

Web site makes community promotions simpler, free

CHARLES SCHILLINGER *The York Dispatch*
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Robert Godfrey Jr., left, founder of mycommunitytickets.com, and Web site engineer Peter Gracey...

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If community theaters, fire departments and churches want to reach more people with notices about their events, they have to get on the Web, said one Yorker with a history of community involvement.

But Robert Godfrey Jr. has found that doing so isn't always an easy -- or cheap -- task for nonprofit groups.

So he launched a Web site this month, MyCommunityTickets.com, that will make it simpler, and free, for community organizations to post events. Nonprofits can post open houses, galas and theater performances on the new Web site.

"There's a lot of small nonprofits out there that don't have the resources to be online," Godfrey said. "But you've got to be online. E-commerce is growing at an astounding rate. People want the convenience."

He said this likely will help the consumers of community organizations as well, as they will be able to go to one place to find everything.

Though he is starting the site in York, Godfrey wants to take it national, giving smaller communities like York a resource for listing events.

Knowing the difficulty in setting up a site that would be nationwide, he enlisted York-based Double Dog Communications to design the Web site.

The site launched this month. Users register their organizations and then are allowed to list their bingo nights, yard sales, musicals and other events free of charge.

Godfrey plans to pay for the site through advertisements and charging a fee if people buy tickets on the site for the events.

The important feature to setting up the site was making sure it was easy for people to get to what they want, said Peter Gracey, a Web application engineer for Double Dog who helped build the site.

People can search by the event type, such as an art exhibit or fundraiser, or by city. There's also a directory of venues.

The more than 50 events already listed are almost all from the York region as of now, but a couple of organizations in Delaware have already listed events. Godfrey said he has also had interest from communities in California and Michigan as well.

"It'll be interesting to see how some of these people are finding out about the site," Gracey said.

The West York VFW plans to use the site to list events, said Lloyd Greenwood, adjutant and former commander of the post on Andrew Street in West York.

"We have events where we open our doors to the public, and it'd be nice to see some new faces," he said. "This seems like a nice idea to reach out to some people who might not know what we're doing."

About 30 organizations, such as the Naylor Wine Cellar in Stewartstown and the Scottish Rite Theatre in Harrisburg, have also posted events. Godfrey said he is in discussions with another 30 to 40 groups to also post events on the site.

The goal is to increase the number of people visiting the site, he said. Once that happens, larger venues will start to take notice and want to post on the site as well, he said.

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