
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CDS-02-2025 New Festival and Event Application – Hagersville 150th Anniversary Ag Day Celebration



For Consideration by Council in Committee on March 18, 2025

OBJECTIVE:

To receive Council authorization for the Hagersville Chamber of Commerce’s community-wide “Ag Day – Celebrating 150 Years of Hagersville” event taking place Friday, June 6, 2025, and approval on a one-time basis of a Haldimand County Festival and Event Operating Grant to an upset amount of \$7,500.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-02-2025 New Festival and Event Application – Hagersville 150th Anniversary Ag Day Celebration be received;
2. AND THAT the “Ag Day – Celebrating 150 Years of Hagersville” event planned by the Chamber of Commerce’s Hagersville 150 Committee be authorized and deemed a municipally-significant event in accordance with Haldimand County’s Festival and Event Policy 2015-02 and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario;
3. AND THAT a Haldimand County Festival and Event Operating Grant, to an upset amount of \$7,500, be approved on a one-time basis for the Hagersville 150 Committee’s Ag Day event;
4. AND THAT event approval and funding are conditional upon compliance with Policy 2015-02 and County and provincial standards, permits and processes.

Prepared by: Jayne Aldridge, Supervisor, Community Programs & Events

Reviewed by: Katrina Schmitz, Manager, Community Development & Partnerships

Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The community of Hagersville is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2025. The Hagersville Chamber of Commerce—through its Hagersville 150 Committee—has been working since 2023 to create a year of memorable events and activities, including its major community event on June 6: “Ag Day – Celebrating 150 Years of Hagersville”.

Originally founded by the late Marie Trainer, former Haldimand County Councillor and Mayor, Agriculture Day was a popular annual event in the community, taking place from 1980 to 1999.

The 2025 edition will build on the community’s agricultural heritage and vibrant rural culture, bringing together farmers, families, community members and visitors to share and enjoy interactive exhibits, live demonstrations and family-friendly entertainment. Ag Day will not only celebrate significant pieces of Hagersville’s history, it will offer an educational understanding and appreciation of that history to

residents and visitors of all ages. This year's edition will take place in Hagersville Market Square, on Alma Street and in Sgt. Andrew Harnett Memorial Park.

BACKGROUND:

Haldimand County recognizes the importance of festivals and events in the County. The community volunteers and groups who host these activities enhance the quality of life, vibrancy and sense of community for residents of, and visitors to, Haldimand County. Festivals and events also contribute significantly to the local economy and help boost tourism.

The purpose of the Festival and Event Policy 2015-02 is to establish fundamental criteria and definitions for approving festivals and events taking place on public property in Haldimand County and for the implementation of a Festival and Event Operating Grant Program. Additionally, the Policy ensures organizers of festivals and events taking place on County property obtain all necessary regulatory and operational approvals and adhere to applicable by-laws, policies and procedures. Policy 2015-02 also includes an Operating Grant for community groups whose event meets the Policy guidelines:

- An organized, non-profit event, recurring annually, which incorporates an intensive level of planned activity, a multi-faceted program of arts, cultural, sports or entertainment activities within a defined period of time that provides community benefit;
- Is anticipated to have attendance of more than 500 participants;
- Has an operating budget over \$10,000;
- Will take place almost entirely on County-owned property;
- Will temporarily limit community use of County-owned facilities, properties, roads and/or amenities for a day or more; and,
- Will require approval from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and therefore requires Council approval.

The Hagersville 150 Committee's "Ag Day – Celebrating 150 Years of Hagersville" has been identified by staff as a new, major event as it is anticipated to have 5,000 or more attendees, a projected operating budget of \$75,000 and will be a major source of community and economic benefit. It meets all of the above-noted criteria, with the exception of being an annually-recurring event (as it is a community anniversary).

The Hagersville Chamber and 150 Committee are requesting Council authorization to undertake Ag Day on June 6, 2025 in keeping with the County's Festival and Events Policy 2015-02, including:

- (i) Completion of a Special Event Application to be vetted by a team of County staff;
- (ii) Approval of Ag Day as a municipally-significant event; and,
- (iii) Consideration to receive a one-time Festival and Event Operating Grant—as an exception to the Policy given it is an anniversary event—to an amount of \$7,500.

ANALYSIS:

In 2023, the Hagersville Chamber of Commerce began planning for the community's 150th anniversary in 2025. The Hagersville 150 Committee has been working since that time to create a series of events and experiences that celebrate the community and its rich history.

With a theme of "Celebrating Heritage, Welcoming Tomorrow", the Committee kicked off its anniversary year with the opening of a twenty-year-old time capsule on January 5 and is hosting smaller community events throughout the year.

The major event planned for the 150th anniversary is the return of Ag Day, on June 6, 2025 (a PA Day for local elementary School Boards), which will be a free, open-to-the-public event throughout the community.

The Proponent:

The Hagersville Chamber of Commerce's Hagersville 150 Committee began working with Haldimand County's Community Events staff in early 2024, including providing Special Event applications for all its activities. The Chamber has a long history of civic leadership in Hagersville, taking on operating responsibility for the former Hagersville Community Centre for many decades until it closed in 2022, operating the Hagersville Farmers Market and hosting the popular Hagersville Rocks music festival.

Details of the Event:

"Ag Day – Celebrating 150 Years of Hagersville", takes place June 6, 2025, 11:00 am to 10:00 pm, in three locations: Hagersville Market Square, on Alma Street and in Sgt. Andrew Harnett Memorial Park. Among the activities for all ages are:

- A Family and Kids Zone offering a community mural project, rock painting, children's games, inflatables and interactive farm-themed activities;
- Livestock displays and agricultural demonstrations;
- Vendor booths featuring local artisans, businesses and Hagersville's iconic Farmers Market;
- A heritage display celebrating the diverse agricultural, rail and mining history of Hagersville;
- Live music and stage performances all day, including an opening ceremony featuring a performance by the Youth Drum Circle from Lloyd S. King Elementary School; and,
- Food trucks and a beer garden.

The Hagersville 150 Committee anticipates attendance for the Ag Day event could be well over 5,000 participants.

Community Benefit:

Staff have identified that Ag Day will provide significant community benefit in accordance with Policy 2015-02, including:

- It is open to the general public at no charge and is designed to ensure as much public participation, engagement and access as possible;
- The event is hosted by a non-profit group;
- The event provides a positive image for and increases the profile of Haldimand County; and,
- The event will provide an economic and tourism benefit to the County.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Haldimand County's Festival and Event Policy 2015-02 and associated Operating Grant is intended to provide a fair, clear and consistent review structure to ensure event and funding applications meet the criteria of the program. In recognition of the in-kind and logistical support provided by the County to festivals and events, grant funding can be provided in the amount of up to 10% of the eligible operating budget for an event, using the previous year's actuals. In the event the dollar value of successful grant applications in a given year exceeds the annual funding envelope, the value of all grants will be prorated accordingly.

County staff review festival and event applications for Council approval relative to the following criteria:

- The festival or event aligns with and furthers the County's Corporate Strategic Priorities;
- Applicants must be a community group or organization (individuals are not eligible);

- Applicants must be a group/organization which has been in existence for a minimum of one year and have a bank account in the name of the group/organization;
- A governance structure exists consisting of a volunteer Board of Directors or Committee comprised primarily of Haldimand County residents;
- There is demonstrated organizational capacity of volunteers, contractors and staff to deliver the event while meeting health, safety and legislative requirements;
- There is demonstrated financial capacity to deliver the event while meeting the group/organization's financial obligations; and,
- There is proof of adequate liability insurance coverage for the event, to County standards.

Policy 2015-02 includes an Operating Grant for community groups whose event meets the policy guidelines, including:

- An organized, non-profit event, recurring annually, which incorporates an intensive level of planned activity, a multi-faceted program of arts, cultural, sports or entertainment activities within a define period of time that provides community benefit;
- Is accessible to and provides for broad access and participation to all residents of the County and/or tourists and has significant attendance levels (500+) relative to the size of the festival budget;
- Has an operating budget over \$10,000;
- Has received Council approval;
- Is mostly, if not entirely, held on County-owned property; and,
- Will restrict or limit community use of County-owned facilities, properties, roads and/or amenities for a day or more.

Ag Day – Celebrating 150 Years of Hagersville meets all the criteria for approval of a major event as well as all the criteria for eligibility of an operating grant, with the exception that it is not a recurring event (rather an anniversary celebration). In recognition of the scope and community benefit of the event, County staff are recommending it receive an operating grant, to an upset limit of \$7,500, which represents 10% of the projected budget of \$75,000. This grant would be provided following reconciliation of the 2025 Ag Day event.

Based on the approved/recommended events to date requiring funding from the Festival and Event Operating Grant budget, there are sufficient funds available, including Report CDP-02-2025 being presented at this meeting. Staff will continue to monitor applications to ensure approved funding allotment aligns with the 2025 Festival and Events Operating Budget.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

The Special Event application for Ag Day has been and continues to be reviewed by the Community Development & Partnerships Division's Staff Review Team—which includes all County Divisions, Grand Erie Public Health and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario—as plans are finalized.

Staff from multiple Divisions have provided more specific resources and assistance during the review process, including CDP's Community Events and Heritage & Culture Units, Economic Development & Tourism, Emergency Services, Legal & Support Services, Roads Operations and Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations, as well as the County's Agricultural Advisory Committee.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: Yes

Policy: No

REFERENCES:

1. [Festival and Event Policy No. 2015-02](#)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation from the Hagersville 150th Anniversary Committee.