



DATE: February 5, 2024
TO: Council Economic Development Committee
FROM: Chief Economic Development Officer
SUBJECT: Hayward Restaurant Month 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Economic Development Committee receives updates on the Hayward Restaurant Month Promotion

SUMMARY

As part of the City of Hayward COVID-19 economic recovery plan that was reviewed by the Council Economic Development Committee in June 2021, the Together for Hayward e-Gift Card program and the Hayward Open for Business program were launched. These two programs were designed to encourage customers to shop and dine at Hayward brick-and-mortar businesses rather than spending money outside of the city or online. Utilizing the principles from the Hayward Open for Business and the software capabilities and brand awareness of the Together for Hayward Gift Card program earned to date, the Economic Development Division was able to launch its inaugural Hayward Restaurant Month in January 2024. The following report provides a summary of those efforts and results to date.

BACKGROUND

December and January are traditionally slow months for restaurants. After the holiday season, consumers often cut back on spending, start new health plans, and limit their dining out. To help combat the slowdown in activity, VisitCalifornia.org launched a California Restaurant Month promotion in 2010. This promotion was to encourage residents to support their local eateries and celebrate the diversity of cuisine in the state. Communities across California went on to adopt their own restaurant months and weeks that span throughout the year. The City of Hayward has never participated in any Restaurant Month or Week promotions previously.

DISCUSSION

As part of the ongoing implementation of the Open for Business Program, Economic Development staff continue to explore opportunities to help promote local businesses to the

community and encourage customers to shop and dine. The Yiftee platform, used to administer the Together for Hayward Gift Card Program, allows participating gift card businesses to showcase specials and promotions that are available when a customer uses their gift card. Staff decided that a Restaurant Month could be created by allowing participating gift card restaurants to create a special for listing on the website. This approach is consistent with CEDC member requests to keep the gift card program going.

Staff emailed all participating restaurants and received interest from 18 businesses to participate in the month-long promotion. To help create a consistent brand, the Economic Development staff created all the graphic visuals to be used on the gift card website, City social media accounts, and the individual social media accounts of the businesses. In addition, the Community Media Relations Division team also created a special landing page on the City's website to showcase the participating businesses (<https://www.hayward-ca.gov/business/hayward-restaurant-month>), provide a map with the business locations, and a link for customers to purchase additional gift cards. In addition, a news article was released in The Stack Newsletter.

To further encourage participation by customers, staff created a gift card promotion allowing a customer purchasing a \$100 gift card to be entered in a weekly drawing to win one of sixteen \$100 gift cards. Drawings were held each Monday.

Through the City's promotion of the Inaugural Hayward Restaurant Month, local media including, The East Bay Times and KTVU Fox 2 News reached out to Economic Development to run feature stories about the efforts and the ongoing promotion for the month of January.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Hayward Restaurant Month had a positive impact on the participating businesses. As of the drafting of this report, 15 of the 18 participants absorbed gift card funds during the first two weeks of January. In addition, the number of sales increased after the stories about Restaurant Month ran on KTVU Fox 2 News on Wednesday, January 10, and Thursday, January 11th.

FISCAL IMPACT

Other than Economic Development and Community and Media Relations staff time, there was no fiscal impact associated with the launch of Restaurant Month. All the promotion of the event took place using the City's existing social media accounts. The bonus cards that were sent to the weekly drawing winners came from funds recouped from unspent bonus gift cards from the previous bonus promotions.

Prepared by: Catherine Ralston, Economic Development Consultant

Recommended by: Paul Nguyen, Chief Economic Development Officer

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly McAdoo', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kelly McAdoo, City Manager