



CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM NEWSLETTER

April 2024



E.D.'S CORNER: A Word From Chuck Thibeault

Good Day,

I think the saying is, "If you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life". I am fortunate enough to be doing just that. This month has been full of moments of pure joy for me. From the incredible conversations that took place at the symposium to councillor reactions when I shared municipal tourism data, discussing opportunities for visitor growth at community tourism planning meetings to speaking at the Resorts of Ontario conference dinner at Hockley Valley Resort, I have been surrounded by your passion for the industry and resolve to build on your success. Last night was like the cherry on top.

CCT and the towns of Georgina and East Gwillimbury organized a networking event at the brand-new Multi-Use Recreation Complex (MURC) in Georgina. Close to 30 stakeholders from the area attended. The purpose of... [Read more.](#)

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MEMBER NEED TO KNOW...

RECAP: 2024 Tourism Symposium

Our 2024 Tourism Symposium took place on April 9 and what a day it was! With nearly 180 of our stakeholders present, the energy in the room was magnificent, the chatter during the breaks divine, and the presentations insightful. The day centred around themes of technology, workforce development, and collaboration, and ended with a networking happy hour event, courtesy of Destination Markham - thank you again! For those that missed it, head on over to our [website](#) for a few of the presentation decks, links and resources. And if you haven't already, please [let us know how we did](#).



New CCT Product Alert: AVTR¹

For those that didn't attend our symposium, you missed the unveiling of our new augmented reality app-based technology, [AVTR¹](#). Designed with your visitor experiences in mind, this technology will be a game-changer for visitor engagement and content delivery. Using QR codes, your very own personal avatar comes to life to augment any visitor experience from tours, trails, presentations, demos, and so much more. Want to see it in action? Visit our [website](#), download the AVTR¹ app, then print off our [sample cards](#) to get a better sense of how this technology can work for you. Try it now! Have questions? Contact [Chuck](#).

CCT Board of Director Nominations

Are you passionate about tourism in York, Durham and Headwaters? Want to get more involved with Central Counties Tourism and/or play an integral role in shaping our strategic direction? Then consider joining our [Board of Directors](#)! CCT is managed by a group of volunteer, industry-led professionals and they are currently looking to fill five positions on the Board to join them. Four 3-year terms, and one 1-year are available. The application deadline is **April 30**. [Learn more](#) and apply today!



Pictured: 8 (of our 18) current Board Members

MORE MEMBER NEED TO KNOW...



Networking Event in Headwaters

If you read [Chuck's E.D. Corner](#) this month, you will already know that our networking events continue to be a hit, and aim to foster new connections and collaborations amongst our stakeholders. The next networking event is taking place in Headwaters and promises to be no exception! Join us at [Hereward Farms](#) on **May 13, 2024** from 3pm to 5pm.

Advance registration is required. RSVP to Sarah Gratta at sgratta@centralcounties.ca by May 6. And as Chuck mentioned, if you'd like to host one in your community, get in touch with us.

Learning Lab: Tourism Now

We have launched a new Learning Lab module, [Tourism Now](#), which serves as an introduction to the current tourism landscape, providing an overview of Canada's tourism structure, the role of Central Counties Tourism, its services, supports, and key partners. In this course, you'll learn how Central Counties and its tourism partners can help you build a stronger business by taking advantage of its opportunities and programs. [Get started today!](#)



Dufferin County Workshops

Join [Dufferin County](#) on **May 22, 2024** at the [Museum of Dufferin](#) for their [Tourism Community Insights Workshop](#). In partnership with local municipalities, the Dufferin Board of Trade and Headwaters Communities in Action, the Community Insights Workshop Series, invites participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including upper and lower-tier municipalities, local industry, not-for-profit organizations and residents to contribute ideas, share perspectives and collaborate on key priorities and initiatives. [Learn more.](#)



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GOOD NEWS, ACCOLADES & COLLABORATION



Brewery Opens in Stouffville

[Muddy York Brewing Co.](#), an award-winning small-batch family-run brewery, relocated from Toronto to Stouffville earlier this year. Operating since 2013, their retail store is now open, with a taproom opening soon! For those of you that attended our Symposium, you were treated with a sample ale, as Treetop Trekking Stouffville teamed up with them as part of their table sponsorship. Welcome to YDH, Muddy York!

McMichael Canadian Art Collection in the NY Times Travel Section

The New York Times recently included the [McMichael Canadian Art Collection](#), in a [36 Hours in Toronto](#) article, amongst their recommendations of top things to see and do outside of Toronto's downtown core. Describing the McMichael as "no prettier place to become acquainted with some of Canada's most influential artists: Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven" (*Ingrid K. Williams, NY Times*), and we couldn't agree more! Nestled amongst 100 acres of forested land in the Humber River Valley, the McMichael is as beautiful inside as it is out - with trails, a sculpture garden, and the burial grounds of six Group of Seven members.



Source: [CCT's Image Bank](#)



The Grand - Documentary Short Film

[The Grand](#) is a 20-minute short film that follows Tom Ostapchuk on his self-supported eight-day kayak journey through the 300 km-long Grand River in southern Ontario. Partnering with CCT, and three other Regional Tourism Organizations also home to the Grand River, this passion project demonstrates the strength of not only local support, but pan-regional collaboration as well. The Grand was accepted to three film festivals and screened to an estimated 1,200 audience members across southern Ontario. Read more about this partnership in our recent blog article: [A River Runs Through It.](#)



FUNDING & SUPPORT

Host In Vaughan Grant

The [Host in Vaughan Grant](#) aims to grow existing Vaughan events and projects, and attract new ones to the city, enhancing tourism across Vaughan through increased visitation and participation at local events. Funding is available for sports events, business conferences, tourism partnerships, major festivals and events, and community activations. Deadline to apply is **May 15, 2024**. Visit [HostInVaughan.ca](#), for funding details, eligibility criteria, their upcoming [April 30](#) info session, and more.

Breaking Barriers: Funding for Black-Owned Businesses with FACE Coalition

Join the [York Small Business Enterprise Centre](#) (YSBEC) on **May 16, 2024** for a free in-person workshop on breaking barriers and fostering economic empowerment for Black-owned businesses. With the expertise of the [Federation of African Canadian Economics](#) (FACE), YSBEC aims to break down barriers to financial access and forge new bridges towards economic empowerment and prosperity. [Register to attend](#).

Cyber-security Solutions for Small to Medium Sized Businesses

[Digital Main Street](#) has partnered with Mastercard to provide its members with free access to the [Mastercard Trust Centre](#) to help small and medium sized businesses improve their cyber-security. The Mastercard Trust Centre provides access to trusted cyber-security research, education, resources and tools, and is tailored from beginner to expert level to meet you where you are at on your cyber-security journey. A free cyber-security assessment tool and cyber-readiness starter kits are available. Digital Main Street membership is free. [Learn more](#).



LEARNING & EVENTS

ChatGPT & AI Tools for Digital Marketing

Join [CampTech](#) on **May 7, 2024** for their online workshop [ChatGPT & AI Tools for Digital Marketing](#). This hands-on, beginner-level workshop is designed to empower marketers and small business owners with the knowledge and skills to leverage AI tools (including ChatGPT, Gemini, Jasper, DALL·E, OpusClip, Canva, and more) for cutting-edge digital marketing strategies. Discover how AI can transform your marketing efforts, from personalized customer engagement to content creation and beyond. [Register today](#).

Rainbow Registered Info Session for Durham businesses

Are you a Durham business interested in sharing your commitment to providing an inclusive, safe space for 2SLGBTQI+ customers and staff? Join [Invest Durham](#) and [Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce \(CGLCC\)](#) on **May 21, 2024** for a virtual information session for local businesses to learn more about the benefits of the [Rainbow Registered](#) accreditation program. [Register to attend](#).

Propel Student Work Placement

The [Propel Student Work Placement Program](#) is now accepting applications for the summer semester. Wage subsidies of up to \$7,000 are available to tourism and hospitality employers to hire a student, enrolled at a recognized post-secondary institution, for a paid position to fulfil the co-op or internship component of their program. Wondering about the process? Their next virtual information session is being held on **May 23, 2024**. [Register to learn more](#).

ELLA Express

[ELLA Express](#), created by [York University's YSpace](#), is a free online asynchronous program designed to support women entrepreneurs. It equips first time women founders, who have recently launched their business, or about to, with essential tools, skills and knowledge required to make smart decisions from the start, along with access to an inclusive community of women entrepreneurs of diverse backgrounds, industries, and specializations. Applications are accepted year-round. [Learn more](#).

TOURISM

INDUSTRY NEWS

Canadian Tourism Awards 2024: Call for Nominations Now Open

Celebrate excellence in Canada's tourism sector by nominating outstanding individuals, destinations, businesses, and initiatives for the [Canadian Tourism Awards](#), presented by the [Tourism Industry Association of Canada](#) (TIAC), recognizing the best and brightest in Canada's tourism industry. From outstanding teams and organizations to individual luminaries who surpass all expectations, exemplifying a commitment to provide nothing short of exceptional tourism experiences from coast to coast to coast. [Learn more.](#)

Employer Pulse Survey

As part of [OTEC's Tourism SkillsNet Ontario](#) activities, the bi-annual [Employer Pulse Survey](#) aims to better understand the current challenges experienced by businesses in the community, local priorities and best practices. Findings from this survey help to formulate evidence-driven, actionable insights and contribute to the advocacy efforts for further support of the sector, allowing your businesses to recover and grow. Deadline to participate in this survey is **May 1, 2024.**

Disability Inclusion Survey for Tourism Employers

[Tourism HR Canada](#) is seeking input from tourism businesses to gauge employers' awareness and practices related to disability inclusion, workplace culture, recruitment, training, and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Feedback received will inform the development of tools and training for tourism operators to increase tourism employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Canada, as part of their new, three-year project [Belong](#). Complete the survey [here](#).

Connect with us on social!

