



## Staff Report

**Report Title: 2023 Year End, Manager of Strategic Initiatives**

**Prepared By: Michelle Goetz**

**Department: BED**

**Date: Jan. 15, 2024**

**Report Number: BED-2024-01-3**

**File Number:**

**C11 BED 24**

### **Attachments:**

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### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report Number BED-2024-01-3, as prepared by Michelle Goetz, Manager of Strategic Initiatives.

### **Background:**

2023 was a busy year for our department, we achieved a lot in our 2023 Business Plan and had another successful year of implementing our economic development action plan.

### **Discussion:**

The Economic Development Team created an ambitious business plan and budget for 2023 and I'm proud to say we accomplished everything we set out to do with the exception of the Downtown Development Project that is being deferred to 2024. The 2023 Business Plan is attached for your review.

### **2023 Highlights:**

- Investor's Day Bus Tour: a guided bus tour of available commercial, residential and industrial properties was completed in May with over 30 investors, Realtors, Developers and community partners in attendance. The Economic Development Team was awarded an Economic Developer's Association of Canada marketing award for this initiative.
- The Homestead; We had three separate entrepreneurs take over the Homestead space in the Hub with the most recent business transforming it into a clothing store and Christmas market in downtown Ripley. With the

support of the program, the owner of Collective Co. is actively researching opportunities to open a retail business permanently in the downtown. The success of the Homestead program will live on through our partners at the Town of Minto who modelled their own program using our Homestead successes, we wish them all the best with their program.

- The Hub; although the doors of the Hub closed in December, we took the opportunity to look back on three years of success, despite the challenges we faced with the pandemic. The Hub provided our team with a great learning experience that our work will benefit from for years to come.
- The Ripley Industrial Park officially received its Ontario Certified Site certification!
- The Women in Construction Program received additional funding of \$445,275 from Ontario's Ministry of Immigration, Labour, Training, and Skills Development, to train 20 women in carpentry and provide trade workshops for an additional 50 women in Bruce, Grey and Huron Counties. We also partnered with Bruce County on an application to continue the program with Skills Development Fund 4.0 funding, we hope to hear if our application is successful early this year.

In 2023, 18 women completed the carpentry fundamentals and skills training, 11 started or completed their work placements, and 6 are interviewing for work placements (placements must be complete by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024). 7 of the 8 participants from cohort 1 (May 2023 start) are working full-time in the field.

To complement our already successful program, we hired a Workforce Development Coordinator to assist the Program Coordinator with employer engagement and workshop coordination. The Workforce Development Coordinator planned 6 workshops to date; 2 mini excavator, 2 chain saw, 2 skid steer and he has additional workshops planned in 2024.

- The Team hosted the Ripley Food Art and Craft Festival on August 19<sup>th</sup>, we had 62 vendors and 650 attendees.
- In partnership with the Kincardine Family Health Team and the Family Y; work began on the renovation of the Ripley Medical Centre and Family Y Childcare centre in Ripley. Plans were developed and the RFQ posted.
- We also completed a number of marketing, communications and engagement projects including:
  - Updated the four tourism kiosks located throughout the Township with the new Secrets of the Back 40 branding and maps.
  - Launched our new corporate website powered by Govstack
  - Attended the Investor's Dragon's Den event to promote Huron-Kinloss as a prime destination for investment

- Provided community engagement training to 11 staff from all departments
- Extended our licence and promotion of See Click Fix; our report a problem mobile app and web portal

## **Economic Development Action Plan**

In 2019, an economic development action plan was created by Deloitte and the CAO Department. The plan outlined actions to be completed from 2019-2023. In 2023, the CAO Department began the process to update the action plan; we completed a review of the current plan; conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis and a current state analysis; and developed a set of priorities to focus on moving forward. The updated plan will include detailed goals and objectives and we hope to present the final draft to Council in early 2024.

In 2023, all of the work completed by the Economic Development Team was supported by the current action plan as outlined in this report.

## **2023-2033 Strategic Plan: Blueprint for our Future**

Last but not least, the Strategic Plan was a large project that took most of our focus in 2023, a full report will be provided on this project.

### **Financial Impacts:**

None at this time.

### **Strategic Alignment / Link:**

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

### **Respectfully Submitted By:**

Michelle Goetz, Manager of Strategic Initiatives

### **Report Approved By:**

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer