



Business Guide to Community-Led Events

Throughout the year, Okotoks hosts a variety of community-led events organized by non-profit organizations, sports groups, community associations, businesses, clubs, and other external event organizers.

These events are not organized or operated by the Town of Okotoks, but they play an important role in bringing visitors, families, athletes, spectators, and customers into the community.

This guide is intended to help local businesses prepare for and benefit from increased activity generated by community-led events taking place in Okotoks.

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is intended to help educate businesses on how community-led events operate in Okotoks, and how businesses can prepare for and leverage opportunities created by these events.

While some events may receive support from the Town of Okotoks through permitting, tourism promotion, facility bookings, or partnerships, community-led events are organized and operated by external organizations such as non-profits, sports organizations, community groups, and event producers.

This guide encourages businesses to take an active and collaborative role in staying informed, connecting with event organizers, and identifying ways to participate in and benefit from visitor activity generated through community events.

What are Community Led Events

Community-led events are events hosted by organizations outside of the Town of Okotoks administration. These events may be organized by non-profit organizations, sports organizations and associations, community groups, event producers, local clubs and societies, businesses, or recreation groups. Examples of community-led events may

include sporting tournaments and championships, community festivals, markets and fairs, fundraisers and charity events, cultural celebrations, recreation events, conferences, and meetings.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

Community-led events are organized and operated by external organizations, not by the Town of Okotoks. While the Town may support some events through permitting, facility bookings, tourism promotion, or community partnerships, event organizers are generally responsible for the planning, promotion, communication, and delivery of their events.

Because of this, businesses are encouraged to take an active role in staying informed about events happening in the community and identifying opportunities to connect with visitors and participants. This may include monitoring community calendars, following local social media channels, connecting directly with event organizers, and exploring ways to participate through promotions, partnerships, sponsorships, or visitor experiences.

Successful event communities are often built through collaboration between event organizers, businesses, tourism partners, volunteers, and the broader community. Businesses that proactively engage with events are often better positioned to benefit from increased visitor activity and community vibrancy.

Why these events matter

Community-led events help bring activity, visitors, and economic impact into the community. Visitors attending these events often dine at local restaurants, shop in local stores, visit cafes and attractions, explore downtown and the river pathways, stay overnight, and may return in the future for additional visits. Businesses that are prepared for increased visitor activity help create positive visitor experiences, contribute to a vibrant and welcoming community atmosphere, support increased local spending, and build greater awareness of Okotoks businesses and attractions.

How Businesses Can Prepare for and Leverage Community-Led Events

1. Stay Informed

Businesses are encouraged to stay aware of upcoming events happening in Okotoks throughout the year. This may include checking community calendars, following local social media pages, monitoring event announcements, and watching for sporting tournaments, festivals, markets, and community events.

2. Learn About the Event

Once a business becomes aware of an event, they may wish to learn more about it. Consider researching:

- The type of event
- Expected attendance
- Visitor demographics
- Event schedule and timing
- Locations and venues
- Whether visitors are local, regional, or travelling from outside the community

3. Connect with Event Organizers

Businesses may consider reaching out directly to event organizers to introduce themselves and explore opportunities to participate or support the event. This may include asking:

- Whether visitor information or promotions can be shared with attendees
- If there are sponsorship opportunities available
- Whether businesses can contribute prizes, offers, or visitor information
- How businesses may help support the visitor experience

4. Develop Promotions or Visitor Offers

Businesses can prepare promotions, products, or experiences that align with the event audience. Examples may include:

- Event-themed specials
- Team or participant discounts
- Grab-and-go offerings
- Extended hours
- Family-friendly promotions

5. Prepare and Share Marketing Content

Businesses can create content to share with organizers, visitors, and customers, including:

- Social media graphics and posts
- Visitor offers or coupons
- Business information
- Directions or parking details
- Links to websites or menus
- This content may be shared through:
 - Event social media pages
 - Welcome packages
 - Visitor guides
 - Event websites
 - Email communications

6. Create a Welcoming Visitor Experience

During the event, businesses can help create a positive community atmosphere by:

- Welcoming visitors warmly
- Keeping storefronts clean and inviting
- Being prepared for increased traffic
- Sharing recommendations about Okotoks attractions and amenities

7. Reflect After the Event

After the event, businesses are encouraged to review what worked well and identify opportunities for future events. This may include reviewing customer traffic, successful promotions, visitor feedback, and potential partnership opportunities moving forward.