

MEDIA RELEASE:

Regional Tourism Organization 7 (BruceGreySimcoe) Partnership Funding Applications Now Open

BRUCEGREYSIMCOE, May 14, 2014: Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) announces they are now accepting applications for the 2014/15 Partnership Funding Program. Partnership fund projects will support RTO7's business plan goal of driving overnight accommodation within the region and extending length of stay.

In the program's second year, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport has provided RTO7 with \$336,000 in partnership funding, with matching dollars to be contributed from participating tourism partners. RTO7 will contribute an additional \$168,000 from its base funding towards these partnerships. Funding is available for the following areas of investment:

- Tourism Wayfinding (and cycle) Signage
- Digital Marketing
- Experience Development / Consumer Research
- Workforce Development

Reliable and recognizable tourism wayfinding continues to be a priority for RTO7. Increased funding has been allocated to tourism wayfinding signage, and cycling signage has been added (at an enhanced funding ratio). Digital (online) marketing remains another significant focus for funding. A review of the planning and buying patterns of RTO7's targeted audience(s) indicates overwhelmingly that they do so through internet and social media. Investment in consumer research, the region's tourism workforce and tourism experience development will assist in differentiating Region 7 from other tourist destinations, thereby increasing tourism receipts.

Organizations within BruceGreySimcoe eligible for Partnership Funding include:

- Private tourism businesses
- Destination marketing organizations
- Tourism organizations
- Municipalities
- Tourism Associations/Interest groups (including provincial associations with strong involvement from relevant stakeholders within the region)

Partnership Funding Program Guidelines and applications can be found on RTO7's website [Partnership Funding page](#). Applications are being accepted on an ongoing basis until available funds have been allocated to approved projects.

Strong partnerships and a coordinated, collaborative approach to product development, regional planning and marketing are essential to the future sustainability and increased competitiveness of tourism across BruceGreySimcoe.

About Regional Tourism Organization 7:

RTO7 provides strategic and collaborative leadership to build, sustain and grow tourism in the region comprised of Bruce, Grey and Simcoe Counties (BruceGreySimcoe). We are one of 13 RTOs – independent, not-for-profit corporations – to which the Ontario government provides some \$40 million in annual funding to lead tourism planning, marketing and development in their respective regions. Some quick facts about BruceGreySimcoe tourism:

- In 2010 the three counties that comprise the region attracted an estimated 9.5 million visitors
- Visitors to Bruce, Grey and Simcoe spent an estimated \$1.2 billion in the region, on everything from food & beverage to accommodation to transportation, accounting for almost 7% of \$17.1 billion total Ontario tourism spending in 2010
- Tourism across the region accounts for some 27,000 jobs that deliver millions more in economic outputs
- BruceGreySimcoe has in excess of 25,000 accommodation rooms, including hotels, motels, camping and RV sites, commercial resorts, cabins and B&Bs
- There are over 400 attractions across the region, and over 600 festival and event days each year

For more information, contact:

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705-888-8728 or partnerships@rto7.ca

Consumer sites:

On the web:

www.BruceGreySimcoe.com

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/BruceGreySimcoe>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/BruceGreySimcoe>

Tourism industry sites:

www.rto7.ca

<http://www.facebook.com/RTO7Connection>

<https://twitter.com/RTO7Connection>