



2011

## Local Food Survey Initiative First of its Kind

*Potential economic growth to affect entire region thanks to unique partnership*

### NEWS

April 4, 2011

Northumberland County is partnering with 8 other communities, the East Central Ontario Training Board and the Province of Ontario to launch an unprecedented effort to help local food businesses in Eastern Ontario. The Province's Ontario Market Investment Fund is contributing half of the funding for the \$100,000 project, the other half is being funded through contributions from project partners, Community Futures Development Corporation offices in the region and the Eastern Ontario Development Program.

Over a year, businesses that produce or promote food from local communities will be asked to participate in a Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Survey. Developed in conjunction with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), these surveys identify the strengths and challenges faced by participating businesses. These surveys are typically used to develop economic strategies to help industries thrive and are proven to be successful in Ontario. By conducting the survey in a regional partnership, each community benefits from the information required for internal development but also receive information on overarching themes and goals.

Project coordinators are currently seeking volunteers to help administer and participate in the survey. A full report of the survey results and recommended actions is expected to be available in the coming months.

### QUOTES

"The strength of the partnership in this project clearly shows that Eastern Ontario is serious about utilizing and building the local food capacity in our area. This type of project is long overdue and I am certainly excited about the possibility it will create when completed."

– Lou Rinaldi, Member of Provincial Parliament for Northumberland-Quinte West

"This project crosses several jurisdictions and offers an opportunity to work within a natural trade area for agri-business. We hope to find new ways to work together, as government and as small businesses, to overcome some of the challenges that the industry is facing."

– Mark Lovshin, Warden, Northumberland County

"The recommendations developed by this project will have the potential to build Local Food capacity in our community and help identify opportunities for people working in agriculture to grow their businesses and find new markets."

– Trissia McAllister, Agricultural & Creative Economy Coordinator, Northumberland County

### QUICK FACTS

- Northumberland County is leading the project but the other partnering communities include Peterborough, Hastings, Prince Edward, Lennox & Addington and Frontenac Counties as well as the Cities of Kawartha Lakes, Quinte-West and Belleville, and project partner the East Central Ontario Training Board.
- Surveys will be conducted at different times throughout the year in each partner area.
- Individuals wanting to help administer the surveys, or become a survey participant, can volunteer by contacting Kari Spry at 905-372-3329 or 1-800-354-7050 ext. 6266, or by email [spryk@northumberlandcounty.ca](mailto:spryk@northumberlandcounty.ca).

### LEARN MORE

For specific project details and ongoing updates, visit [www.localfoodbre.ca](http://www.localfoodbre.ca)

Details concerning Ontario's Business Retention and Expansion process can be found [online](#)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 4, 2011**

## **LOCAL FOOD SURVEY FIRST OF ITS KIND**

**[COBOURG, ON]** – Northumberland County and the East Central Ontario Training Board are partnering up with 8 other communities and the Province to launch an unprecedented effort to help ‘local food’ businesses across Eastern Ontario. Half of the funding for the \$100,000 project is being provided through the Province’s Ontario Market Investment Fund, the other half through contributions from project partners, Community Futures Development Corporation offices in the region and the Eastern Ontario Development Fund.

Working together with the communities which lie between the City of Kawartha Lakes and Frontenac County, Northumberland’s Economic Development and Tourism department is leading a Local Food Business Retention and Expansion Survey over the next year. The survey will be delivered to businesses that produce and sell local food products. Trissia McAllister, Agricultural & Creative Economy Coordinator of Northumberland County Economic Development & Tourism, thinks the potential impact of the survey could prove to be significant for everyone involved.

“The recommendations developed through this project will have the potential to build Local Food capacity in each of the participating communities while also building partnership opportunities for future projects based on quantifiable data,” said McAllister.

By conducting the survey as part of a partnership, each community involved will benefit from the information required for internal development and also receive information on overarching themes and goals that may lead to future partnerships.

Project coordinators are currently seeking individuals who have an interest in local food and would like to volunteer to help deliver or administer the survey as well as any local food-supporting business to submit survey responses. Anyone wishing to get involved can contact Kari Spry by phone at 905-372-3329 or 1-800-354-7050 ext 6266, or by email [spryk@northumberlandcounty.ca](mailto:spryk@northumberlandcounty.ca).

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For more information, visit our website at [www.localfoodbre.ca](http://www.localfoodbre.ca) or contact:

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## Northumberland heads project to advance local food interests

John Campbell  
April 29, 2011

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY -

Northumberland County is taking the lead role in an unprecedented effort to help local food businesses across eastern Ontario grow.

The business retention and expansion survey is the first of its kind in Ontario to be regional in scope, said Dan Borowec, the County's director of economic development and tourism. Normally, such surveys are done for a single community but this one will collect data in an area stretching from the City of Kawartha Lakes to Frontenac County, he said.

Northumberland County stands to gain from the \$15,000 to \$20,000 it's investing in the project, Mr. Borowec said.

"We firmly believe there are business opportunities to be had in Northumberland County that have not been identified. (The survey) will identify those gaps because it involves producers, processors and users."

The project, to be completed by year's end, will cost about \$90,000, with half of the money coming from the Ontario Marketing Investment Fund. The balance will be covered by Northumberland and the other counties taking part, along with the Community Futures Development Corporation and the Eastern Ontario Development Program.

"There is a real benefit to doing this collectively and working together on this one," Mr. Borowec said, pointing out the entrepreneurial opportunities that are sure to emerge, particularly those aimed at youth that will encourage them to stay in Northumberland.

So far the County has recruited 35 volunteers to conduct the surveys it began rolling out in March, but it could use another 20 to meet with farmers, restaurateurs, business people and bed-and-breakfast owners, said Trissia McAllister, Northumberland's agricultural and creative economy co-ordinator. "We're hoping to hit around 65."

Across the region, the target figure is a minimum of 500 respondents. A couple of research consultants have been hired to assist in the project. Each jurisdiction will receive a report tailored to its area along with a report covering the entire region.

"There's a lot of excitement about this project from a lot of different levels," Ms. McAllister said. "It's neat to be able to work on something that is going to impact ... 650,000 people."

The survey's retention aspect is "to find out what our local businesses are doing very well, where they're struggling, and if there is anything we can do to help them out," Ms. McAllister said. The expansion component is to determine what kind of new businesses could be created to complement existing ones.



Dan Borowec. NORTHUMBERLAND -- Dan Borowec, economic development officer at Northumberland County. *Peg McCarthy/Northumberland News*

Ms. McAllister pointed out the County identified a gap two years ago when it put together the farmgate guide. Farmers said they would like to sell more food to local restaurants and other businesses but had neither the time nor means to make deliveries; businesses, in turn, expressed an interest in buying local food but indicated a similar lack of resources to make it possible.

"It's pretty hard to build a business case on that," Ms. McAllister said of the anecdotal evidence, but the survey could supply the necessary figures.

She said the local food movement is gaining traction in Ontario.

"Consumers in the province have truly welcomed and embraced the idea of local food and supporting the local agricultural community," Ms. McAllister said.

To become a volunteer, call Ms. McAllister at 905-372-3329, ext. 2492.

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# Volunteers take a bow after successful local food survey

The ambitious project in Northumberland set out to build partnerships and expand the industry

BY SUZANNE ATKINSON  
Ontario Farmer

**C**obourg – Four hundred volunteers, 375 training hours in 19 sessions, thousands of hours over 28 weeks of surveying, thousands of kilometers of driving in eight municipalities, hundreds of questions, a \$100,000 price tag and one consultant.

When it all wraps up later this year Northumberland will have spearheaded one of the most ambitious and comprehensive local food business retention and expansion surveys ever undertaken in Ontario.

It was being delivered to businesses that produce and sell local food products with the goal of building local food capacity and possibly even “building partnership opportunities for future projects based on quantifiable data,” says the county’s agricultural and creative economy co-ordinator.

“This is a really, really big deal,” Trissia McAllister said in thanking about 15 of the Northumberland volunteers. As the lead county, Northumberland has had a phenomenal participation rate of 64 per cent.

Of the county’s 120 retail, processing, food and beverage businesses and its 70 producers, 76 responded positively by participating in the approximately 90 minute survey.

And the volunteer surveyors from Northumberland were thanked for their contribution at an informal luncheon last week.

Twenty seven Northumberland volunteers logged 450 hours and covered 7,600 kilometres in their quest for information. Fifteen attended the luncheon to be presented with gifts of tee shirts and preserves.

Northumberland, in concert with the East Central Ontario Training Board, eight communities and the province, has undertaken the survey to “help local food businesses across eastern Ontario.”

All of the municipalities began work on the survey at different times, but Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes, Hastings and Prince Edward County have almost completed it, Frontenac, Belleville and Quinte West were at the mid-way point and Lennox and Addington

**“The best job is the one that you create.”**  
— Trissia McAllister

was just getting started.

“We just want to say thank you...for working so hard and believing that we can accomplish anything we put our minds too,” McAllister told the volunteers.

She also had words of praise for Northumberland’s political leadership.

“I don’t know another county that would take on a project...so

far beyond their borders, and just step up and get it done.”

Volunteers from Sustainable Cobourg and the Farmers Market were among the participants.

McAllister said it will be the new year before the data is compiled, but, based on a previous attempt to tackle the Northumberland local food industry, she expects to hear that processors will say they would use more local food but they don’t have time to go get it, and farmers will say they’re so busy growing it that they don’t have time to deliver it.

She expects there will be many opportunities for job creation.

“The best job is the one that you create.”



Northumberland volunteers were thanked for their efforts at a recent luncheon. They include fruit and vegetable farmer Barb Klatt, Christmas tree farmer Diana Barrett and beef farmer Pat Johnston. Also pictured are Janette Johnston, Lisa Meekes and Michelle Bandurchin.

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