting has begun for a seasonal summer student to assist with IT Helpdesk support.
- The focus of the ADP project has been the set up the human resources functionality. Recently, the focus has been moved to the payroll function. Payroll staff are now running both payroll systems in an effort the complete in depth testing to ensure NPC payroll is accurate when ADP goes live.
- Staff recruitment continues with finalized needs and supporting the NPC job fairs as well as attendance at the local High School job fairs.
- The Chefs Training Program (to broaden and enhance the Culinary Services brand redevelopment in promoting local food and beverages) was completed with a presentation and tasting to Senior Management on March 3, 2017. This

initiative showcases the Chefs' creativity, new menu products and positive team building.

- Due to a staff resignation, an internal posting was issued for an Assistant Golf professional at Legends on the Niagara. The new candidate was recently announced and commenced work on March 27, 2017.
- The Golf Superintendent and Mechanic staff attended several conferences and seminars throughout the winter months to remain current on technologies, processes and industry standards.
- A joint training session for Whirlpool and Legends golf turf department staff was conducted on Friday March 24, 2017. The session covered health & safety items and orientation. This was the first time the meeting was conducted together.
- Parks staff attended the "Collaboration of Envisioning Excellence Workshop" on March 23 at Legends. Both full time and seasonal staff attended and participated in a variety of visioning exercises.
- NPC staff attended the Canada Blooms conference.
- Early recall of seasonal staff and a milder spring has enabled central parks staff to clean up the area around the Hornblower plaza for the April 1 opening as well as spring pruning and raking and cleaning the main core areas.

Partnerships

- Heritage Services has renewed our agreement with the Mackenzie Printery Group and marked 25 years of volunteer service from this excellent team of dedicated individuals.
- Sales Staff attended the following:
 - February 1-3 - Canadian Society of Association Executives Gatineau Chapter Tradeshow and Meeting Professionals International Charity Client Event, Ottawa, ON
 - February 26-March 3 – National Tour Association Annual Marketplace, St. Louis, MO
 - March 7-12 – North American Travel Show & sales calls, New York, NY
 - March 20-23 – Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Canada Sales Mission, Montreal, QB
 - March 30-31 – Tour Guide Testing & sales calls, Montreal, QB
 - April 9-11 – Canadian Inbound Tourism Association Annual General Meeting – Asia Pacific, Ottawa, ON

- April 10-15 – Tourism Toronto Mission for NuSkin Corporate Incentive Event, Honolulu, HI
- A class of Attractions Management (TOUR 1350) students in the Tourism Management program at Niagara College were hosted at Niagara's Fury on March 29, 2017. The class field trip assignment was to research the Niagara's Fury attraction and observe how retail is incorporated into and enhances the attraction. Students were able to experience the Niagara's Fury attraction, listen to a presentation by Niagara Parks Retail Managers, ask questions, and then participate in an interactive retail scavenger hunt arranged by the professor in coordination with Niagara Parks staff. The students were thrilled with their field trip and the professor is looking to make this a regular part of the TOUR 1350 class going forward.



- Audubon Certification efforts continue at Whirlpool Golf Course, and anticipates achieving two of the five categories towards certification in 2017.
- In partnership with the Niagara College Teaching Brewery, Culinary Services will be offering a special craft beer, the "Canada 150 Ale" in celebration of the Sesquicentennial.
- Parks staff continued to implement the Niagara River Coastal Wetland Restoration Project in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources Foundation. Approximately 300 metres of shoreline coastal wetland has been restored including the installation of a floating bio mat using over 150 Ash trees and 150 recycling Christmas trees provided by the Niagara Region.
- In collaboration with the Town of Fort Erie, the Fort Erie Recreation Trail project, funded by the Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program is underway. Archaeological Assessment (Stage 1 and 2) has been completed.

- The Niagara Parks Commission, Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture received a “Garden Experience” award from the Canada 150 Garden Tourism Conference on March 14.



Facilities & Technology

- Heritage staff have Skyped with students from the brink of Niagara Falls. This has included students in Australia, Indonesia and Mexico.
- A procurement will be issued for a “Drill and Fill” service provider (three years) to begin in the fall of 2017 on the putting greens at Whirlpool golf course. The work will inject sand deep into the roots of the greens and dramatically improve drainage over time as the process is repeated.
- A Procurement was issued to purchase and rent a new fleet of golf carts at Legends on the Niagara. A contract award is expected in April with new carts arriving later in the spring.
- The 2017 spring bulb show at the Botanical Gardens has been negatively impacted by significant grazing of migrating deer. The main areas affected are Rose and Parterre Gardens, Old Lecture Hall and front entrance plantings. The herd have developed skills to infiltrate the temporary fencing and for the first time are now learning to graze Hosta plantings. NPC staff are reviewing options to mitigate future impacts.
- Parallel testing was undertaken with regard to the new Payroll/Time and Attendance/Human Resources system. Weekly meetings were held with ADP to review business rules and testing progress.
- In March, IT closed 263 Helpdesk service tickets. YTD 2017, 830 IT Helpdesk tickets were closed compared to 835 in the prior year.

- For March 2017, 63.1% of Helpdesk requests are handled same day and 81.7% of requests are handled within one week. These IT service levels have remained consistent throughout 2016 and into 2017.
- IT is currently recruiting for a seasonal summer student to assist with Helpdesk support.
- There are 189 staff members who reference the NPC network and/or Office 365 remotely.

Enterprise Projects

- **ADP - Time and Attendance, Payroll, HRIS**
This project led by Human Resources and Payroll and managed by IT's Project Manager is preparing for go-live. Training, and several parallel runs have taken place, to ensure staff are confident using the new time clocks, payroll and HRIS systems.
- **Ticketing Replacement**
This project is led by Business Development. The RFP has been awarded to Accesso and contract negotiations are complete. POS devices (68) and peripherals have been purchased and received. The project team is engaged and Omni Ticketing system will be used this season.

Network and IT Infrastructure Projects

- **Old Fort Erie – Cogeco for Business**
Cogeco for Business implemented at Old-Fort Erie improving bandwidth for data, alarms and CCTV.
- **Table Rock Bus Management - NPC Fiber**
This short fiber run to the Table Rock Bus Management is underway and is targeted for completion by April 21st. This work eliminates point-to-point radios and the business interruption caused radio frequency interference from buses wifi.
- **Next Generation Firewall – Palo Alto**
An RFP was conducted for a next generation firewall (NGFW). The NGFW provides for network inspection of network packets, and threat intelligence cloud necessary to thwart external network threats and cyber-attacks. Implementation will commence before May 1st and will take approximately six weeks to implement.
- **Replacement of Point-to-Point Radios at Hilton**
The “Oak Hall to Hilton”, and “Hilton to School of Horticulture” point-to-point radios were replaced. The “Hilton to Legends” point-to-point radios were also replaced. The previous radios were no longer supported and were experiencing

interference with other public frequencies. The new radios increase the network speed, performance and bandwidth for the above sites

Information Systems/ Applications Projects

☐ **CRM - Microsoft Dynamics Implementation**

This project is led by IT and Business Development. Microsoft Dynamics is an extension of the Office 365 environment. A detail design is being signed off by Sales and configuration will continue.

☐ **Policy Pro Systems Development**

A workflow application to manage policy development and management was developed in-house for Records Management. The solution covers policy governance, policy process and policy review.

☐ **RFP for POS Service**

We currently have an RFP in progress for POS service and support of Aloha (Culinary POS) and Retail Pro (Retail POS) hardware and software. The RFP is expected to be awarded by the end of April.

Help and Infrastructure Projects

☐ **Microsoft Office 2013 to Microsoft Office 2016 Migration**

To continue to use Microsoft Office 365 cloud solution, NPC must maintain the current versions of Microsoft Office. The conversion from Office 2013 to Office 2016 is in progress. Microsoft Office 2016 was release September 2015.

☐ **Postage Machine Upgrade**

Based on changes at Canada Post, a new NeoPost shipping solution was implemented at Oak Hall.

Finance

- ☐ Heritage staff were successful in securing a Celebrate Ontario Grant for our author series and an SEP Grant for students at Old Fort Erie.
- ☐ The Procurement department facilitated 39 active procurements. There are 125 planned procurements including special projects anticipated in the Business Plan, opportunities for cooperative contracts with Niagara Public Purchasing Committee (NPPC), Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace (OECM), and a 180-day view of expiring contracts within the Contract Database System (CDS).
- Work has begun to prepare for the annual audit and preparation of NPC's financial statement for the year ending March 31, 2017. NPC's auditors, Grant Thornton, will be performing field work from May 1 through to May 19.

Products & Services

- Elements on the Falls restaurant featured a St. Patrick's Day menu on March 17.
- Special Easter Brunch Menus were prepared for Elements on the Falls, Queenston, Whirlpool and Legends Restaurants.
- Heritage staff were posted at Table Rock throughout Heritage Week, March Break and Easter. This year, NPC focused on Canada's and Ontario's 150th birthdays.
- A recent tender to procure new golf club rentals was awarded to the Cobra Golf Company for three years with delivery expected in late March.
- Legends on the Niagara and Whirlpool golf courses have been wintering well. The greens and course conditions appear to be on track for a healthy opening with minimal turf damage. Whirlpool golf course is scheduled to open on April 7, Battlefield, Chippawa and the practice area will open April 14, followed by Ussher's Creek on April 21.
- The Golf Academy at Legends will be operational in the academy building commencing April 3, 2017. A variety of instructional, private and coaching programs are available for the 2017 season.
- Two failing water crossings at Legends on the Niagara were replaced in the winter months as per the bridge inspection report that was completed in 2016.
- The NPC Golf ALL ACCESS program is available for sale to the public in limited quantities. The program features 20 or 50 round packages with additional incentives to play at NPC golf courses
- To date, the total number of trees removed from January – March 2017 is 511 of which 316 trees were Ash trees. The balance consisted of dead or hazardous trees. Over 300 trees have been purchased and are ready for spring planting.
- The Northern Owl Exhibit continues to be well received by visitors. This travelling exhibit from the Royal Ontario Museum in combination with free outdoor raptor demonstrations by the Canadian Raptor Conservancy launched successfully in February. The NPC marketing team created a beautiful bilingual brochure to compliment the exhibit. Feedback on this first Ontario 150 Rooted in Nature initiative has been positive with exceptional numbers during the beautiful family day weekend. The exhibit will continue to run until April 23, 2017.



February 13 – April 3, 2017

Retail - \$87,743 (5206 sales)

Attraction - \$298,613 (31,850 visitors)

- The front display at the Butterfly Conservatory Gift Shop was merchandised to align with the Northern Owls exhibit.



- The Niagara Falls Adventure Pass program launched on April 1, 2017. New this year is the addition of the four Heritage sites to the Adventure Pass Plus to celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial.

- The Christmas Shop at Table Rock was merchandised with new displays, including updates to the Canadiana-themed tree for Canada 150.



- The concourse-facing window at Table Rock was remerchandised to feature ROOTS and Canadian products.



- The lower level at Table Rock was merchandised with a Canadiana lodge/cabin theme, especially highlighting very popular buffalo plaid products.



Image

- The Niagara Parks Event Team took part in the Canada 2021 Games bid announcement on March 30, 2017 and are pleased to advise that Niagara was the successful bidder and has been awarded the Games. NPC staff will now work with the “Host Society” (yet to be formed) and negotiate the final venue agreements to host the golf competition at Legends on the Niagara (Battlefield course) and athlete festivities in Queen Victoria Park for the Commission’s review and approval.
- Elements on the Falls Restaurant was awarded Open Table’s Diner’s Choice Award for being one of the top restaurants in Niagara based on reviews from the past year.
- Following the presentation at the December Commission meeting, the design for a panel honouring Harriet Tubman has been selected. This was based on the work of the citizens’ committee and the design work of our Marketing department. The unveiling will take place on Friday, June 2 at 11 a.m. next to the Whirlpool Bridge.
- Working with the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC), Events Staff updated and featured Historic Fort Erie as a venue open to filming. The article was featured “In the Loop” issue 118 – February 2017 by OMDC which is sent out to the film industry in Canada and abroad.

- The Floral Showhouse annual spring show is on display and is currently being enhanced with lilies for Easter, and will be on display until the end of April.
- The School of Horticulture held their 75th graduation ceremony at the Botanical Gardens on April 1st. The ten students of the graduating class of 2017 received various awards such as the NPC General Proficiency Award, Botany Award, Landscape Design Award to name a few.
- The School of Horticulture students attended the National Collegiate Landscape Competition; an international event sponsored by the National Association of Landscape professionals “NALP”. The Niagara Parks School team included 15 students and two faculty who participated among the 65 colleges and 850 student competitors, taking part in 29 events. The Niagara Parks School placed sixth overall with many of our students placing in the top 20 of their respective events.
- NPC Staff provided an interview to Rev Publishing as part of their research on the plight of the Monarch Butterfly and what positive actions can be taken. The Niagara Parks initiative to increase habitat for the Monarch and all pollinators was also highlighted.

Appendix A

February 17, 2017 – April 20, 2017

Media Releases

- January 20 – Botanical Gardens Watermain Project
- January 23 – Announcement of Chief Scott's Retirement
- January 31 – Appointment of Janice Thomson as Chair of Illumination Board
- February 7 – Northern Owls Exhibit
- February 8 – Northern Owls Media Preview Event
- February 10 – Valentine's Day Illumination
- February 13 – Family Day Activities at Niagara Parks
- February 14 – Niagara Parks Job Fair
- February 16 – Dufferin Islands Bridge Closure
- February 22 – Coca Cola Bands Callout
- February 23 – Update on Winter Golf Academy at Legends
- March 1 – March Break Activities at Niagara Parks
- March 2 – Construction Activity at Thompson's Point
- March 2 – Trivia Challenge at Old Fort Erie
- March 13 – Niagara Parks Marina RFP Issued
- March 15 – St. Patrick's Day Illumination
- March 20 – Infrastructure Repairs Along Niagara Parkway
- March 22 – WWF Earth Hour – Nightly Illumination of Niagara Falls to be turned off
- April 4 – Golf Courses Scheduled to Open
- April 4 – Easter Display at the Floral Showhouse
- April 5 – Rock Scaling Update

VIP Tours

- March 11 – Niagara Parks hosted a visit of the Irish Ambassador to Canada along with the Irish Minister responsible for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, the Honourable Simon Coveney. The Ambassador and the Minister were greeted by NPC CEO, Reegan McCullough, and participated in a walkabout tour of the brink area of the Falls, followed by a complimentary tour of Journey Behind the Falls. The delegation viewed a special lighting of the Falls in green, ahead of the planned participation of Niagara Falls in the Global Greening initiative on St. Patrick's Day. The special lighting ceremony was followed by a dinner at NPC's Elements on the Falls Restaurant.



- March 25 – Niagara Parks hosted a visit from the Czech Foreign Minister, His Excellency, Lubomír Zaorálek, and an accompanying trade delegation from the Czech Republic. The Foreign Minister and delegation were officially welcomed by NPC Chair, Janice Thomson, and taken on a walkabout tour of the brink area of the Falls. The delegation then had lunch at Elements on the Falls, followed by a complimentary tour of Niagara Parks' Journey Behind the Falls attraction.

Events

- February 17 – 20 – Family Day Activities – Northern Owls Exhibit and Live Raptor Demonstrations, Heritage Exhibits at Table Rock
- March 9 – Teacher Open House Event at Laura Secord Homestead
- March 11 – March 19 – March Break Activities:
 - February 13 – April 17: Northern Owls Exhibit and Live Bird Displays and Demonstrations (March 11-12 & 17-19)
 - March 11-19 – Heritage Exhibits at Table Rock
 - March 11 – Trivia Challenge at Old Fort Erie
 - March 13-14 – March Break Matinees at Old Fort Erie
- March 17 – St. Patrick's Day Themed Menu at Elements on the Falls Restaurant
- March 17 – Global Greening Initiative – Niagara Falls Illuminated in green
- March 25 – Earth Hour – Niagara Falls nightly illumination was turned off from 8:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.