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Kentucky Fried Chicken: Advertising Article

LOUISVILLE (AP) — Fast-food chain KFC is giving two Indiana cities \$7,500 so it can emblazon founder Colonel Sanders' face on their hydrants and fire extinguishers to promote new "fiery" chicken wings.

Experts say to expect more ads like this, on public property from sewer grates to the local landfill, as companies look to cut through the clutter of traditional advertising. Cash-strapped governments have long sold space on mass transit, benches, trash cans and other public property to help stretch budgets.

KFC told Indianapolis and nearby Brazil, Ind., that it wanted to improve their fire safety by helping pay for new hydrants and extinguishers in exchange for advertising on them. The company plans to e-mail a national network of mayors on Wednesday to find three more cities to participate in the approximately \$15,000, month-long effort, which began Tuesday.

Alternative marketing efforts like this have been growing as people become immune to advertising in print, outdoors and on television, said Allen Adamson, managing director of branding firm Landor Associates in New York.

"I think it's the tip of an iceberg of things to come as marketers struggle to find places to reach consumers and as cities look for ways to squeeze more dollars," Adamson said.

Laura Ries, president of marketing consulting firm Ries & Ries outside Atlanta, said marketers must find new places to reach consumers.

"People ignore advertising, they try to get away from it whenever possible," she said. "So hitting them in unusual and unlikely places, at least initially, is likely to get some attention."

KFC, whose parent company, Yum Brands (YUM), is one of the nation's largest fast-food chain owners, wants customers to see it as helping communities, said Javier Benito, a KFC executive vice president.

It spent about \$16,000 last year to help fix potholes in four cities — Topeka, Kan., Chattanooga, Tenn., Warren, Ohio, and Louisville, where it is based. In return, more than 1,500 potholes were branded "Re-Freshed by KFC" in chalk that lasted about a month.

"These are things that not a lot of people are doing. I think it helps us in terms of creating goodwill with consumers," Benito said.

KFC approached city officials in 8,600-resident Brazil after a local newspaper reported that dozens of hydrants were out of service. Mayor Ann Bradshaw, who said her city's budget situation "hasn't been very good," had no qualms accepting the deal.

The chain will give the city \$2,500 so it can put its logo and actual chicken buckets on at least three city fire hydrants, including one each near the courthouse, the post office and a VFW post. Bradshaw said the city intends to use the money to repair hydrants or purchase one; they run about \$2,500 apiece.



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She's open to more such arrangements.

"I'm willing to jump on board," she said. "I think KFC is out there starting the ball rolling."

Indianapolis will receive \$5,000 to buy fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. Some 33 extinguishers will be placed in recreation centers at city parks, and fire officials will hand out the detectors, said Jen Pittman, spokeswoman for Mayor Greg Ballard. The extinguishers will display KFC's logo for at least a month, a KFC official said.

"It's offsetting a need, it's offsetting some of our budget costs," Pittman said.

Instructions: Complete the following questions to the best of your ability using complete sentences.

1. What is KFC doing to advertise their Fiery Chicken Wings? Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not?
2. In the article, it states that consumers ignore advertising, why do you think that is? Use a personal example.
3. Why is KFC trying to help cities? Why are cities seeking help from companies like KFC?
4. Think of any other company that exists. Come up with an idea in which that company can market within a city in an unusual way, like advertising on a fire hydrant for "fiery" wings.

