

COMMUNITY

Taste! to tempt visitors for seventh year

Annual celebration offers selection of foods grown within 100 kilometres

By Sean Tomlinson
Gazette Staff

Motorists driving by the Crystal Palace Saturday Sept. 27 can be excused if they make a sudden turn, driven by the pleasant smell of culinary food travelling to their nose.

Yes many passing drivers could be the victim of a sudden urge to eat once they catch a whiff of the annual Taste the County event held next weekend.

The seventh edition of *Taste! A Celebration of Regional Cuisine* will showcase the finer, original tastes of Prince Edward County, including exhibits and tables from local wine and beer makers, ciders, artisanal products and cuisine.

Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell, executive director of Taste the County, said she expects about 2,500 people to attend.

"It's a fabulous way to market the contributions of this county to the culinary arts," said LeHeup-Bucknell who pioneered the event seven years ago in an effort

to create a setting that would increase marketing exposure to the county's culinary and wine sector.

She said an economic impact study completed in 2005 indicated the event has a significant financial impact on the county, pumping about \$500,000 into the local economy and small culinary business.

The tourism brought into the county through the event also has a positive impact.

"Over the years we have had a lot of positive feedback from local business saying that it's a great sales weekend," said LeHeup-Bucknell. "The nice thing about the event is that it's from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., so people will stick around and go out for dinner, buy wine at the wineries or produce at the roadside stands."

Everything showcased at the event comes from within 100 km of Prince Edward County, a feature that LeHeup-Bucknell says shows the unique nature of the region.

"It really supports the importance of local foods and the importance of celebrating it," she said.

New to this year's event is a farmers' market that will include produce for

sale from nine farmers in the county. All proceeds from sales at the market will be donated to the Picton Food Bank.

It is an initiative that Pat Romkey, director of the Picton United Church County Food Bank, said will greatly help the efforts of the organization going forward.

Romkey said the food bank serves about 234 people within Prince Edward County every month.

"This will give us a variety of good foods," said Romkey. "Without the farmer we would all go hungry."

Invited to judge the 2008 Taste awards are Cindy Chavich, a Calgary-based travel and food writer, Jamie Drummond, head sommelier on Jamie Kennedy's wine program, and Margaret Webb, food writer and author of *Apples to oysters: A food lovers tour of Canadian farms*.

This year's award of excellence, given to 19 different recipients throughout the day, was designed by Heather Watson of the Red Barns.

The award is silver and features emblems of the different culinary and wine aspects of the county.

"It really spoke to all the



Gazette photo by Sean Tomlinson

Culinary recognition— Heather Watson holds this year's award of excellence. Her design was chosen for the award which will be given to 19 category winners.

layers of the event," said LeHeup-Bucknell.

Those interested in tickets can visit www.tastethecounty.ca or call 613-393-2796. Organizers ask participants to keep in mind that the *Taste!* event is an age of

majority event.

Child care will be provided at the Prince Edward Curling Club from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m.. Those wishing to use the services must register their children by noon Sept. 26 to ensure a spot.

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