

## City Digs Into Food Waste – Auditing Waste

**August 14, 2015** – The City of Thunder Bay wants to know how much of the food it purchases for the Pioneer Ridge long-term care facility becomes landfill waste. This past week, a work team from Community Living Thunder Bay’s Monty Parks Centre has been busy digging for answers as part of a Food Waste Audit undertaken in partnership between the City’s Supply Management Division, the Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy and Food Services Management at Pioneer Ridge Home for the Aged.

To continue making gains in the area of local food, one of the City's six local food procurement objectives for 2015 is to undertake a Food Waste Audit.

“We want to know not just how much we send to the landfill,” said Dan Munshaw, Manager Supply Management - City of Thunder Bay. “But what we send, and why. We hope that what we learn through this audit will let us make some changes in the way we use food that will result in cost-savings as well as reduced waste.”

Munshaw says his team will strive to reinvest any cost-savings into the purchase of food from local farmers. Another benefit of the project is environmental sustainability through the creation of a composting program with Belluz Farm. Staff will separate and set aside organic waste, which Belluz will pick up and bring back to the farm, thus treating food waste as a resource and completing the cycle.

“It’s also a new opportunity for Supply Management to involve the Supported Employment Program at the Monty Parks Centre,” Munshaw says of the team doing the field work. As part of their operations, the Monty Parks Centre supports individuals with intellectual disabilities in a wide range of community-based workplaces, where they’ll gain work experience and opportunities to do meaningful work in the community. “We return to them whenever we’ve got a job their size because they’re a great partner for short-term labour work.”

Kendal Donahue, Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy Coordinator, notes that over the past year and a half, the Food Strategy has been working with the City on a Local Food Procurement Project, funded by the Greenbelt Fund and aimed at increasing the amount of local food being sourced by the City’s Homes for the Aged and Child Care Centres.

“The procurement project highlights you have to work at food from every angle,” said Donahue. “We’re not only working with the City on setting targets to purchase local food, but we’re trying to close the loop on food waste. We’re also building relationships across the supply chain and are consciously involving different aspects of the community.”

Field work for the project wraps up today and the final report on the research should be available by the end of September.

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