

February 6th, 2013



Look for this logo at over 150 participating merchants in Centre Wellington!

SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGN AN ONGOING SUCCESS.

Gift of Choice cheques, part of the Fergus Elora Retail Alliance's (FERA) shop local campaign, hit a record high this past Christmas season with over \$14,000 of Gift of Choice cheques sold. The program, launched in November 2011, is the result of hard work and collaboration of its four founding members: the Elora and Fergus BIAs, Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce and the Township's Economic Development Department. FERA's intent is to run the program for at least 3 years, support locally owned businesses, and protect local character and prosperity. Indirectly, the benefits of the shop local campaign are many, from promoting environmental sustainability to encouraging entrepreneurship and product diversity. To date, over \$48,000 worth of cheques have been sold, over 150 businesses participate in the program and cheques can be purchased at four locations across the Township.

"It's a successful community partnership," says Garth Green of Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce and Chair of FERA, "We were able to get off to a great start, thanks to our partners in our first year – Scotia Bank and OLG – and we maintained the momentum from there. It's a great way to keep our dollars in the local economy and ensure a strong, competitive local marketplace."

Businesses can participate in a variety of ways: by selling, accepting, promoting via specials or as purchasing as rewards for staff and customers. There is no cost to sign up for members of Elora/Fergus BIAs or Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce, the cheques are legal tender, as good as cash, have no expiry date and can be deposited in any bank. Participants benefit from cross-promotional advertising with their business name on the list of participants issued with each Gift of Choice Cheque, and on the website.

The cheques come in denominations of \$10 and \$25 and are a great option for that hard to buy person on your list: your hockey coach, child's teacher, babysitter, neighbour...you get the picture. And you don't always have to buy "stuff" with them – many of the businesses in the program are service industries. Need your tires rotated? Use your gift of choice cheque. Signing up your kids to swimming? Use your gift of choice cheque. Computer needs an overhaul? Use your gift of choice cheque. These cheques are easy to tuck into a card to say thanks, happy birthday, happy anniversary, I'm sorry, Just because or Congratulations! Also a good idea for any holiday you observe!

Cheques are available at CW Chamber and Fraberts in Fergus, and Elora Info Centre and Epiphany in Elora. For more information on the program or to sign up your business, please contact Roberta Scarrow at Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce, 519 843 5140, or visit www.giftofchoicecw.ca