



CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM NEWSLETTER

March 2024



At The Maple Syrup Museum of Ontario, Erin (Headwaters)

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

Good Day,

Trish and I had an event at one of the wineries we are members of and headed down to Niagara. The event itself was really cool. We were presented five blind tastings of Pinot Noir and had to deduce (in my case blindly guess) whether the wine came from:

- 1) The old world or the new world
- 2) The country of the world that we chose
- 3) The region within the country

I guessed one of the five wines correctly and mostly because I had enjoyed a few glasses of the exact same wine the night before. Other than that one, everyone else typically picked the exact opposite of me and were right more often than not. It was a fun, engaging event that lasted about an hour. Because it takes just over an hour for us to get to the winery, Trish and I... [Read more.](#)

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MEMBER NEED TO KNOW...

REGISTRATION CLOSED: 2024 Tourism Symposium

Our [2024 Tourism Symposium](#), on **Tuesday, April 9, 2024**, is now just a few short weeks away, and we are so looking forward to seeing you all there! For those wanting to get an early start to your networking, registration opens at 8:30am, with a breakfast social hour, sponsored by [Delta Hotels Toronto Markham](#), to kick off the morning. And, our presenting sponsors, [Destination Markham](#), are organizing a Happy Hour networking social, at Smash Kitchen and Bar, beginning at 4:30pm, so bring your business cards and your appetite for chatter, as there will be ample time to connect with your industry peers. If you do not have a ticket yet and would like to attend, contact [Adriana](#), our Director of Industry Development. Full agenda available [here](#).



Feast On® Webinar Recording

Last month, in collaboration with the [Culinary Tourism Alliance](#) (CTA), we hosted a 'Feast On® = Certified Local' information session for our members to learn more about the [Feast On®](#) program, membership criteria, and benefits of getting certified. If you missed it, a [recording of the session](#) is now available. Are you a food service provider (restaurantier, farmer, grower, producer, or distributor) interested in becoming certified, or just curious as to the current Feast On® members in York, Durham and Headwaters? Check out our recent blog article, written by CTA, on '[How Feast On® Certification Can Help Your Business](#)'..

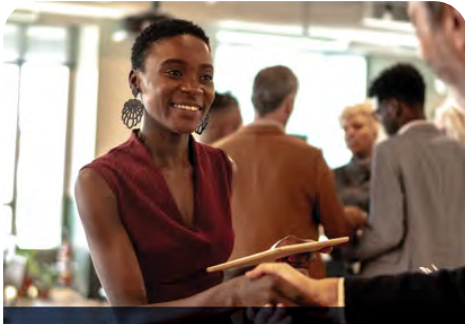


CCT Learning Lab Feedback

By now, you should all be familiar with our [Learning Lab](#), even if you haven't yet registered for it - what are you waiting for, by the way? For those that have completed at least one module - Tourism Ambassador Program, Social Media Marketing Program, Tourism Grant Writing Ready, or IncludeMe™ - Workplace Mental Health, we want your feedback! Please complete the following [short survey](#) to let us know what you enjoyed, what you didn't, and what you'd like to see more of. Thank you!



MORE MEMBER NEED TO KNOW...



GEORGINA & EAST GWILLIMBURY
TOURISM NETWORKING SOCIAL

York Region Networking Event

Calling all Georgina and East Gwillimbury Tourism stakeholders! Join us on **Thursday, April 18, 2024** from 4pm-6pm at the brand-new [MURC](#) (Multi-Use Recreation Complex) for a Tourism Networking Social. Together with the [Town of Georgina](#) and the [Town of East Gwillimbury](#), [Central Counties Tourism](#) invites you to meet others within the industry, share best practices and create new collaborations! For more information, or to RSVP, please contact Sara Sterling, York Region Industry Relations Manager, at ssterling@centralcounties.ca.

Destination Development Networking Event in Whitby

Join [Whitby Tourism](#), [Central Counties Tourism](#), and [Durham Tourism](#) for the next Destination Development tourism networking event on **April 16, 2024**, from 4-6pm at Dish Play in Whitby. The Town of Whitby is looking forward to collaborating with tourism businesses and community partners to develop a tourism economy that is welcoming for both visitors and residents, and are excited to tell the stories of their amazing community to uncover new partnerships and create high quality visitor experiences. Come join your tourism colleagues at this networking event – learn about the exciting tourism initiatives on the horizon, participate in engaging conversations, and pursue partnerships and collaborations. **RSVP by April 9** to tourism@whitby.ca.



You're Invited...

Destination Development Tourism Networking Event

ENGAGE, COLLABORATE AND INSPIRE



Destination Markham Board Recruitment

The [Destination Markham Corporation](#) (DMC) is currently recruiting seasoned, tourism-related business professionals to join their Board of Directors and contribute towards shaping the future of Markham's thriving community. The ideal candidate(s) should have familiarity with Markham, relevant expertise, and experience serving on other boards and in public-private partnerships. The deadline to apply has just been extended to **March 31, 2024**. [Learn more](#).

Psst! CCT's Board of Directors will also be seeking nominations for a few Director positions that will become available as of mid-June. More details coming soon.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GOOD NEWS, ACCOLADES & COLLABORATION



FEO 2024 Award Winners

The [2024 Festival and Events Ontario \(FEO\) Awards](#) were held on February 28, as part of their annual FEO "IMAGINE" Conference, and wow, are lots of congratulations to York, Durham and Headwaters stakeholders ever in order! From Achievement Awards, to Top 100 Festival and Events Awards, Municipality of the Year Award, and even a Volunteer of the Year Award, it is absolutely wonderful to see so many of our members recognized. We have compiled a list of all the 2024 recipients from our region - [check them out here](#). And again, congratulations to each and every one of you!

Best Farmers' Market in Ontario

As the [Newmarket Farmers' Market](#) prepares to open its 25th season, how fantastic is it that they have just been selected as the [Best Farmers' Market of the Year](#) in Ontario, by [Farmers' Markets Ontario](#), from over 180 farmers' markets across Ontario. This prestigious award celebrates the outstanding efforts of the Newmarket Farmers' Market in contributing to the growth and success of the local farmers' market community. Congratulations to all involved! [Read more](#).



SOURCE: [Ontario Para Network](#)

Sport Tourism Canada 2024 Prestige Awards

The [2024 Sport Tourism Canada Prestige Awards](#), recognizing outstanding people, corporations and events hosted in 2023, took place earlier this month, and we've got a winner in YDH!!! [Durham Region](#) was awarded one of the [Legacy of the Year Awards](#), which recognizes, on a national level, outstanding sustainable and environmental stewardship achievements, or contributions, that leave a demonstrable legacy to the community, for having hosted the [2023 Ontario Parasport Games](#). The Games created an economic impact of \$702,853 in Durham Region, and a [Legacy Fund](#) of \$145,579 that will benefit the community for years to come. Congratulations Team Durham!

MORE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GOOD NEWS, ACCOLADES & COLLABORATION

Meet Rural Route Tour Company

Many of you should be familiar with the name Tamara Stefek, as a former CCT Headwaters Field Manager, and more recently as the interim Director of Industry Relations. But, you may not know that she launched a new business last year, [Rural Route Tour Company](#), offering tours from Toronto to York, Durham and Headwaters. Recently, Tamara partnered with CCT to bring a group of media influencers to experience her [Taste of Maple Tour](#) in the Headwaters Region, which was a tremendous success, and even garnered her some love on [foodism.to](#). Read all about it [here](#).



SOURCE: [CCT Imagebank](#)

Have your own exciting tourism story to tell, or experience in YDH to share? Want our help to promote it, connect with your Industry Relations Manager and tell them all about it, or submit your info via our new [Marketing Assistance Intake Form](#).



SOURCE: [The Jonathan van Bilsen Show](#)

Meet Matt Passafiume, Applewood Farm Winery

[Applewood Farm Winery](#) is no stranger to CCT. Originally located on the family farm in Stouffville (York), Matt and Stephanie Passafiume made the decision to relocate their fruit winery (in the midst of Covid) to Port Perry (Durham), literally building it all over again, straight up from the ground. If you are not familiar with their story, Matt was recently a guest on [The Jonathan van Bilsen Show](#), where he chatted all about what they do, the art of wine-making and the history behind Meade, one of their most popular items! [Have a listen](#). And a fun fact, their original Stouffville winery was featured on Schitt's Creek as the [Herb Ertlinger Winery](#).

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Insider's tip: Both Rural Route Tour Co. and Applewood Farm Winery are among this year's 18 table sponsors at our Tourism Symposium. Wonder what goodies their tables may have in store for our attendees? We'll have to wait til April 9 to find out! Thank you for your support, friends.



BT at Elliott Tree Farm

Last week, bright and early at 5:30am, Sue, our Director of Marketing, and Jessica, our Marketing Manager, arrived at [Elliott Tree Farm](#) for a Breakfast Television LIVE segment, with Frank Ferragine, exploring the world of maple syrup with Derek Elliott. Did you know Elliott Tree Farm is also home to the [Maple Syrup Museum of Ontario](#)? Watch this segment [here](#).



Destination Ontario Content Request

Tourism businesses are the lifeblood of our industry - the people and experiences that create travel memories, inspiring visitors to return and explore more of Ontario. Did you know you can keep [Destination Ontario](#) informed about your tourism offerings by submitting your content to them? They are currently looking for spring and summer info, including: Guided walking tours | Bird watching | Apiaries & bee keeping experiences | Bus tours | Sustainable businesses | Scottish festivals & Highland games Flower festivals | Pick your own flower farms | Star gazing experiences | Noteworthy architectural wonders | Theatres with special programs, Q&As, tours, or other unique experiences | Summer cultural festivals | Night markets | Fun zones & adventure parks Fun places for family or game night | Wellness nature experiences | Literature events. Want to be considered? [Submit your spring or summer content](#) to them now.

Globe & Mail Co-op Ads

We have secured two full pages in the Globe & Mail's upcoming 'Explore Ontario' special insert for May 17, 2024. The Expression of Interest (EOI) system launched last year, will remain in effect for our 24/25 fiscal, with a 72 hour turn-around time to submit your EOI for one of the eight available 1/4 page spots, at a cost of \$750 (+HST). The EOI window will open on April 2, with a reminder email to be sent out that morning. Full details can be found [here](#). Future co-op dates to be confirmed shortly.



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](#)





My Main Street

Funded by the Government of Canada, through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, [My Main Street](#) provides support to main street businesses and communities across southern Ontario. Two streams of support are available: 1) Business Sustainability and 2) Community Activator, with a deadline of **March 31, 2024** to apply. Recordings of their [information sessions](#), held for each stream, are available to help you learn more about My Main Street, its eligibility criteria and how to apply.

The York Region Tourism

Established in 2022, the [York Region Tourism Fund](#), aims to enhance tourism across York Region by encouraging visitation and participation at local events, and fostering strong partnerships amongst York Region tourism stakeholders. Funding, to a maximum of \$5,000 per project, is available to support community-based tourism events, from January 2024 to December 31, 2024. [Learn more about this opportunity.](#)

Destination Markham's 2024 Partnership Support Program

Destination Markham Corporation's (DMC) [2024 Partnership Support Program](#) has launched, and will provide financial support, up to 20% of the project cost to a maximum of \$10,000, to Tourism & Hospitality businesses/organizations that stimulate Markham's visitor economy through marketing initiatives and hosting events. The first intake deadline is **April 30, 2024** for projects taking place between June to December 2024. Visit DMC's [website](#) for eligibility criteria, funding categories, and how to apply.

Indigenous Tourism Ontario Workforce Development Workshops

[Indigenous Tourism Ontario](#) (ITO)'s Indigenous Business Advisors Program assists Indigenous tourism businesses throughout the province to improve sustainability and resiliency while encouraging success within their operations. This workforce development service, focussed on training, coaching, and mentoring, is offered complimentary to ITO members. [Learn more.](#)



EDI Essentials 101: Everything You Thought You Knew and more

Join the [Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce](#) (CGLCC) on **April 2, 2024** for an impactful webinar series with diversity champion [Ren Navarro](#), focusing on the importance of diversity and inclusion and how it benefits everyone. This series is perfect for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of diversity and inclusion, equip themselves with practical tools for change, and foster a more welcoming and supportive environment in any sector. [Register today!](#)

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 **April 11, 2024**. [Register to learn more.](#)

IMPACT Regional Ontario 2024

The [2024 IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism - Ontario: A Regional Event](#), is taking place in Toronto from **May 5-7, 2024**, at Centennial College, [Canada's first LEED Gold, zero carbon, mass timber, higher-education facility](#). Bringing together thought leaders, destination and industry experts, educators, and government officials committed to making tourism more sustainable, this event fosters collaboration, idea-sharing, networking and uncovers innovative strategies to help you create a positive 'impact' in your business and community. [Find out if this event is right for you.](#)

Durham Accessibility Conference

[Abilities Centre](#), in partnership with the [Region of Durham](#), invites the business community, Durham Region employers and those interested in exploring the power of inclusion in the workplace, to attend the [Durham Accessibility Conference](#) on **May 22, 2024**. This year's theme is 'Committing to Inclusion in the Workplace: Getting your toolkit ready', and is free to attend, virtually or in-person. The registration deadline is **May 16, 2024**. [More information on keynote speaker, panelists and how to register.](#)

TOURISM

INDUSTRY NEWS

Destination Canada partners with Federation of Canadian Municipalities

In the first of its kind partnership, [Destination Canada](#) and the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#) have come together to showcase tourism's contribution to over 2,100 communities across Canada over the next three years. This collaboration will proactively engage community leaders to understand the value of tourism, and the power of collective destination stewardship and thoughtful tourism development, with an emphasis on how to leverage the visitor economy to benefit communities and residents across the country. [Read the full media release.](#)

TIAO's Tourism Mentor Match Coming Soon!

The [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario](#) (TIAO) is launching Tourism Mentor Match as part of their [Tourism Workforce Sustainability Program](#). This unique mentorship program will connect new tourism employees with industry professionals who share more than career aspirations; they might share culture, religion, lifestyle, or personal challenges and/or opportunities. Through these meaningful connections, employees will find support and guidance to help them thrive as they navigate fulfilling and sustainable careers in tourism. Interested in becoming a Tourism Mentor? Email Leni Brem at lbrem@tiaontario.ca.

Tourism Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey

[Tourism HR Canada](#) is on a mission to enhance mental health and wellbeing across tourism workplaces, and needs your input. By participating in their survey, your experiences and insights will guide them in implementing effective strategies and improvements, aimed at enhancing job satisfaction, mental health, and overall workplace culture. The survey closes **April 5, 2024**. [Complete it now.](#)

Canadian Tourism Labour Market Snapshot

The [February 2024 Canadian Tourism Labour Market Snapshot](#), by [Tourism HR Canada](#), shows growth acceleration with respect to employment and the labour force when compared to the previous month. Additionally, the tourism sector was in a better position than it was in February 2023, but has yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Tourism employment reached 1,986,800—97.8% of what it was in February 2019—and accounted for 9.9% of all employment in Canada. [Read the full report.](#)

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