



The Daily Gleaner

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Green Your Harvest

This year, the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival organization became a member of Fredericton's Green Shops program for businesses. But even a few years prior to this, as a socially responsible community organization, the Festival began some initiatives to reduce their environmental footprint. Then last year an official Green Team was formed and the 'Green Your Harvest' program was born.

Harvest organizers, patrons, volunteers, and musicians, are working together to reduce the average of 32 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions produced in connection with the Festival annually. The Festival believes it is time to think of what we can do individually so that, collectively, this number can be reduced each and every year.

With this philosophy in mind, the Green Your Harvest program continues to provide increasing support and motivation for patrons to be environmentally responsible by reusing or recycling most everything related to their Festival experience, including: ticket stubs, bracelets, drink cups, drink token baggies, programs, and schedules.

Festival patrons can return their programs and schedules to the Admissions table for reuse by other patrons; if they are buying a drink with their last token, they can give the bar back their token baggie so they can be reused; and of course, they can reuse their drink cup throughout an evening event. And when it comes to recycling cups, the motto is: "If you see a cup, pick it up" and put it in the cup-suckers located on the side of each blue recycling bin.

As well, volunteers were asked to bring in their old volunteer pass lanyards so they can be reused this year, returned after the Festival and re-used again next year.

But the biggest contribution to reducing the Festival's carbon footprint – resulting from cutting down on traffic congestion and vehicle emissions - is their new and improved free transportation system - the *NB Liquor Harvest Park & Ride*. The map, schedule, stops, and routes are posted at:

www.harvestjazzandblues.com/parkandride.html

The Park & Ride pick up times, locations and routes have been expanded this year, so both Festival patrons and volunteers are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this stress-free and convenient way to get downtown to the shows. The Fredericton Exhibition Grounds (FREX) location is a great carpool destination if you are coming in from out of town; a bus will come by every 20 minutes, then swing by the Delta Hotel for a pick-up and then head downtown to the Westminster Books (on King St.) drop-off and pick-up location. This bus will run Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 3pm-3am. A large poster will be in the Westminster Books window with the schedule and routes.

Additionally, another bus is servicing the uptown with stops at six hotels on Prospect and Bishop Drive from 5-6pm and again from 7-8pm, and passing by the UNB SUB as well. A large poster with schedule and maps will be in the lobby of these hotels and at the SUB. Towards the end of the night, from 11pm-12am and from 1am-2am, hotel patrons can meet the bus at Westminster Books to head back up to their hotels and the SUB.

Another way the Festival works to reduce emissions from vehicle congestion is by providing a Musician Shuttle Service so visiting musicians don't have to bring cars into the downtown core from the various hotels. This way, transportation for bands can be scheduled and coordinated, and provides bands with an easy way to get to their venue for sound checks and performances.

This week coming up is a magical one in downtown Fredericton. It's our Harvest! We need to take care of it and sustain it for many years to come by doing the little things – reuse or recycle Festival 'stuff' (programs, schedules, bracelets, etc.), walk to shows instead of drive, carpool to Park & Ride sites, don't idle, generate less garbage, and keep the city clean.

My personal must-see act in this year's Festival is JJ Grey and Mofro from Jacksonville, Florida. In a recent interview JJ Grey said: "People thank me all the time for my 'environmental stand'. I'm proud that they do, but I'm not sure exactly what they mean. I also get asked a lot if I think we can 'save' the environment. I don't really believe in 'an' environment. I LOVE MY HOME. My home is the real world to me."

I agree with JJ. This week, even more so than usual, there's a lot to love about our home – Fredericton. So let's tread lightly on it, even as we dance.

Sonya Hull is the project manager for Fredericton's environmental programs; and a long-time volunteer with the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival. For more information on 'Greening your Harvest' check out www.harvestjazzandblues.com/greenyourharvest.html.