

Quarterly Update Report

Title: Strategic Initiatives Department Quarter Update 1 - 2025

Report Number: Strategic Initiatives Quarterly Report-2025-01

Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025

Tourism

The new Tourism Coordinator began work on January 13th, 2025.

Welcome Centre

Work is underway to open the Welcome Centre at the Kincardine Centre for the Arts on Friday, May 16th. The Welcome Centre will be open Monday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and from 12 – 3 p.m. on Sundays. Phone calls to the Welcome Centre are answered year-round.

Tourism Marketing

The marketing campaign designed by the Letter M was very well received in 2024 and will continue to be used throughout 2025 along with the website www.kincardinewelcomes.ca.

- The Kincardine Independent will produce the 2025 Visitors Guide with several ads.
- Blogs, videos, posters, community calendar and rack card are in development.
- Social media ads are being developed.
- Communications staff are assisting in development of two new videos have been created for future promotions: Cruise Nights and the Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band.
- A billboard by Pearson Airport on the 401 will feature the kincardine lighthouse and pier the week of May 12 to May 18, right before the long weekend (Ad #1).
- An ad is being placed in the Canada Travel - May 2025 - Globe & Mail (Spring + Summer Edition) (Ad #2).

Special Events

Tourism promotes community events, which includes events hosted by the Municipality.

Staff have been working with community volunteers to plan and implement the following municipal sponsored events:

- Movie Night in Victoria Park is being planned for Saturday, June 7th, 2025 in partnership with the Bruce County Public Library and Kincardine Pride.
- Cruise Nights are being planned for Friday June 27th, 2025, Friday, August 1st, 2025 and Friday, August 29th 2025 in Lakeside Downtown Kincardine.
- Canada Day Kick-off is being planned for Saturday, June 28th 2025 in Tiverton.

- Canada Day Weekend Fireworks will be on Sunday, June 29th 2025, with a rain date of Monday, June 30th, 2025.
- The Canada Day Parade will be held on Tuesday, July 1st, 2025 with celebrations to follow at MacPherson Park.
- The Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band is booked to parade every Saturday starting June 21st and will continue to August 31st.
- Phantom Piper playing every evening during July and August (except for Saturdays).
- The Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band 34th Annual Gathering of the Bands is being planned alongside volunteers to take place on Saturday, August 23rd.
- To recognize the work of special event organizers, an event was held on Saturday, March 22nd, 2025 - Kincardine Kudos. The agenda included municipal updates, marketing tips and tricks, tourism data and lessons learned from event organizers.

Communications

We continued our organization-wide support for communications development in the first quarter with requests for support totaling 196:

- January 1st to 31st – 61
- February 1st to 28th – 56
- March 1st to 31st – 79

These numbers do not necessarily reflect the complexity of all projects currently in process, as some larger initiatives have many components and are longer term.

Winter weather impacts

These requests do not reflect the volume of effort that went into weather-related communications, including closures, cancellations, and cautions which add multi-faceted messaging projects:

- January - 48 projects
- February - 43 project
- March – 6 projects

These weather-related communications often require messaging outside of standard office hours, as well as increased monitoring and responsiveness to our online channels. These events offer us a significant opportunity to engage and build confidence with our audiences.

Among some of our most successful posts were our operations updates that allowed us to ask for the cooperation of the community while illustrating what our crews were facing in the field. These posts often included simple answers to frequently asked questions, while also helping to explain processes and responsibilities.

Visitor's Guide

The approach to this year's Visitor's Guide includes municipal communications in addition to the tourism efforts. This provides a 'municipal guide' functionality to the publication, which is published by the Kincardine Independent. We have crafted and provided the publication with print-ready pieces from a municipal perspective

Many Channels

We continue to explore a variety of ways to deliver messaging to our audiences. The monthly e-newsletter is distributed at the end of a month, while the full page in the Kincardine Independent hits around the middle. Efforts to do mailings for specific projects are underway, while we are also testing radio and digital advertising options.

The development of a “Let’s Connect” card update helping people understand just how many ways they can stay in contact with the Municipality is also now available, complete with a magnet for quick details.

Physician Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment work

Since 2021, the physician recruitment and retention program has recruited and signed on 6 physicians, retained 9 physicians, 1 physician left the community, and work to attract 4 more additionally needed physicians continues.

The 2023 application to the Practice Ready Ontario program was successful in getting a candidate and this quarter a physician started practicing medicine and will be starting family practice at the Hawthorne Community Clinic, taking on new patients Spring 2025.

The Municipality of Kincardine had a job fair booth at the annual Rural Ontario Medical Program ROMP in February in Collingwood.

Regional Recruitment

The Grey Bruce Primary Care Recruitment, Retention, and Wellness Collaborative (GBPCRRWC) is working to engage regional stakeholders to actively work together to advance regional primary care recruitment, retention, and wellness initiatives.

SOPRA Southern Ontario Physician Recruitment Alliance: the Municipality joined this regional group in 2023 and includes 17 community physician recruiters working together to attract Canadians studying abroad and doctors from the UK, US, Ireland and Australia.

Healthcare Partnership Program

The Kincardine Saugeen Shores Healthcare Partnership Three Year Pilot Program continues to meet and work on physician recruitment. Focus on keeping the ER open, primary care recruitment and long-term planning for growth including the possible Bruce C build.

Education Programs

There have been 2 visiting physicians completing their rural residency rotation in Kincardine so far this year. Each resident physician completes two months of primary care, hospital inpatient care and emergency room work. Education is a successful recruitment strategy.

Economic Development

The new Community Economic Development Coordinator began work on February 10, 2025.

Development Facilitation & Investment Attraction

- Working with developers evaluating investment opportunities within the Municipality of Kincardine, providing data and municipal support to facilitate project decisions.
- Served as the lead point of contact for several companies planning to establish operations in Kincardine, with new business openings projected for 2025.

Business Openings & Milestone

- Attended and supported two business grand openings.
- Celebrated the five-year anniversary of an established local business.

Downtown Business Attraction

- Identified and promoted available commercial spaces to potential investors and business owners.
- Actively engaged in targeted outreach to attract new businesses to the Municipality of Kincardine's downtown core.

Patio Policy Implementation & Review

- Assisted businesses with the patio application process to ensure a seamless transition under revised regulations.
- Organizing two business forums focused on presenting Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) survey findings (May 15 & October TBD)

Facilitating discussions on key business topics such as tariff impacts, economic forecasting, and municipal business support initiatives.

Funding & Grant Support

- Continuously researching and disseminating relevant funding and grant opportunities to businesses through direct outreach and the municipal newsletter.
- Supporting the final distribution of Spruce the Bruce grants for 2024, with a comprehensive program overview to be presented to Council in early 2025.

BR+E Survey Promotion & Business Support

- Actively promoting the BR+E survey across all Municipality of Kincardine channels.
- Providing one-on-one support for businesses completing the survey.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access

- Displays for Black History month in February were featured at the Davidson Centre and the Municipal Administrative Centre.
- In partnership with community partners and Bruce Power, planning for the Afro Caribbean Youth Awards.
- Planning for the 20th Multicultural Festival is underway for festivities on May 13, 2025.
- Plans are underway to host an exhibit from the Canadian Language Museum called: "*Beyond Words: Dictionaries and Indigenous Languages.*"
- Planning is also underway to host a day that acknowledges our commitment to reconciliation. The day will take place on Saturday, June 14th.
- A learning circle is planned for June 17th for municipal staff and council to discuss how to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous nations.

Housing Action Plan

- Continue to meet to advance Council's motion on the 705 Prince's site. A County planner is working on towards advancement to the expression of interest.
- Worked with a developer who is planning to build a Tiny Home village in Kincardine.

Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)

Planning is under way to investigate the implementation of a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) and Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) licensing.

Financial forecast: A consultant has been secured to conduct a forecast of revenues generated by the collection of the MAT for both commercial and short-term accommodation.

Community engagement: Will take place throughout the process to understand the potential impacts, both positive and negative, before implementing a MAT and STA licensing.

Serve Inform Engage Framework

Council has directed staff to develop a communications policy by the second quarter of 2025. While developing this policy, it was quickly realized that besides communications we needed to focus on components of customer service and public engagement as the three areas are intrinsically linked to communications. This framework which includes the Policy, Standards and Actions for each component will come to Council in Q2 2025.

Miscellaneous

Seasonal decorations

- The seasonal lights for downtown Kincardine light poles were installed in December 2024. Due to issues the vendor is developing a new design and working with staff to replace all the fixtures for 2025.
- A vendor has been secured to do the trim work and clean up of the 3 Kincardine and 2 Tiverton highway signs which will be completed in May 2025.

AI

- Drafted a policy on AI use at the Municipality of Kincardine.

Tourism and Tariffs and Blue Box Changes

- Hosted a business forum to provide information on Blue Box Changes and on the topic of Tourism and the US Tariff impacts.

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