

BRUCE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Annual Report 2022



BRUCE  
county



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# Introduction

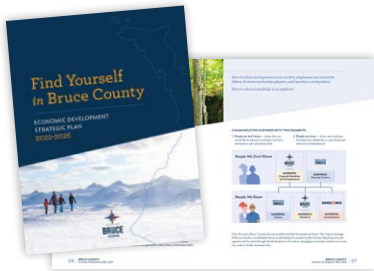
The Bruce County Economic Development Annual Report 2022 provides a yearly update on the economic development programs and initiatives undertaken towards economic growth and prosperity across Bruce County.

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**B**ruce County Economic Development aims to influence and support business growth, foster community improvement, sustainably develop tourism, and secure a reliable and skilled workforce now and into the future.

As the Bruce County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026 entered its first year in 2022, the team worked with community and regional partners and kept collaboration as a principal consideration of every project and initiative. The enhanced Macro Approach was built to reflect a commitment to forging a collective path forward in collaboration and meaningful partnership. The report shows the overall illustration of the programs and initiatives undertaken with municipalities and community partners towards business development, community development, and workforce development.

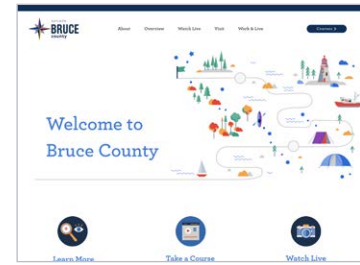
# Year at a Glance



The **Bruce County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026** was adopted and endorsed by Council and will guide economic development initiatives for the next 5 years.



Bruce County worked to progress actions outlined in the **Workforce Development and Attraction Strategy** to address the region's critical labour force shortage.



The **Newcomer Portal** was launched in partnership with the Newcomer Centre of Peel to create awareness about the communities of Bruce County and Jobs in Bruce to newcomer job seekers.



Under the **Community Grant program**, Bruce County provided 29 grants totaling \$48,500 to organizations or groups focused on growing and supporting agriculture in the area.



Bruce County supported various **multicultural events** across the County with the goal of making Bruce communities welcoming and inclusive for all.



Bruce County, in partnership with Grey County, continued to work on the actions outlined in the **Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy**, a roadmap to build welcoming and inclusive communities in Grey Bruce and improve the integration of newcomers.



The **Business to Bruce program** continued to support the local entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing business advice, training, mentorship, and grant opportunities to local entrepreneurs.



The **Spruce the Bruce program** increased its impact by introducing new grants and expanding its eligibility to include businesses outside of the downtown core, while still providing financial support for businesses, municipalities, and community partners to improve their properties and infrastructure, ultimately building vibrant and attractive communities.



Bruce County continued to support innovation around tourism through the **Tourism Innovation Lab**.



**Marketing initiatives** continued to market Bruce County as a place to visit, live, invest, and start or move a business here.



Kincardine resident Michael Grant was one of several people featured in the *You Are Bruce* campaign. ↗



## Mission

To provide workforce, community, and business development services to ensure that the County's attraction value remains high, that it is positioned towards growth, and that opportunities exist for visitors, residents, and businesses.

## Values



### Inspire

To create a culture of innovation and opportunities



### Attract

To connect to a broad range of people who are potential prospects



### Support

To collaborate and encourage success for all

## Long-Term Goals

### 1. Growth of Tax Base / Tax Assessment

Increase the tax base by promoting Bruce County as a place to live and attract entrepreneurs to the area

### 2. Growth of Population Base

Increase the population base by attracting visitors and entrepreneurs to the area and providing business opportunities

### 3. Diversify the Economic Base

Foster, position, and promote entrepreneurial opportunities in Bruce County through cluster development around Bruce County's key sectors: tourism, energy, and agriculture

### 4. Business Retention and Expansion

Support and foster local opportunities, efforts, and advancement by attracting new entrepreneurs and supporting business expansions



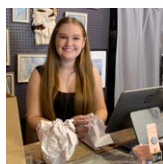
# Audiences

The County supports motivating people to visit, live, invest, and start or move a business here.



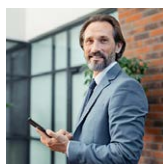
## VISITORS

Bruce County inspires curiosity, nurtures exploration, and celebrates discovery. Visitors have an emotional bond with Bruce County that has the potential to last a lifetime.



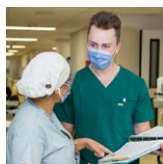
## ENTREPRENEURS

Bruce County entrepreneurs see tried and true as an invitation to try something new. Their tinkering leads to invention, their art becomes industry, and their sweat becomes equity. In Bruce County, energy, nature, and innovation all combine to create fertile ground to make what is dreamed possible.



## INVESTORS

Bruce County is ripe with opportunities for those looking to invest. The Bruce County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026 drives towards attracting new investment and pushes investors to become Bruce County Explorers.



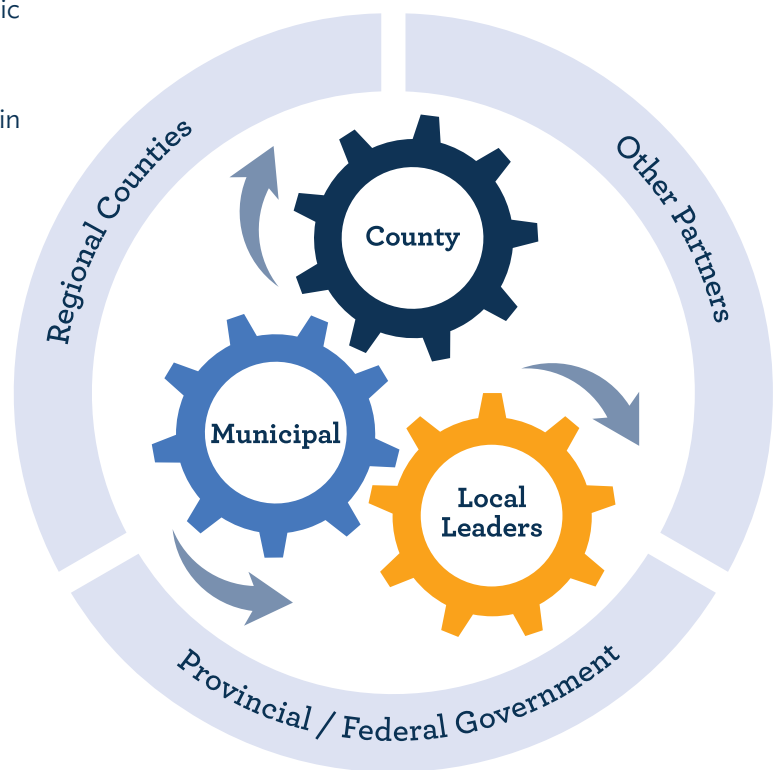
## RESIDENTS

Bruce County residents are the dreamers who take the roads less travelled and encourage their children to look under rocks, curious about what the path ahead looks like. The Bruce County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026 welcomes new residents who want to explore farm life in the morning, beach life in the afternoon, and bright, starry skies all night long; who want to turn alternatives into sustainable choices; and who collaborate with their neighbours to create welcoming, thriving communities.

# The Macro Approach

The Bruce County Economic Development team have been actively involved in implementing the Macro Approach outlined in the Bruce County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026:

- 2022 saw the first in-person Joint Regional Working Group of economic development professionals.
- Local municipal staff were included in local programming and provided expert advice and unique viewpoints to further collaborate on solutions.
- The Economic Development team met with representatives from eight different Federal and Provincial Ministries to advocate and develop relationships intended to grow Bruce County's economy.
- The Economic Development team undertook a process to be better connected with all regional Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Areas.





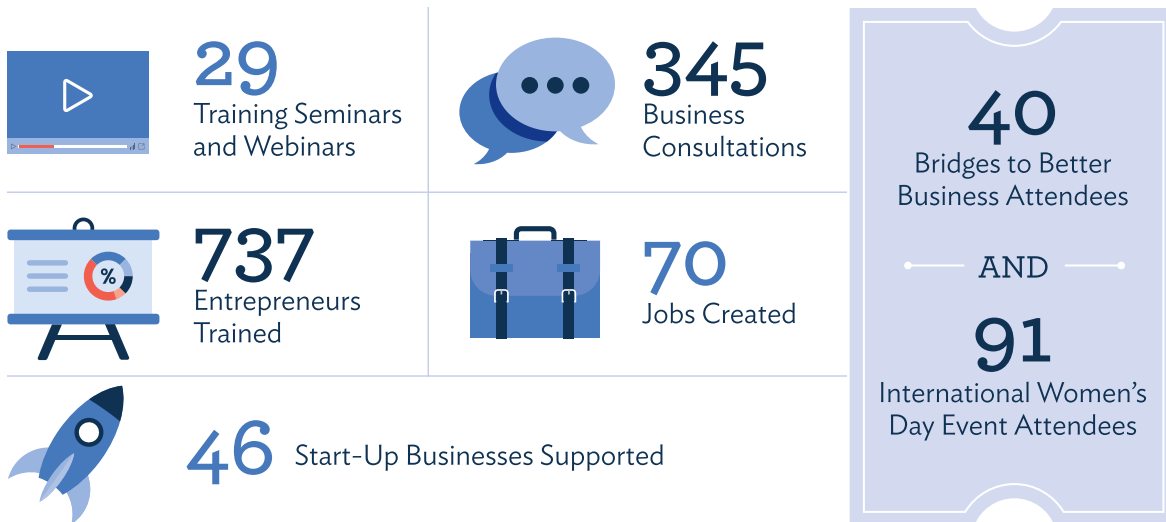
# Successes

## Business Development

Through Business to Bruce (Small Business Enterprise Centre Program), Bruce County supports entrepreneurs and existing businesses by providing grants, training, and support programs to foster growth.

### Highlights

The **Small Business Enterprise Centre Program**, in partnership with the **Province of Ontario**, provided:





The fourth round of the Tourism Innovation Lab Spark Program was held, and the first time it was provided County-wide.

Three deserving tourism operators were awarded with a \$3,000 grant and mentorship:



- **Amy Caperchione, iSUP Saugeen - Saugeen Shores**  
Wellness events, water safety education, and mobile surf shop services
- **Ian Shawn Nadjiwon, Nanabush Apiaries - Neyaashiinigiing**  
Anishnawbemowin tours of the Apiary and Honey Bee Forage Area
- **Wendy Chen - Warton**  
Local Bruce County tours for the Chinese community

## SummerCompany

The Summer Company Program, in partnership with the Province of Ontario, awarded three entrepreneurs with a \$3,000 grant each.



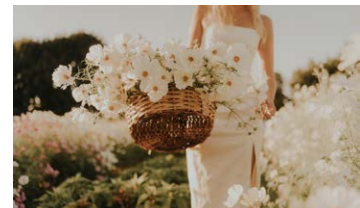
L-R: **Abhinav Shankar** - Websites by Abhi (Port Elgin), **Thomas Mackay** - Property Maintenance (Warton), **Lauren White** - Popcycle (Point Clark), **Christina Tennyson** - Bruce County Business Development Coordinator

## StarterCompany PLUS

The Starter Company Plus Program, in partnership with the Province of Ontario, provided four start-up businesses with a \$5,000 grant each, along with mentorship and training.



**Dane Buttenaar**  
The Beach Motel, Southampton



**Jeanette Rimmer**  
Flower Child Organic Blooms, Cargill



**Rachael Hardy**  
055 Custom Apparel Co., Cargill



**Gemma Mendez-Smith**  
Live by Design Immigration Services, Paisley

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROGRAM

The development of a Bruce County Business Retention and Expansion Program began in Q4, with the intent to launch in Q1 of 2023. The team continued to be out in the County meeting with businesses, taking this opportunity to take photos and promote the exciting work being done in Bruce. These site visits and tours of communities gave an opportunity to provide resources to local businesses and educate them on Business to Bruce services.

Around data collection for tourism, 2022 saw a pause in the development of the *Economic Impact of Tourism Report* as staff worked with local municipalities to develop a more comprehensive approach to collecting data related to tourism.

In addition to using the upcoming Business Retention and Expansion Program, research around new methods to conduct and report on tourism statistics, including visitor surveys, business surveys, and partner data was undertaken. A new approach will replace the previous *Economic Impact of Tourism Report* and is slated to launch in Q1 2023.

## NEW WEBSITE

To attract business investment, the Bruce County Economic Development team undertook its first-ever attraction website — *Invest in Bruce*. The website will act as an information resource and marketing tool to attract and sell Bruce County’s communities as a destination for new business and new investment. The website is planned to launch in early 2023.



In efforts to increase the number of new or expanding businesses and increase awareness of and uptake of business consultation services, Bruce County Economic Development uses Facebook as a tool to engage with the local business community and residents, share resources and promote events and programming.

In 2022, the Bruce County Economic Development Facebook page had:



3,455  
Followers



107,645  
Engagements



318  
Posts

# Workforce Development

A strong and committed workforce supports the growth of communities and builds a foundation for continued prosperity. Long-term economic success relies on the strength of businesses to attract, retain, and build a skilled workforce.

## Highlights

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION STRATEGY

To execute the actions outlined in the strategy, Bruce County launched a first-ever digital marketing campaign to attract new residents and increase awareness of Bruce County as a place to live. From April to September, the campaign ran on Facebook, Google, YouTube, and Bell. It promoted the benefits of living and/or working in Bruce County, enticing those working in and around the GTA to relocate.

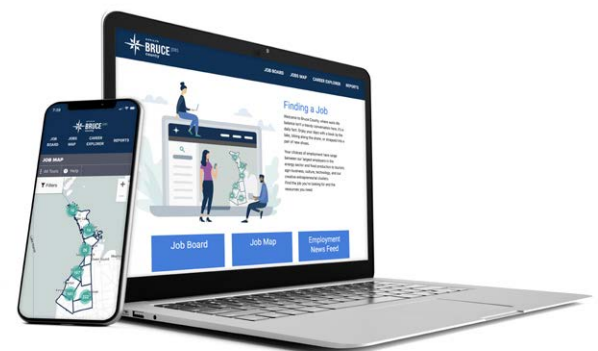
The campaign targeted core audiences and encouraged visits to campaign landing pages, including JobsInBruce.ca. Residents who recently moved to the area were featured in campaign marketing collateral.

*The campaign results: 13.8 million impressions and 45,000 clicks.*

These top-level metrics indicate awareness was achieved. The team continued to work with local school boards and educational institutions to focus on the need for skills-building, development, and apprenticeship opportunities. A series of webinars were put forward for businesses to hire co-op students as potential employees.

### JOBS IN BRUCE CAMPAIGN

An extensive marketing effort was made to market the Jobs in Bruce website and through developed partnerships with RTO7 in the first quarter of the year and the continuation of efforts through the remainder of the year, January through to November saw **44,985 users to the website** for an average of 4,089 per month. This is a substantial increase in users to the website with only 9,329 users in 2021.





## GREY BRUCE LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (GBLIP)

### Employer Roundtable

An employer roundtable titled *Contemporary Challenges in Hiring and Retaining Immigrants* was organized in Grey Bruce. The participants discussed the challenges, ideas, and best practices of successfully recruiting and integrating immigrants into the local workforce and the resources they need from GBLIP to help them move forward.

### The Experiences of Discrimination in Grey Bruce

A qualitative study has begun and will contribute to the understanding of the current situation of various newcomer groups in both Counties with issues related to experiencing discrimination and how that has affected them.

### Train the Trainer Program

The Phase 1 of Train the Trainer Program wrapped up in July. Between August, September, and October, the Local 11 participants developed workshop facilitation experience and skills, and trained 21 individuals. The participants gained an understanding of crucial, fundamental concepts relating to eliminating discrimination and fostering inclusion, such as brave space, micro-aggressions, and unconscious bias.



### Hindu Culture Open House

The Hindu Culture Open House in Kincardine had 400 people in attendance and was a great success. This was organized by the Belong sub-committee of GBLIP.



# Community Development

Bruce County is working towards building vibrant, welcoming, and sustainable communities through various community development programs and tourism initiatives. People are looking for a good quality of life experience and an attractive place to build a business — the Spruce the Bruce Program and the Community Development Strategy is how Bruce County will help make it happen.

## Highlights

### REWARDING PARTNERSHIPS

The work alongside the Sustainable Tourism Advisory Group (STAG) in Northern Bruce Peninsula continued, which helped address and offer **solutions to sustainable tourism** in the Peninsula region.

Moreover, numerous other collaborative partnerships within the County departments were supported:

- Transportation and Environmental Services and Economic Development worked together for Infrastructure Canada's Rural Transit Solutions Fund **grant for Bruce County's Clean Energy Public Transit project.**
- Through the RTO7 Tourism Relief Fund, Corporate Services and Economic Development provided the necessary funds to **install several level 2 chargers** across Bruce County, including Southampton and Kincardine.
- Human Services and Planning worked in collaboration to create the **Affordable Housing Development Toolkit.**





Spruce the Bruce grant recipient  
Joy Source for Sports in Walkerton.

## UPDATES TO SPRUCE THE BRUCE PROGRAM

As a result of the expansion of the Spruce the Bruce (STB) program, adopted by Council in 2022, a **new Community Development Guide was created** to help support the improvements. The guide outlines the necessary steps for municipalities to access the STB grants, as well as the supports available to assist with their local community and economic development action plans. This adjusted the approach to the community toolkits and grant approvals, and streamlined processes, making the team more efficient in executing STB.

The program was **expanded to offer 13 different types of grants**, and allow funding access to eligible businesses and properties located outside the downtown cores where local Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) permitted. Some of the new grants available offer support for regional issues such as housing, transportation, and accessibility, as well as industries such as agriculture and tourism.

Local CIPs require updates, including expanding their Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs) to access the new grants. The Municipality of Brockton was the first municipality to activate a new CIP. While the STB program was expanded geographically, it continued to support traditional improvements to downtown commercial businesses and properties through façade and patio grants, as well as community organizations through streetscape and community signage grants.

*The program provided 42 grants valued at \$86,379, 14 to local businesses, municipalities, and community partners, making positive improvements to our downtowns and communities.*



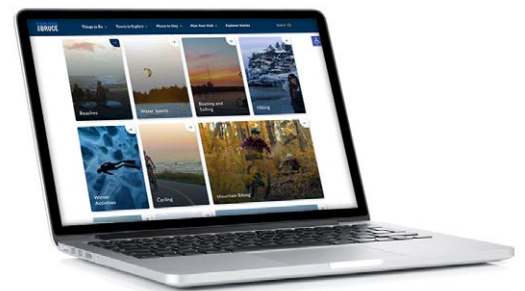
# Marketing and Communications

Marketing and communications plays a vital role in motivating people to visit, live, invest, or grow a business in Bruce County. The objectives are achieved by executing marketing efforts around the narrative of Bruce County as a place to “Be an Explorer.”

## Highlights

### ENHANCED TOURISM WEBSITE

A new and improved tourism website—ExploreTheBruce.com—was launched to optimize user experience and increase exposure of local tourism operators and their offerings. In 2022, the website had a total of 715,046 pageviews, an average of two pages per session, and an average bounce rate of 76.21%.



### DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS



For the third year, a digital advertising campaign titled *Book and Look* was implemented in partnership with RTO7. From April to November, the campaign ran on Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, and Yahoo/Verizon. The goal of this campaign was to encourage travel etiquette on the Peninsula through booking parking spaces in advance at popular destinations, such as

the Grotto, Halfway Log Dump and Lions Head Lookout. The campaign also promoted tourism activities in the Interior and Lakeshore regions, building awareness on sustainable tourism across the County as a whole.



The *Fall Activities* digital marketing campaign was implemented from September to November in partnership with RTO7.

The goal of this campaign was to promote Bruce County as a fall destination for visitors, encouraging overnight stays and spending throughout the County.



*Both the **Book and Look** and **Fall Activities** campaigns resulted in 4,824,096 impressions, 83,325 clicks, and a 1.73% click-through rate.*



## ADDITIONAL MARKETING

The Spruce the Bruce program was promoted through a variety of marketing channels, utilizing and showcasing projects of past grant recipients, as well as celebrating the successes of the 2022 grant recipients.

Social media marketing continued on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Social media creates a community of Bruce County travelers who share their experiences and help each other plan trips. Explore the Bruce social media content was strategically executed to build awareness and provided trip

inspiration and assisted with trip planning. In 2022, 33,381 people followed Explore the Bruce on Facebook, 14,023 followed on Instagram, and 12,500 followed on Twitter.

## WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Across all websites managed and promoted by Economic Development — including BruceCounty.on.ca, ExploreTheBruce.com, BusinessToBruce.com and JobsInBruce.ca — there were 1,049,686 pageviews in 2022.

Website	Pageviews	Average Pages Per Session
JobsInBruce.ca	161,980	3
BusinessToBruce.com	13,560	4
ExploreTheBruce.com	715,046	2
BruceCounty.on.ca (including visitors, business, and living subpages)	159,100	N/A

## Regional Support Economic Development Pilot

2022 was the start of a new approach to providing economic development support to local municipalities across Bruce County. The inclusion of a temporary position has resulted in assistance for local initiatives being provided to four different municipalities. It is expected that this work will continue into 2023 with additional municipalities seeing benefit from this program.

## Lead Generation and Investment Attraction

The team found, vetted, and distributed five different investment leads to municipal staff. These leads included industrial, residential, and general commercial development opportunities.



Ribbon cutting ceremony of Three Sheets Brewing: The Tap Room in June.

# Awards

## MIPIM Award

Through the Economic Developers Association of Canada, Bruce County won a MIPIM award. MIPIM is the world's leading real estate market event including an exhibition, conference and networking event. The County was successful in winning the award, beating out applications from across Canada. The prize for winning this award is the opportunity to attend the annual MIPIM event in 2023.

In 2022, over 2,400 global companies attended the event with over 26,000 participants from around the world with the goal of finding new investment opportunities. The 2023 MIPIM event will occur from March 14 to 17 in Cannes, France.

### **The joint award from the Economic Developers Association of Canada and MIPIM includes:**

- A booth
- Four special delegate registrations
- Access to the database of investors before the event
- On-site media relations
- Speaker time slot to highlight opportunities in Bruce County
- An article in the MIPIM news section
- Networking opportunities

This package is worth approximately \$15,000.

Winning this award raises the profile of Bruce County for business attraction across Ontario, Canada, and internationally. The goal of attending a MIPIM conference is to promote the development and investment opportunities that are available across Bruce County, ultimately developing a list of leads for economic development staff from across the region to nurture.



## Hermes Creative Awards

Bruce County has won three prestigious Hermes Creative Awards 2022 for the outstanding work in creative economic development video work and marketing campaigns.

### **Platinum Award for 'Be An Explorer in Bruce County' Video Campaign**

This video targets three audiences: visitors, entrepreneurs, and residents showcasing Bruce County as a great place to live, work, and play, promoting the benefits of visiting, living, and exploring business opportunities in Bruce County.

### **Gold Award for 'Bruce County Plan the Bruce' Digital Ad Campaign**

This marketing and engagement campaign encouraged participation in the land-use planning project Plan the Bruce, a project to inform the new Official Plan — the roadmap for growth and development in the next 25 years.

### **Gold Award for 'Bruce County Live Here: Millennial Relocator' Digital Ad Campaign**

This marketing campaign focused on attracting millennials to Bruce County to consider relocation.

# Looking Into 2023

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROGRAM LAUNCH

The Bruce County Business Retention and Expansion Program (including sector-specific) will be launched. Data will be collected on an ongoing and continuous basis. The data and results will be used to inform Bruce County's decision-making, including what types of supports, resources, and guidance businesses and entrepreneurs require.

## STRATEGY FORMULATION

The team will be working towards formulating the following strategies:

- Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) Strategy
- Tourism Destination Plan
- Agriculture, Tourism and Energy sector specific strategies
- Investment Attraction Strategy

## CONTINUED BUSINESS SUPPORTS

- New supports and training opportunities will be provided to our local municipal partners with topics including investment attraction, tourism roles and responsibilities, effective use of CIPs and more.
- Support existing businesses across the County in all sectors through the Small Business Enterprise Centre Program in partnership with the Province of Ontario via Business to Bruce.

## CONTINUED COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

- Onboarding new communities into the Spruce the Bruce program is planned in partnership between the municipalities and the Bruce County Economic Development team. Community brands and façade guidelines will be developed for each community and act as part of the review and approval process for the Spruce the Bruce program.
- Implement year three of the partnership with Grey County and complete the activities outlined in the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership.
- Continue to work on the actions outlined in the Workforce Development and Attraction Strategy.

## CONTINUED MARKETING EFFORTS

- The Explore the Bruce website will continue to be built upon, adding new Explorer Stories to highlight the best of Bruce and engaging users through user-generated content (UGC).
- The *Dare to Do Winter* digital advertising campaign in partnership with RTO7 promoting Bruce County as a winter destination for visitors, encouraging overnight stays and spending, begins in early 2023.
- Continue to promote the County as a place to live, attracting newcomers, immigrants and relocators, with the intention of finding new workforce.



# Conclusion

2023 is a year of continued change in the economic development space. Adaptation is key to ensure that supports exist to help our businesses navigate the changing economy, that our communities are ready for investment, and that Bruce County is viewed as a progressive economic region in Ontario.

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Collaboration through the Macro Approach is leading every economic development initiative, setting the foundation to attract visitors, residents, investors, and entrepreneurs to Bruce County. Economic success requires continuous planning, effort, dedication, and a coordinated approach from several partners. The Bruce County Economic Development team is looking forward to 2023 with a vision to support communities with downtown revitalization and continuing to work on priorities outlined in the strategic plan. Bruce County Economic Development will attract, retain and assist business in expanding through resources, business guidance, training, and mentorship.

As the County continues to embark on the journey towards meeting the goals of the Bruce County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026, the Bruce County Economic Development team looks forward to building upon the progress made and achieving economic growth and prosperity now and in the future.



*Be an explorer.*