

Community Service

Part of a How-To Guide for Successful Agritourism Enterprises

Prepared for The University of Georgia's Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development and North Carolina State Cooperative Extension Service's Business Side of Agritourism Program Series. The Primary Investigators on this project were Kent Wolfe, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development and Gary Bullen, North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension Service.



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Introduction

Good owners and managers of businesses are very involved with their communities.

They volunteer to help rather than waiting to be asked. They look for good community causes and then work to develop good relationships with others who support those causes. Successful business people look for the needs within the community, and ways in which they can assist. Your purpose is to help your community. However, as a result of your commitment, wonderful opportunities often present themselves. Through your community involvement, you can also maximize your business' exposure.

Listed below are just a few ideas about ways you can become involved.

Farmer's Market

Meet with your County Extension agent to discuss showcasing at your County Farmer's Market. Farmer's Markets provide fresh, local products to the consumer. However, their primary purpose is to help local farmer and agritourism operations succeed-survive. If your business is food related, offer samples. Explain how your product is made and why it is better than your competitors'. If your business is activity related, your Farmer's Market can serve as an effective outlet to distribute brochures or coupons, or set up displays.

Civic Organizations

Speak at local civic organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary, and Lion's Club. These organizations are always looking for good speakers who are not only interesting, but who also represent new businesses and commerce. They especially like to host speakers who are local and community oriented. Consider becoming a member. Invite members to hold a company picnic or event at your operation. Consider showcasing your food product in novel ways such as gift baskets and seek corporate business and contracts. Because these are service organizations, you will be combining the efforts of your community involvement with a host of other business.

Churches, Schools, Community Organizations

Work with local churches, charity causes, community programs and schools. Offer educational outings to groups. Sponsor a youth sports team. These organizations are continually searching for ways to make money. Offer your product or services at a wholesale price so that they can be sold at retail cost for fundraisers.

Chamber of Commerce

Join the Chamber of Commerce and sponsor a "Business after Hours". People love to network. You will find that other businesspeople will be supportive of your new venture. Business breeds business, so they will also profit if you are successful. They were once where you are now and know the problems you may be dealing with. They can give you

advice that may help you to avoid mistakes. They can also give you pointers about what helped them to succeed.

Acknowledgement:

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Additional Resources:

Agritourism in Focus

A Guide for Tennessee Farmers

The New Farmers' Market

Corum, Rosenzweig & Gibson
New World Publishing