



Staff Report

Report Title: October 2023 – The Hub Status Report

Prepared By: Will LeGrand, Business Development Coordinator

Department: Business & Economic Development

Date: Oct. 31, 2023

Report Number: BED-2023-11-41

File Number:

C11 BED 23

Attachments:

Recommendation:

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report Number BED-2023-11-41 prepared by Will LeGrand, Business Development Coordinator.

Background:

The Hub October Status Report provides information to Council on behalf of the Business Development Coordinator.

Discussion:

The Hub's Funding Period Ending Soon

As this year comes to a close, The Hub will conclude its funding period after nearly three years of operations. Our commitment to providing business and marketing support will continue until December 15th, 2023.

Following December 15th, we will complete administrative duties and close-out procedures to ensure the effective conclusion of our operations.

We express our gratitude for the incredible journey and the privilege to serve the business community. The December COW Report will offer a comprehensive overview of The Hub's history, notable achievements, and the businesses we've supported, highlighting the accomplishments of this initiative.

Business Support

The Hub assisted 23 businesses in October, with 11 from Huron-Kinloss and 12 from the surrounding area: Arran-Elderlies (1), Brockton (3), Kincardine (3), Saugeen Shores (4), Huron County (1).

The businesses contacted The Hub for a range of services, including marketing and branding, social media marketing, market research, grant support, and technology and IT support.

Homestead Program

The Homestead Program, offered by The Hub, supports entrepreneurs in testing their business concepts in a physical location, providing both space and essential guidance. Currently, the program is hosting Maggie Robinson, owner of Collective Co, a consignment store specializing in women's and children's clothing.

Collective Co, operating from The Hub since September 13, has proven to be a significant attraction, with an average of approximately 12 visitors daily. They hosted a successful sale during the Ripley fall fair, receiving robust support from the local community, which boosted the boutique's visibility and community connections.

Collective Co Boutique will continue to operate in The Homestead space until Christmas, providing an ideal destination for residents and visitors seeking clothing during the holiday season. Plans to expand their vendor market are underway, with the goal of enhancing offerings to the community as they approach the upcoming season.

Business Training Events

In October 2023, The Hub hosted a webinar on SEO strategies in collaboration with Deborah Clarke of 519Web. The webinar had 12 registrants and aimed to improve businesses' online visibility through SEO best practices. We remain dedicated to offering valuable training opportunities to support local businesses.

Partnerships with County and Other Municipalities

At The Hub, we're dedicated to nurturing partnerships for the local business community's growth and success. On October 4th, our Business Development Coordinator, Will Legrand, delivered two webinars on AI tools for social media strategy as part of Bruce County's "Business to Bruce" training series. He also spoke at the Municipality of South Bruce's annual Networking event on October 18th, sharing insights on digital marketing tools. These collaborations underscore our commitment to supporting local businesses and community connections.

Office/Co-working Space Rentals

In October 2023, The Hub's private office was rented once for a half day. Additionally, the co-working space was rented for an event hosted by Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Bruce North Huron.

Website & Social Media Analytics

1. The Hub's website had 89 visits.
2. Instagram reached 518 followers.
3. Facebook page reached 2459 followers.

Financial Impacts:

None at this time.

Strategic Alignment / Link:

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

Projects in this report assist staff in achieving the following projects in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Action Plan:

P2.2 Business Incubator

Respectfully Submitted By:

Will LeGrand, Business Development Coordinator

Report Approved By:

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer