

Subsidizing, staffing events costs taxpayers \$80K: report

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Supporting community events this year will cost the town about \$80,000 in everything from staff overtime to the purchase of materials, according to a Nov. 20 report to council.

So far this year, community event assistance

has resulted in 3,857.50 hours of direct staff involvement. About 627 of those hours created just over \$22,000 in paid overtime, according to the report authored by Rob Raycroft, director of leisure services for the town.

"Sometimes if it's in the day time, it can be accommodated in the shift," Mr. Raycroft told The Sun-Tribune.

The municipality participates in 29 major annual community events, including First Night Fireworks, the Ballantrae Fall Fair and Strawberry Festival.

Town staff assist with area set-up and tear-down, monitoring of washrooms and garbage removal, to name a few.

With council's approval, the town also provides cash subsidies to some of these events.

Of the events held so far this year, the Strawberry Festival was the most highly attended with about 10,000 people, according to the report. The town's direct costs were \$20,525, which included a \$20,000 grant.

The Santa Claus parade is expected to be the second most popular event with 8,000

spectators. The town's cost is to be \$3,310, which includes a \$3,000 grant, according to the report.

The Downtown Easter Egg and Halloween candy hunts each cost \$500 and both drew 1,200 people.

One thousand people attended the Victoria Day fireworks, which had a price tag of \$7,600.

The annual classic car show cost \$4,600 and drew in 500 people.

The Winter Carnival cost \$5,000 and attracted 700 people.

Indirect costs were not included in these figures as they were spread out among different departments or areas of the existing operating budget, according to the report.

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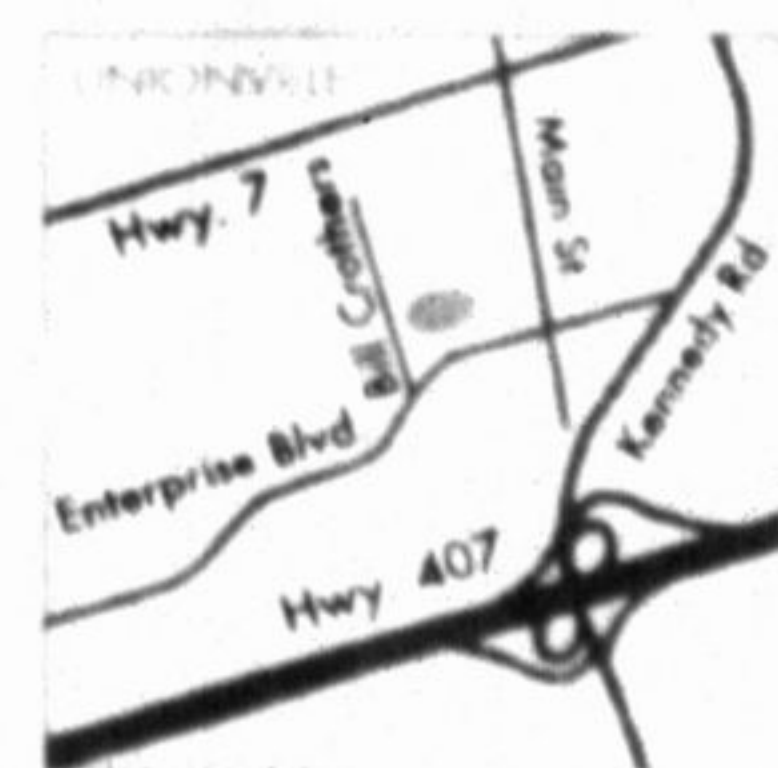
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