



CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM NEWSLETTER

December 2023



At Canada's Wonderland, Vaughan, York Region

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

Good day,

As we find ourselves immersed in the festive glow of holiday decorations and the warmth of seasonal cheer, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the spirit of sharing that makes this time of year truly special. The holiday season is not only a time for reconnecting with family and friends but also an opportunity for businesses to come together, sharing best practices, successes, and the unique stories that make our region shine.

Sharing Best Practices: A Recipe for Success

In the spirit of giving, let's consider the idea of sharing best practices among businesses. Just as a treasured family recipe is passed down through generations, the knowledge and insights gained from running a successful enterprise can be invaluable when shared with fellow entrepreneurs. Whether it's innovative marketing strategies, effective customer engagement, or... [Read more.](#)

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MEMBER NEED TO KNOW...

Experience Ontario 2024

Administered by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the [Experience Ontario 2024](#) program supports in-person festivals and events taking place between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025, over a minimum of two consecutive days. The application deadline is **January 11, 2024**, with funding ranging from \$20,000 to \$125,000. A virtual info session is being held on **December 20, 2023 at 1pm** to provide an overview of the program’s application and eligibility requirements, recent changes, and answer questions related to your festival or event. Register [here](#) to attend. It is recommended that you review the [Application Guide](#) or [overview video](#) prior to the info session.



Upcoming CCT Information Sessions

Before closing out the year, we wanted to share details on a few upcoming virtual member info sessions to lock into your calendars now:

REMINDER: Get Social Media Ready (Learning Lab)

WHEN: Wednesday, **January 17, 2024** at 11:30am-12:30pm

Together, we will work through the first of four parts of our online Social Media Marketing Program. More details and registration info [here](#).

SAVE THE DATE: 2024/2025 CCT Partnership Program Overview

WHEN: Thursday, **February 1, 2024** at 1pm

An overview of what’s new for 2024/25 will be provided, along with an opportunity to address any questions. Register [here](#) to attend. Note: there will only be two intake periods, with the first intake deadline being March 15, 2024. [Learn more](#).

NEW: Feast On® = Certified Local

WHEN: **February 12, 2024** at 10am

Managed by the Culinary Tourism Alliance, Feast On® recognizes food tourism businesses committed to sourcing Ontario-grown food & drink. Register [here](#) to learn more about the program, the current network, and the benefits of getting certified.



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In the meantime, we leave you with one of our recent YDH blog articles '[O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, Here’s a Little History](#)', and wish you and your families a joyous holiday season, however you choose to celebrate, or [not to celebrate](#). All the best for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year ahead!
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FUNDING & SUPPORT

Canada Summer Jobs 2024

The [Canada Summer Jobs](#) program, which provides wage subsidies to employers, with 50 or fewer full-time employees, to create quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30 years, is now accepting applications. Deadline to apply is **January 10, 2024**. [Learn more](#).

The Ecosystem Fund

Supported by the Government of Canada, the [Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce's](#) (CGLCC) [Ecosystem Fund](#) has been designed to assist non-profit organizations that collaborate with and support 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs. It fuels two core project categories: programs supporting 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs, and internal capacity-building initiatives. Review the [Funding Guidelines](#) to determine eligibility and program requirements. The deadline to apply is **January 31, 2024**. [Learn more](#).

Electric Vehicle (EV) ChargeON Program

The [EV ChargeON Program](#) provides funding for the installation of public electric vehicle (EV) chargers in Ontario communities outside of major cities, with populations of under 170,000 people. Read the [Program Guide](#) for complete details. Deadline to apply is **January 31, 2024**.

Tourism Growth Program

The [Tourism Growth Program](#), delivered by FedDev Ontario, provides support to Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, small- and medium-sized businesses, and not-for-profit organizations to develop local tourism products and experiences. Applicants are eligible to apply for a maximum of \$250,000 per project. Deadline to apply is **February 29, 2024**.

Honey Bee Health Initiative

The [Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Honey Bee Health Initiative](#) supports beekeepers to maintain healthy honey bee colonies and grow their number of colonies to increase the sustainability of the beekeeping industry in Ontario. Applicants are eligible to apply for 50% cost-share funding up to a maximum of \$25,000 per registered commercial beekeeper and \$4,500 per registered hobbyist beekeeper. Deadline to apply is **March 1, 2024 or once funding has been fully allocated**. Review the [program guide](#) to learn more.



LEARNING & EVENTS

Certificate in Reconciliation Training Program

Offered by [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#) (ITAC), in partnership with Legacy Bowes, the [Certificate in Reconciliation](#) training program for the Tourism Industry is a hybrid virtual and in-person program that provides a safe space for staff and board members to learn more about Indigenous perspectives and explore their role in furthering reconciliation. [Contact ITAC](#) to learn more about how your organization can support reconciliation in Canada through the growth of Indigenous tourism.

Propel Student Work Placement Program Webinar

Aimed squarely at the tourism and hospitality sector, the [Propel Student Work Placement Program](#), funded by the [Government of Canada's Student Work Placement Program](#), offers post-secondary students opportunities to develop the work-ready skills required to secure meaningful employment upon graduation. Qualifying employers are provided with a wage subsidy for each qualifying student hired through the program. Employers [register on the Propel online portal](#), post the position they wish to fill, hire a student, and then apply for a wage subsidy. Register for the next virtual info session on **December 19, 2023** to [learn more](#).

Vaughan 'Spark' Mentorship & Grant Program

Do you have an innovative tourism idea for visitors to Vaughan? Apply for the [Vaughan "Spark" Mentorships and Grants program](#), in partnership with the Tourism Innovation Lab. Selected participants will be asked to pitch their ideas for the chance to bring them to life with the help of grant funding, mentorship and partner support. A virtual info session will be held on **January 10, 2024** for prospective Vaughan applicants. [Register here](#). Program application deadline is **January 17, 2024**.

How to Create Captivating Videos for Social Media

In this beginner-level webinar, hosted by [Digital Main St.](#), you'll learn the ins and outs of creating compelling videos for platforms such as Instagram Reels and TikTok, with a focus on using smartphones as your main tool. You'll discover editing techniques and tips, and walk away with the knowledge and inspiration to make your videos stand out and effectively connect with your audience on social media. Register [here](#) for the free **January 16, 2024** online webinar for Ontario small businesses.

TOURISM

INDUSTRY NEWS

Value-for-Money Audit: Tourism Support Programs (2023)

[Released](#) on December 6, 2023 by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, the [Value-for-Money Audit: Tourism Support Programs \(2023\)](#) concluded “that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (Ministry) has not developed and executed on a long-term strategic plan since its five-year plan released in 2016 (covering 2016 to 2021) to grow Ontario’s tourism industry and maximize its contribution to the economic growth of the province”. Additionally, the audit found that some tourism funding programs were neither efficiently nor effectively designed or delivered, and that the Ministry lacks comprehensive information to determine how well provincial tourism supports contribute to the growth of the tourism industry. Read the [full report](#) for their complete findings and recommendations.

WorkDoesntSuck.ca

As part of their [Tourism Workforce Sustainability Program](#) (TWSP), TIAO recently launched the [WorkDoesntSuck.ca](#) marketing campaign focused on attracting youth and others to discover the diverse and dynamic careers offered within the tourism industry. Do you have an amazing career in tourism and love to talk about it? Reach out to [Leni Brem](#), TWSP Project Manager, to express your interest in joining their Mentorship Program.

Tourism HR Canada Fostering Accessible Employment Opportunities in Tourism

Earlier this month, [Tourism HR Canada](#) announced a new, three-year project, [Belong](#), which will support the long-term labour market integration of persons with disabilities across the Canadian tourism sector. The Belong initiative will strengthen tourism's capacity to offer inclusive, diverse, equitable, accessible, leading (IDEAL) workplaces. The project is funded by the Government of Canada’s [Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities](#). Find project details and sign up for updates at [BelongTourism.ca](#).

Connect with us on social!

