

Quarterly Update Report

Title: Strategic Initiatives Quarterly Report

Report Number: Strategic Initiatives-2024-14

Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Communications:

Continued organization-wide support for developing communications that improve our engagement and confidence within our audiences.

There was a total of 221 requests for support during the third quarter of 2024:

- July 1st to 31st – 76
- August 1st to 31st – 75
- September 1st to 30th – 70

With two new websites launched at the end of April, continued work to polish and develop content is underway. Communications is working with tourism as the brand new www.KincardineWelcomes.ca takes shape. Response to feedback from site users for both the tourism and municipal sites has helped to direct development, edits, and planned improvements.

The focus for the websites is now turning to implementation of a maintenance plan and further training for staff using the content management system.

Additionally, a deeper dive into optimizing the searchability of the sites along with studying the analytical reporting data is helping us to better understand the needs of the users. This information helps us understand which solutions work best, and which content needs better support for improved user experience.

A continued exploration of additional channels through which we can connect with our audiences took form with a new effort with the Kincardine Independent. Beginning in July, a monthly full-page piece highlighting messaging from across the organization (Attachment 1).

Fostering improved media relations was also part of improving our efforts to connect with the community. Meetings with local radio stations to discover additional means of sharing our messaging happened in September.

Training for the Emergency Information Officer (EIO) role, which is part of the Municipality's Emergency Response Plan/Team, saw both the primary (Manager of Strategic Initiatives)

and alternate EIO's (Communications Coordinator) attend two days of training hosted by Bruce County. They, alongside other municipal EIOs, communications professionals, and staff, learned critical crisis communications practices for emergency situations.

The communications coordinator, a member of the Grey Bruce Communicators Network, also attended the first Rural Communications Conference at the beginning of October. In addition to a fantastic day of learning and networking, she also represented the Municipality of Kincardine as a panelist during one of the sessions.

Community Economic Development

Investment & Business Attraction

- Actively conducting outreach to targeted businesses and ongoing dialogue with businesses/companies that have expressed interest in opening a location in the municipality and connecting them with realtors or landowners that have property and/or buildings that meet their criteria.
- Attended an Investment Attraction/ Foreign Direct Investment training session held by Bruce County on September 11th.
- Meeting with other communities that have successfully used their Community Improvement Plan (CIP) programs as a tool to attract new investment and companies.

Development Supports

- Continue to advance actions from the Future Growth and Development workshops that were completed with municipal staff and Bruce County, including providing input on the new Bruce County Official Plan urban boundary adjustments.
- Initiated and attended pre-consultation meeting on new large business and development proposals.
- Reviewed and provided comments on the new draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law, specifically from a housing and business friendly lens.
- Continue to work with developers that are considering purchasing or pursuing projects in the Municipality of Kincardine.

Housing

- Continue to meet with community partners like Community Living, the Women's Shelter, Bruce County Housing staff, Russell Meadows and engaging with some developers to explore affordable or supportive housing development.
- Led work with Flourish consulting and community housing partners to create a report with new housing development conceptual plans and preliminary financial pro forma on municipal lands and private property for a potential new affordable and supportive housing project.
- Organized and hosted a Realtor Roundtable on September 19th with local realtors to share MOK updates and gather feedback on key housing and real estate related issues/opportunities.

Nuclear Sector

- Attended quarterly meetings with Bruce Power staff
- Continuing to arrange meetings with nuclear suppliers.

- Involved in the Bruce C project – attend Impact Assessment Agency and Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) meetings, workshops, reviewing documents and providing comments (ie. Initial Project Description)
- Hosted a successful and informative Canadian Association of Nuclear Host Communities (CANHC) meeting in Kincardine on September 6th.
- Attended the Nii Clean Energy Conference on September 30 and October 1st.

Community Improvement Plan

- Partnered with the County of Bruce and launched additional Spruce the Bruce grants to support downtown Kincardine & downtown Tiverton businesses
- As of October 9th, approximately 25 businesses have expressed interest in the business grants, 15 grant applications have been submitted and 6 have been approved. A Council report will be provided later this year with an update on the program.

Business supports

- Completed 22 business recognition certificates and Council photos opts in 2024.
- Provided secretary support for the monthly BIA Board meetings and attended the quarterly meetings of the Kincardine and District Chamber of Commerce.
- Attend numerous business networking events and gatherings

Business Expansion and Retention (BR+E)

- Working with Bruce County economic development staff on a new 'business survey' to collect and analyze data from the business community with an anticipated launch in early 2025.
- The confidential business surveys would help:
 - Identify the needs, concerns and opportunities of existing local businesses so that actions can be identified to support and resolve, where appropriate.
 - Understand and learn about the future plans of the local businesses with respect to future expansions, relocation, closures and retirements, and provide some assistance or resources where possible.
 - Gauge the general perception from the business community on the services and programs available in the region.
- An effective BR+E program can help strengthen municipal relationships with the local business community, help identify key opportunities and barriers and increase effective communications and referrals to relevant services.

Tourism:

Welcome Centre

The Welcome Centre continued summer hours, Monday to Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. up until the end of September. Fall hours have been set as Tuesday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with plans to attend some community events on weekends.

The Welcome Centre has had 1689 visitors this quarter. There was an average of 24 visitors per day. The busiest days were Mondays, most likely due to the traffic from the Monday

Market in the Park, followed by Saturdays as the second busiest. 23% of the visitors to the Welcome Centre were locals. Our largest demographic visiting this quarter was seniors, closely followed by adults without children. The most popular take-away items were the visitor guides, community calendars, trail maps and municipal maps.

The feedback on the re-location of the Welcome Centre from the highway to the Kincardine Centre for the Arts, 707 Queen Street has been overwhelmingly positive. Visitors have expressed their appreciation for the Centre being located downtown where it is accessible and visible.

The Welcome Centre shares the facility with the Victoria Gallery & Gift Shop, Kincardine Scottish Festival and the Kincardine Theatre Guild. This arrangement has provided opportunities for cross-promotion and collaboration.

Beach Wheelchair

The beach wheelchair which is loaned out through the Welcome Centre has been borrowed 21 times during this quarter.

Tourism Marketing

The marketing campaign designed by Letter M, a well-respected marketing and branding agency was implemented in May and continued through this quarter.

The objectives of the marketing campaign were to:

- Bring residents back downtown and encourage stronger affinity for local tourism assets.
- Encourage increased tourism including:
 - a. Longer term stays (from day to weekend; weekend to week).
 - b. Higher per-visitor spend in the community.
 - c. Strong shoulder season (spring, fall) participation.

The focus of the campaign has been on the lakeside, nature, downtown businesses and restaurants, markets, heritage, special events and welcoming people to the community.

The underlying theme of the campaign is that **“It’s Right Here!”**

- Several new products were developed including: blogs, videos, posters, community calendar and rack card templates etc.
- Our Youtube and google metrics have been performing beyond expectation. A gentleman was in from Michigan and mentioned that he planned his stay after seeing our online advertisements.
- Our new tourism website www.kincardinewelcomes.ca launched this spring. It has grown over the season to represent Kincardine Tourism and be a helpful tool for tourists.
- Two new videos are being created for future promotions: Cruise Nights and the Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band.

Social Media

- Age and gender demographics are on par with the campaign's target audience.
- Meta analytics have drastically improved their reach this season. META reach this quarter is 159.1K, compared to 67.1K this quarter last year. Kincardine Tourism now performs comparably to other tourism information centres in Ontario.
- 18% of visitors who entered the Welcome Centre during this quarter heard about us through social media.

Special Events

Special events bring a vibrancy and sense of connection to a community. They also draw visitors to the area and provide economic, recreation, and culture benefits to the community.

The Tourism office promotes community events to visitors and residents. Some of these events are hosted by the Municipality. Since the last quarter report staff worked with community volunteers to plan and implement the following municipal sponsored events this past quarter:

- Worked with the BIA to coordinate the Monday Markets in the Park.
- Worked with a planning group to implement the last Cruise Night on August 30.
- The Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band has been parading every Saturday starting June 22th and continued to August 31st with the grand finale performance by glow sticks.
- The Phantom Piper played every evening during July and August (except Saturdays).
- Hosted the Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band 33rd Annual Gathering of the Bands on Saturday, August 24th. The event had record food sales for the Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band, greatly assisting their fundraising efforts.
- Marine Heritage Day also took place on August 24th and included tours of the Kincardine Lighthouse, the Walker House Museum, kids' craft table and scavenger hunt, as well as beach safety information displays. Community partners appreciated being able to spread awareness about water safety and connect with the community. The event was attended by approximately 500 guests.
- Tourism teamed up with the Kincardine Agricultural Society to support their 173rd Kincardine Fall Fair on August, 31st to welcome in fall. The Agricultural Society greatly appreciated the support from the municipality.
- On October 6 staff attended the Tiverton Fall Fair with a pop-up table, including a supply of information on the Tiverton Heritage tours.

Pop-Ups

Throughout the quarter, pop-ups were held at various locations and events. This provided an opportunity to reach different tourist demographics than those visiting the Welcome Centre, highlight our community assets and further develop Kincardine as a destination. 2944 people visited the pop-up table this quarter.

Statistics

Work continues to monitor and evaluate visitor trends and statistics at the Welcome Centre, Special events and through [RT07](#) which is the Regional Tourism Organization. RT07 has

produced an interim report from January 1 to September 2024 on the Downtown Kincardine area (See attachment 2). This report was created using data in the Envision business intelligence platform by Environics Analytics. The data points were extracted using the MobileScapes tool. The purpose of this report is to provide consumer data that will inform decision making when developing actions for the Municipality of Kincardine. This report will assist in understanding the visitor profile for the geofenced area in Downtown Kincardine.

Based on data for the first 9 months of 2024, Kincardine downtown is on track to meet and perhaps exceed visitation numbers for this year. This data is helpful when planning for actions/budget for 2025. A couple of preliminary observations from RT07.

- July and August have seen the most visits and March had the lowest visitation.
- There is a big increase in the number of visits from Kitchener. Fewer visitors from Saugeen Shores and Toronto.
- Social media remains to be the channel of choice for people to receive their information; Facebook/Meta, Youtube, Whatsapp, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- The moderate decline in consumption of radio, television and newspaper continued in 2024.
- 70% of visits to downtown Kincardine are from Kincardine and Huron Kinloss residents.

Work to analyze the results will continue and shape promotions and actions for 2025.

Physician recruitment and retention

Recruitment work

We hosted 6 potential physicians to tour the community, clinic and hospital. We also hosted 7 clinic locums doctors recruited to work at the medical clinic, in 2024. These locums provided coverage for physicians to work in the hospital, ER shifts or vacation coverage.

Kincardine had a booth at the McMaster University Family Medicine Annual Recruitment Event in September in Kitchener. There were 20 first and second year resident physicians in attendance, many interested in information about opportunities in Kincardine.

Practice Ready Ontario (PRO) is a new Ministry of Health program to streamline the integration of Internationally Trained Physicians (ITPs) into high need communities in Ontario. One PRO candidate has accepted an offer to complete a 3-year return of service in Kincardine under a local physician's supervision.

Locum Houses

Having housing available for new or visiting physicians is crucial so they can settle in quickly and provide immediate care in the clinic, ER and hospital.

Two homes have been provided for locums, medical residents and their families through the generous support of The Society of United Professionals. The Society who purchased two homes in Kincardine in 2014 has leased them to the Municipality of Kincardine at no cost for 10 years. In 10 years over 300 physicians have stayed at the locum houses.

The Society of United Professionals has decided to sell the properties on Weick and McKendrick. They will continue to support the Physician Recruitment and Retention Program in Kincardine and are planning to purchase two condominiums after the sale of the two houses. Once the Society purchases the homes a new agreement will be required and proposed for Council consideration.

Hawthorne Community Clinic

The new full-time Lead Hand - Building Maintenance position has been extremely helpful in adding staff capacity for repairs and maintenance.

With three tenants in the clinic, it is nearly full. There will not be room for 16 physician offices in the clinic or room for more in the future as the number of physicians grows to accommodate community growth.

Regional recruitment

Grey Bruce Primary Care Recruitment Collaborative was created in June 2024 after work the Grey Bruce Owen Sound Recruitment task force ceased operations. The October quarterly meeting included representation from the Grey Bruce Ontario Health Team (GB-OHT), Bruce Power, CAO of Bruce County, CAO of Grey County, Ontario Health Regional Advisor and community primary care recruitment representatives. The focus was on creating terms of reference, group composition, regional recruitment website, regional support for accommodation listings and ways to leverage the areas collaboration to recruit physicians to our areas.

SOPRA Southern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance: the Municipality joined this regional group in 2023 and that includes 17 community physician recruiters working together to attract Canadians studying abroad and doctors from the UK, US, Ireland and Australia. representing their individual areas but working together to leverage international reach. There has been SOPRA representation and leads gathered at 10 different international career fairs in 2024, each member commits to at least two fairs per year and so far over 800 physician candidates collected.

This alliance has now been expanded to an Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance OPRA, with alliances in Southern, Eastern, Central, Northwestern and Northeastern Ontario.

ER Department Support Program

The ER program has allowed for the use of a \$500/shift stipend to be paid to locums or physicians completing third year of residency to work shifts in the Kincardine ER. Bruce power committed \$25,000 a year for 3 years to this program in April.

This past summer was the hardest yet to fill ER shifts and keep it running.

Healthcare Partnership Program

The Kincardine Saugeen Shores Healthcare Partnership Three Year Pilot Program continues to meet and work on physician recruitment.

Current work is focused on recruitment, marketing and promotion. A new video featuring two local Kincardine physicians, is being developed to showcase their professional work and the community.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access

Awareness: Build awareness and understanding to address inclusion, diversity, equity and access

- Promoted dates of significance to acknowledge, create awareness and celebrate the diversity of our community through social media and other communication methods. Target audience is both the public and staff.
- Meetings and planning work have been taking place with community partners for the 2nd annual [Afro Caribbean Awards for youth](#) which will be held on October 26, 2024.
- Developed resource material and displays for public awareness on the topics [Emancipation Day](#) and the [Hindu Culture Open House](#).
- Raised the Black Liberation flag for the first two weeks of [Emancipation month](#) in August.
- Developed a prompt for discussion document based on [immigration and ethnocultural statistics](#) which was used during the Welcoming Event on September 14th 2024.
- Work to [communicate](#) Council's decision regarding the Second monument continued this quarter with the final communication taking place after the September 11, 2024 decision to decommission the monument.

Service: Facilitate social inclusion, access and participation in programs, services and the built environment

- Participated in the Grey-Bruce Immigration Partnership.
- Completed the [welcome package](#) for Immigrants and refugees moving to the Municipality.
- Partnered with the County of Bruce and other community providers to host the 2024 [Welcome Event on September 17](#), during Welcoming Week. Welcoming Week is celebrated in communities to encourage connection and support relationships with newcomers. Newcomer to Canada, Grey, Bruce, or the Municipality of Kincardine were invited to learn about services in the community and to meet new people.

Reconciliation: Work towards actions to address truth, healing and reconciliation.

- Developed a resource table for the Davidson Centre, MAC, Welcome Centre for the public to pick up resource material, pins and stickers for the National Day for Reconciliation – Orange Shirt Day.
- Hosted a training session (learning circles) on the Residential School Impacts for Orange Shirt Day - September 30, 2024 with Elder Shirley Johns.
- Created and promoted a [resource](#) for continued learning on the impacts of the residential school system.
- Raised the [Survivor flag](#) at the Kincardine Public Library and the Tiverton Fire Hall.

Volunteers

- Volunteers contributed greatly to the success of tourism through many hours spent at the Welcome Centre and signature events.
- This quarter volunteers worked 77 hours at the Welcome Centre and 848 hours of volunteer time at special events.
- The support of our volunteer network has been a great asset to Tourism. We have a significant population of student volunteers and appreciate their community engagement efforts.
- There are 82 registered volunteers within tourism this quarter. Of that, 71 % were previously volunteering through Cruise Night and Gathering of the Bands, 17% were acquired through staff connections, and 12% reached out through the municipal website.
- Over 30 volunteers also supported the IDEA work this quarter by helping to plan for and implement the Hindu Culture Open House, the Welcoming event and the Afro Caribbean Awards.
- Staff from across the organization hosted a volunteer recognition event on September 19, 2024.

Murals, Banners, Speakers and Seasonal Lights

- Work to renew the Remembrance Day banners has been initiated in partnership with the Legion.
- Work to refresh the second mural on Harbour Street was completed in October 2024.
- A wifi speaker system was installed in downtown Kincardine.
- An RFP for seasonal lights was created and a vendor secured this quarter.
- Trimming and clean-up of the 3 Kincardine and 2 Tiverton hwy signs was completed this quarter. Another clean-up is being planned for November.

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