



## Staff Report

**Report Title: May 2023 Business and Economic Officer Status Report**

**Prepared By: Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer**

**Department: BED**

**Date: May. 1, 2023**

**Report Number: BED-2023-05-23**

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**Attachments:** None

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### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report Number **BED-2023-05-23** prepared by Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer.

### **Background:**

This report provides the Committee with an update from the Business & Economic Officer.

### **Discussion:**

#### **Economic Development**

The Economic Development team continues to support local businesses by:

- Development of new business recognition program. Huron-Kinloss businesses who are celebrating milestones such as: grand openings/re-openings, new location, anniversaries, changes of ownership or retirement can apply on our website at: [www.huronkinloss.com/business-recognition](http://www.huronkinloss.com/business-recognition). We have 4 businesses that have applied for recognition in May.
- Regular check-ins with local businesses.
- Attendance at Ripley Business Community and Lucknow Chamber of Commerce meetings.
- Discovery Guide 2023 is printed and being distributed to residents, local businesses and tourist information centres.
- Collaboration and networking with neighbouring Economic development officers and tourism coordinators to maximize resources and discuss collaboration opportunities.

- Spruce the Bruce program is still open and support was given to one community application. Funding is almost all distributed.
- Spruce the Bruce toolkits are in the process of being updated.
- Back Forty Bazaar Vendors market is not going to happen in 2023, but being planned for 2024 instead. More research by staff is needed to understand the recent changes to Public Health Guidelines for markets as well as insurance requirements for vendors to ensure a well-executed, safe event with adequate time to secure vendors and market the event. Resources will be dedicated to this initiative this fall to allow a well-designed roll out of planned markets in the spring/summer of 2024.
- Business and Economic Officer attended the NWMO 2-day forum in South Bruce and the one-day trip to the NWMO training facility in Oakville to further understand the potential economic impact a DGR would have on our community.
- Ripley Business Community's Spring Social is on May 2 at 7pm, with Business and Economic Officer speaking about tourism initiatives and how businesses can take advantage of Secrets of the Back Forty.

## **Tourism**

### **Secrets of the Back 40**

- Two grants were received from the Ministry of Ontario Summer Experience Program, in the amount of \$3812 each, to assist with wages for the Lucknow Tourism office and Point Clark Lighthouse Coordinator.
- Our new tourism website, [www.secretsofbackforty.com](http://www.secretsofbackforty.com) is live and marketing plan includes social media roll out in May, print ads in Grey-Bruce Escape, Kincardine Tourist Guide and Huron-Kinloss Discovery Guide. A launch event is being explored with potential partnerships with local businesses and service clubs. Tentative official launch is mid-June. Branded flags, sandwich boards and decals will be distributed to participating businesses.
- Our new tourism kiosks and pedestrian signs with Secrets of the Back 40 branding will be installed this spring.
- Continued support as secretary for Lucknow's Music in the Fields event, to be held on August 24-26, 2023. Line-up was announced last week and ticket sales are going well. Support was given with an Experience Ontario grant in the amount of \$125,000 and outcome will be known this summer.
- Business and Economic Officer attended Ontario's West Coast Tourism Summit on April 24, displayed Secrets of the Back Forty material and took part in a day of tourism focused learning.
- Ec Dev team is working with Bruce County on a Visitors Survey, to gather data about our visitors' experience in Huron-Kinloss this summer. Roll out to be determined.
- Ec Dev team will be taking part in Grey-Bruce's brochure swap on May 9 in Owen Sound.

### **Point Clark Lighthouse Museum Revitalization Project**

- Installation of display cases and exhibits at the Lighthouse taking place the week of May 1.
- One Lighthouse Coordinator and 3 Lighthouse tour guides have been hired for the summer season.
- Merchandise is being procured for the gift shop
- Online booking system for summer tours is being explored by staff.
- Save the date for tentative June 15 re-opening gala!

Key indicators of success:

- Secrets of the Back 40 tourism initiative moves forward with a new tourism website, with the goal of attracting new visitors to Huron-Kinloss, encourage local spending and invite locals to re-discover local producers and spend more time in our downtowns.
- Point Clark Lighthouse Museum revitalization project is completed, to re-open for the 2023 season, on budget, attracting new visitors.
- Surrounding municipalities and organizations are aware of what Huron-Kinloss has to offer and tourism cross promotion bring visitors to the area.
- Huron-Kinloss businesses feel supported and celebrated in our community.
- Ongoing business investment and retention in our community.

**Financial Impacts:**

Included in the current budget.

**Strategic Alignment / Link:**

The information provided in this report is consistent with and in keeping with the Municipality's Vision and Mission. The recommendations contribute to our goals in achieving a prosperous community, a vibrant community, and a spirited community.

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

Amy Irwin, Business and Economic Officer

**Approved By:**

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer