

## PERTH COUNTY KITCHENS

Source: [The Mitchell Advocate](#)

### Community kitchen now open in Mitchell

County begins pilot project in Mitchell, Milverton

**Posted By Rita Marshall**

West Perth has one of only two community kitchen pilot projects in Perth County. The Perth County Economic Development office has launched the pilot project to promote local food in communities, as well as promoting local food producers.

After research, including June's Community Kitchens Survey, two fully equipped, certified shared-use commercial kitchens were approved: the Mitchell Arena and Community Centre, and the Perth East Recreation Complex in Milverton.

Perth County Economic Development coordinator Bernia Wheaton said the enthusiasm she found for the project in Mitchell led to the decision to put a community kitchen in West Perth. "It makes sense to put the facilities where the support is," she said.

The kitchen can be rented hourly for \$10 or for up to 12 hours for \$75. Rental times are available during gaps in the arena's current schedule. The project runs until mid-October.

Any big cooking or baking project is welcome at the kitchen, from pickling and preserving parties to large group meals. Project coordinator Laurie Knechtel said the project will supplement the arena's current equipment with specialized equipment for pickling or preserving.

The kitchen is also an option for new or existing local food businesses to train, produce or develop new products without having to lease kitchen space for the long-term. "These facilities are ideal for those wanting to create value-added products and sell from farmgate or at market," said Wheaton in a press release. "This program greatly reduces the risk and cost that an artisan or producer would have to assume to create market-ready products that comply with food safety regulations."

Knechtel said food classes highlighting local food will also be part of the new community kitchen. Knechtel said she was arranging for local chefs to come in and teach both kids and adults different aspects of cooking using local products.

Making ice cream with local fruit is one idea, as are classes on breadmaking and visits from pastry chefs. "Kids just love to cook and bake and to work with sweets," Knechtel said. Knechtel added that while most people are comfortable buying local fruits and vegetables, she hopes to make local meat easier to find and purchase as well.

She said she hopes West Perth's community kitchen will host a "meat-up" where people can meet local producers, taste samples and find out what kinds of meats are available at local farm gates and farmers' markets. "We're interested in shining a light on all of the producers in Perth County," she said.

Information on available times, upcoming classes and more about the community kitchens is available at [www.perthcounty.ca/page/kitchen](http://www.perthcounty.ca/page/kitchen). Interested people can also contact Laurie Knechtel at [kitchens@perthcounty.ca](mailto:kitchens@perthcounty.ca) or call (519) 271-0528 for more information or to reserve kitchen space.