



# CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM NEWSLETTER

January 2023



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

It has taken me years, and my lovely wife, who has no qualms pointing out the flaws in my thinking, to realize that I am probably not a jinx. Do you know when I purchased my first diesel vehicle? About a week before diesel prices surpassed gas prices. This past week, as the discrepancy between the two prices hit fifty cents a litre, I mused to Trish that it wouldn't really matter if I switched back to a regular gas vehicle because as soon as I did gas prices would soar. "Yep, that's right Chuck," an amused Trish said. "All of the world's oil company executives are just waiting for YOUR next move to decide world fuel prices." It's not the first time she wouldn't let me wallow in self-pity and I am sure it won't be the last. When plans are rained out and I am feeling like Mother Nature's victim, she is quick to point out that a) Mother Nature doesn't care about my plans, and b) there are people all across the area who are probably more impacted than I am by the weather (and I secretly bet that every one of them is feeling that Mother Nature is...[Read more.](#)

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# MEMBER NEED TO KNOW...

## CCT welcomes Sara Sterling as the new York Industry Relations Manager

Central Counties Tourism welcomes Sara Sterling to the team as the Industry Relations Manager for York Region. Sara is a community and relationship builder with vast experience in event management, business development, marketing and communications, most recently with the City of Markham as the Executive Director for the Unionville Business Improvement Area. Join us in extending a warm welcome to Sara! She can be reached at [ssterling@centralcounties.ca](mailto:ssterling@centralcounties.ca).



Sandra Quiteria is still very much part of the CCT Team but has taken on the new role of B2B Marketing & Communications Manager.

## CCT 2023 Symposium - Together in Tourism

Join us for our much-anticipated Central Counties Tourism Symposium, *Together in Tourism*, on **March 20, 2023**. This year's event focuses on embracing the new tourism landscape, harnessing opportunities, and strengthening business excellence. Taking place at [The Kingbridge Centre](#), in King City (York Region), this full day event will include a mix of speakers and panel sessions comprised of tourism industry leaders, content developers, and your peers. For topics, agenda, and more, visit our [website](#). **Early bird deadline is February 20, 2023. [Register today and save!](#)**

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!

Our annual Tourism Symposium attracts more than 150 attendees, representing DMOs, municipalities, BIAs, attractions, and businesses from across York, Durham, and Headwaters who gather for professional development, idea-sharing, and networking with the goal of elevating tourism within Ontario and the region.

This year, there are two types of sponsorship opportunities available: Event Sponsors (Presenting, Platinum, and Gold Partners) and Table Sponsors (In-kind). Contact your region's [Industry Relations Manager](#) to learn more about these exciting opportunities to showcase your brand. **Limited spots available!**



# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## GOOD NEWS, COLLABORATION & GROWTH

### Mansfield Outdoor Centre

With the help of CCT's Partnership Funding and FedDev Ontario's Tourism Relief Fund, [Mansfield Outdoor Centre](#) (MOC) has been able to increase their trail network and accelerate their ability to become re-established as a successful Outdoor Centre offering Outdoor Education, Camps, a Trail/Event Centre and accommodations. In validation of their success, MOC was just awarded an [Ontario Cup Race](#) in June 2023 (one of only four locations in Ontario!). "This is a significant event for mountain bike racing in Ontario. I'm am more than flattered and proud of our team of trail builders for being able to create a trail network that is worthy of hosting such an event. Especially that we have only been open 18 months." says Johnny Yeaman, Trails Manager at MOC. At least seven other trail events have already been secured at MOC for 2023, including the [Ontario Fat Bike Festival](#) in February.



### Elevating Ontario Experiences with TIAO

Two [Elevating Ontario Experiences](#) workshops were recently hosted for York, Durham, and Headwaters stakeholders. This project focused on providing operators with strategy development knowledge and the tools to create or elevate an experience within winter/shoulder season or related to culinary activities, both for their respective businesses and the region. Following the initial workshop, each participant then receives 1:1 coaching to present their unique idea and apply the strategies learned, with the guidance and constructive feedback of the industry specialists facilitating the session. The first, led by the [Culinary Tourism Alliance](#), brought together seven Headwaters stakeholders to learn about "taste of place" and best practices for creating an elevated culinary experience for their customers. The second session, facilitated by [BC Hughes](#), focussed on Shoulder Season Development, with 12 participants from across all three regions. Collaboration was a common theme throughout both of these workshops and we're excited to see (and share) what experiences come forward from them. Stay tuned!



# MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS AND MORE...



**COMING UP:**  
blogTO takeover in Durham Region featuring five stakeholders (incl. giveaway, videos for each social platform, banners on blogTO directing to [YorkDurhamHeadwaters.ca](http://YorkDurhamHeadwaters.ca), an article, and stories on social media). Follow along on [@vistydh!](https://twitter.com/vistydh)

Our YDH Winter website launched on January 4, 2023, with 14 new winter blog articles, and featuring over 80 of our region's businesses. Check out the winter fun [here](#).

## CALL OUT FOR CONTENT

Maple syrup season is coming soon and we want to hear about 'all things maple' happening in York, Durham, and Headwaters! Connect with us and share details about your festival or event, or better yet upload it (for free [here](#)) to our events calendar on [YorkDurhamHeadwaters.ca](http://YorkDurhamHeadwaters.ca). Not sure how? Contact your regional [Industry Relations Manager](#) to help get you started.



## LEARNING LAB: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



Our most recent addition to the Learning Lab is the *Social Media Marketing Program* - a four-part series designed to help you elevate the use of social media for your business. Whether you are in the early stages of developing your social media or an advanced user, these courses will help you hone your skills, inspire you, and increase your strategic use of this essential marketing tool. Learn all about about [here](#) and be sure to complete our *Tourism Ambassador Program* if you haven't done so already.

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 [@vistydh](https://twitter.com/vistydh)  
For industry-focused news and events, tag [@centralcountiestourism](https://twitter.com/centralcountiestourism)





### **Ontario Tourism Town Hall 2023**

On February 1, 2023 the [Tourism Industry Association of Canada](#) (TIAC) is hitting the road with its Tourism Town Halls over the next few months to meet with businesses and stakeholders from across Canada. The sessions will be delivered in person in every province and territory (with recordings to be made available after each Town Hall); and will offer a forum for the industry to meet with TIAC representatives and partners to discuss, debate and have dialogue on the most pressing issues facing the industry. Location: The Omni King Edward Hotel, Toronto. [Register here to attend.](#)

### **Resilient Communities Fund**

The Resilient Communities Fund supports community-based organizations that deliver programs and services in Ontario that need funding to recover and build capacity, resilience, and sustainability. Eligible applicants can apply for a grant to develop and implement medium to long-term plans that address current organizational challenges they are facing to recover and build resilience. The grant application is now available through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's granting portal. The deadline to apply is February 1, 2023 at 5pm. [Learn more about eligibility and the application process.](#)

### **2023 Indigenous Tourism Skode Program**

This year's special edition Skode program will reward a \$5,000 non-repayable financial contribution and a three month mentorship to three winners from Northern Ontario and three winners from Southern Ontario. Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs, businesses, community groups, and non-profits are encouraged to bring forward new tourism ideas and experiences that authentically represent, celebrate, and promote Indigenous culture, heritage, language, cuisine, and communities in Ontario. New for 2023 is a \$20,000 grand prize to be awarded to one of the program winners. Applications are being accepted from January 16 to February 13, 2023 at [tourisminnovation.ca/ITO](https://tourisminnovation.ca/ITO).

### **Canada-Ontario Job Grant Program**

Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) provides opportunities for employers, individually or in groups, to invest in their workforce, with help from the government. It provides direct financial support to individual employers or employer consortia who wish to purchase training for their employees and is available to small, medium and large businesses with a plan to deliver short-term training to existing and new employees. To learn more about eligibility and how to apply visit their [website](#).



## 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? Join Digital Main Street's webinar on February 14, 2023 to learn why you should consider e-commerce for your business and how you can easily get started. [Advance registration required.](#)

### **Making the Most of Social: Destination Canada Video Series**

[Destination Canada](#) offers a series of free videos and resources designed to help Canadian tourism business get the most out of their marketing efforts, reach travellers and remain competitive. The quick tutorials and take-aways feature Destination Canada team members sharing their expertise. Visit the [website](#) to learn more and get started.

### **FREE Rainbow Registered Accreditation**

Rainbow Registered is a national accreditation for LGBT+ friendly businesses and organizations. With the generous support of FedDev and ACOA, tourism and hospitality businesses based in Southern Ontario and Atlantic Canada can become Rainbow Registered for free. If you are looking to share your commitment to providing an inclusive, safe space for LGBT+ customers and staff, Rainbow Registered may be the perfect fit. Email [connor@cglcc.ca](mailto:connor@cglcc.ca) to get started. **Registration deadline closes in February, 2023.** [Learn more about CGLCC's LGBT+ safe space accreditation program.](#)

### **TIAO Extends Complimentary 2023 Membership**

The [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario](#) (TIAO) will continue to offer complimentary membership to tourism operators who are active members of their local Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and/or Sector Association in 2023. For membership registration or questions, email Leni Brem at [membership@tiaontario.ca](mailto:membership@tiaontario.ca) and specify the organization with which you have membership (DMO or Sector association). More information about membership and benefits can be found [here](#).

Connect with us on social!

