



CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM NEWSLETTER

August 2023



Lavender-Blu, Durham

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

Good day,

I had an epiphany this week. A lightbulb moment of clarity when I was beyond frustrated with the total lack of political understanding of the incredible importance our industry plays as an economic driver, employer and creator of pride of place. As it turns out, the businesses of this industry are their own worst enemy, and that is because they continue to thrive IN SPITE of an absence of increasing, tangible, coordinated support from their local, regional, provincial, and federal governments. But, could you imagine how much stronger the economy would be if each of those levels of government invested in the continual development and support of projects/businesses that grew the visitor economy?

Now, I am not saying that there isn't any support for stakeholders and projects that support the visitor economy... [Read more.](#)

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MEMBER NEED TO KNOW...

CCT Partnership Program: Intake 4

The fourth intake period for our [Partnership Program](#) is currently open to York, Durham, and Headwaters tourism stakeholders, with an application deadline of **September 15, 2023, by 3pm**. If you have an event or project starting between October 1 and December 31, 2023 that can benefit from our support, review the program criteria and reach out to your region's [Industry Relations Manager](#) to confirm if your project is a fit. Bear in mind, while we would love to support all the stellar applications being submitted to us, stakeholder interest continues to far exceed the partnership funds available, and as such funding is not guaranteed.

[Full list of successful applications to date.](#)

Save The Date: Truth & Reconciliation Workshop

As a follow up to our 2023 Tourism Symposium, we are thrilled to have [Dakota Brant](#) join us once again for a special event and workshop, [Truth & Reconciliation: Connecting the Calls to Action to Tourism](#), on **September 27, 2023**, from 10am to 3pm. This ticketed event will take place at [Black Creek Pioneer Village](#), picking up where Dakota left off, to explore what putting the [Calls to Action](#) into action for Tourism could look like. Prior attendance at the 2023 Tourism Symposium is not required. All are welcome to attend. Light refreshments and lunch will be served. Keep an eye on your inbox for our next update once ticket sales go live in early September!



Wiigiwaam at the Village:
A place for reflection.
Photo Credit: blackcreek.ca

Tourism Development Fund 2023

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport recently announced the launch of the [Tourism Development Fund](#) (TDF), formerly known as the Tourism Economic Development and Recovery Fund. The TDF is a cost-sharing program designed to provide non-capital funding, and aims to support projects that will increase tourist visitation and visitor spending. Applicants can apply for a grant of up to 50% of total eligible cash expenses, to a maximum of \$25,000, for new tourism projects and experiences. **The deadline to apply is September 14, 2023 at 4pm.** [Learn more about program guidelines and eligibility requirements.](#)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GOOD NEWS & COLLABORATION

Boutique hotel opening in Newmarket

It's almost time! Set to open this fall, in Newmarket, is the [The Postmark Hotel, York Region's first boutique hotel](#). Featuring 57 guest suites, 2 restaurants, 4 outdoor spaces and 3 event spaces, this heritage clock tower building, originally opened in 1914 as a post office, is being revitalized with an emphasis on community, art and gathering. So much so, that they have been working with local artists, with the aid of the [The Newmarket Group of Artists](#), to curate numerous original works of art to display in their rooms and in the lobby. We cannot wait to check out this fabulous addition to Main Street. [Read more.](#)



Photo Credit: [Streetcar Developments](#)

City of Markham to host 2024 Little Native Hockey League Tournament

Markham has been selected as the host city for the Little Native Hockey League Tournament, Cultural Festival & Gala Celebration next year! In March 2024, Markham history will be made as the tournament unfolds across 10 different ice rinks for the first time in the City's history. This will also be the tournament's 50th anniversary celebration and an opportunity to bring together not only hockey players and their families, but the spirit of truth and reconciliation between Canadians. Read more about this exciting development [here](#).



Old Flame Brewing Company acquires Two Blokes Cider

[Two Blokes Cider](#), founded in 2015 by two blokes Matt and Andy, is an award winning, farm-based cidery, located in the Township of Scugog. Matt and Andy recently made what we're sure was a difficult decision to step away from Two Blokes, but thankfully that did not mean farewell to this much loved cidery! We are happy to announce that Two Blokes Cider is now part of the [Old Flame Brewing Company](#) family. In a [post](#) about the acquisition, Two Blokes wrote: "The Old Flame Brewing Co. purchase will help strengthen the Two Blokes Cider brand, contribute to the area's ongoing economic revitalization, and set the stage for exciting new projects at the Somerville farm." We cannot wait to see what comes next! [Read on for more.](#)



Photo Credit: [@OldFlameBrewery](#)



CALLOUT FOR FALL EVENTS

Our fall campaign begins early September, and we want to make sure that visitors to YorkDurhamHeadwaters.ca, our consumer site, can find out all about the exciting events taking place across our three regions - festivals and events, studio tours, on-farm experiences, and more. Log in to your [CCT account](#) to upload your event details today. You can also tag us on social media (@visitydh) to amplify your messaging.



At [Pingle's Farm Market](#), Durham

WORKING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

In today's digital age, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for businesses to connect with their target audience in an authentic and relatable way. Leveraging the credibility and reach of influential individuals within specific niches, brands can effectively amplify their message and drive engagement like never before. A shining example of its impact can be seen through Val from [Heartwood Farm & Cidery](#). Recognizing the potential of influencer marketing, Val partnered with CCT and an influencer, to showcase her charming glamping sites, farm, and cidery. Within a mere two days, Val witnessed a remarkable surge of 300 new followers on [Instagram](#), but the success didn't stop there! The influencer's endorsement not only attracted followers, it also led to a notable increase in bookings for Heartwood Farm and Cidery's glamping experience. Val's experience serves as a testament to the profound impact that a well-executed influencer collaboration can have on expanding brand reach, driving engagement, and boosting bookings and visits. Contact our B2C Marketing Manager [Jessica](#) to explore opportunities for your business.



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

WE LOVE CONNECTING WITH YOU
and sharing with our followers.

Be sure to tag the correct account so your message reaches the right audience.

For all things consumer, tag [@visitydh](#)
For industry-focused news and events, tag [@centralcountiestourism](#)

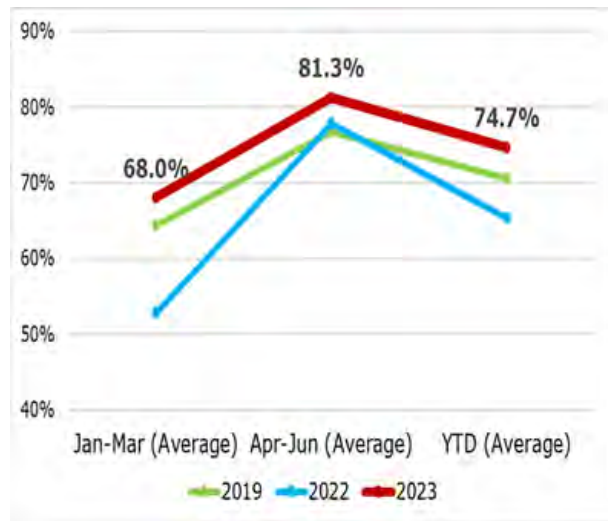




RESEARCH

BEST HOTEL STATS YEAR-TO-DATE!

The first half of 2023 hotel stats are in, and the numbers have surpassed 2019! In the second quarterly hotel update of the year, we will continue to focus on Occupancy percentages for 2023, Year-to-Date, and 2023 vs 2019. The other hotel variables (Revenue, Average Daily Rate (ADR) and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)) are also up, and actually the highest in our reporting history, however, these numbers are significantly impacted by inflation, making it problematic to compare Year-Over-Year figures, especially to pre-COVID years.



RTO6 Hotel Occupancy Average 2019, 2022 & 2023 (Quarterly & YTD)

[Read on for 2023 Occupancy Key Highlights.](#)

GEOFENCING RESEARCH TOOL

Central Counties Tourism can also help you to understand more about your visitor and visitation trends with our [Geofencing Research Tool](#). Through the use of mobility data, geofence data captures the number of unique visitors, the number of trips made by those visitors, the distance they travelled from their Common Evening Location (aka their home), and provides an analysis of these visitors over a specific time period, and best of all, there is no requirement on your part to capture visitor data yourselves as is the case with our [Visitor Research Program](#). Visit our website for an [example](#) of the type of information that can be gleaned from utilizing this tool, then contact [Tom](#) to find out how you can begin putting it to use for your own business.





Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund

The [Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund](#) aims to increase cultural tourism by assisting Ontario’s arts, cultural and heritage organizations to capitalize on the potential of new and expanded events and activities, including exhibitions, festivals and performances. Organizations must start the application process approximately eight months prior to an event. Contact Thomas Vaughan at tvaughan@ocaf.ca to discuss eligibility of your event. The next application deadlines are **September 8 and November 3, 2023**.

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Digital Main Street Digital Transformation Grant

Administered by the [Ontario Business Improvement Area Association](#), the [Digital Transformation Grant](#) program, is designed to assist small businesses with the adoption of technologies. The program will provide training, advisory support and grants to brick-and-mortar small businesses looking to increase their capacity through digital transformation. The portal is now open and applications will be accepted until **September 30, 2023**. Learn more about the grant objectives, participant requirements and criteria [here](#).

Tourism Workforce Sustainability Program

The [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario](#) has launched a new project to expand and retain a diverse and sustainable workforce for the tourism industry. This program will provide direct support to tourism employers to hire 200 new employees across the province. **The intake period for employers is now open.** All tourism industry employers and positions are eligible. If you were unable to attend one of the information sessions, a recording has been made available which can be watched [here](#) to learn more.



LEARNING, EVENTS & INDUSTRY NEWS

Optimizing for Search Engines - Understanding SEO Basics

Often you will hear about needing to optimize for search engines or SEO. But what is it, and how does it impact your digital presence? Register for [Digital Main Street's](#) Understanding SEO Basics webinar, on **September 12, 2023**, to learn about search engine optimization and the best tactics businesses can use towards increasing their ranking in the search engine result pages. Let their Digital Service Squad help you get started. Sign up [here](#).

Tourism Day at Queen's Park

Exclusive to members of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO), [Tourism Day at Queen's Park](#), on **September 26, 2023**, is TIAO's annual lobby day event at the provincial legislature which provides tourism industry leaders and stakeholders valuable face time with MPPs, Ministers and other government officials and staff. TIAO members interested in attending must register their intent to participate, although registration does not guarantee participation, as this event is by invitation only. All TIAO members are welcome to attend the Taste of Ontario Reception, presented by the Culinary Tourism Alliance, on **September 25, 2023**. Note: Complimentary 2023 TIAO membership is still being offered to tourism stakeholders. [Learn more](#).

Accelerated Resiliency & Retention Training Series

[The Ontario Tourism Education Corporation](#) (OTEC) is offering free virtual training for Ontario tourism and hospitality sector workers through their new [Accelerated Resiliency & Retention Training Series](#). This training gives employees the tools to deliver excellent customer service while supporting positive workplace interactions, increasing job satisfaction, and reducing burnout. Features small, interactive classes led by certified, experienced trainers plus access to self-guided eLearning courses on Self-Care and Conflict Management. Virtual sessions start weekly. Contact OTEC at info@tourismskillsnet.org with any questions.