

## Regional Tourism Organization 7 (BruceGreySimcoe)

### Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 6, 2020**

**Regional Tourism Organization 7 takes action to support tourism operators in Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties.**

**Ontario Tourism Region 7, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties** – Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) will invest \$150,000 to support tourism operators throughout the region with financial support for the purchase of PPE to combat the spread of COVID-19. The unique circumstances caused by COVID-19 has provided RTO7 the ability to support tourism operators with the purchase of PPEs retroactively to April 1, 2020.

**A key finding of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) Provincial Survey #6, June 10 to June 19, 2020 – “Liquidity is one of the most significant barriers, with many tourism businesses reporting the need for grants to cover revenue loss, wages, PPE, and new safety infrastructure.”**

RTO7 with support from the Province of Ontario is able to lessen in part the liquidity burden through financial support for the purchase of PPE and new safety infrastructure.

RTO7 has been providing COVID -19 Recovery Support through Phase One of its COVID Recovery Plan through the Operational Implementation Program (OIP) and the Partnership Program (PP) to tourism operators. This OIP program matches operators operational expenses with \$1,000 of social media advertising. The operator does not have to provide additional matching funds to access this social media advertising platform that is delivered by RTO7’s topflight media buying agency. RTO7 has also been providing significant assistance through improved leverages in the Partnership Program. Tourism operators are able to leverage \$1 for \$2 of support from RTO7 and the Province of Ontario in the development of current Video and Still Image Collateral, Digital Advertising and Storytelling programs. All three of these programs support the most current and effective methods to reach the travelling public.

RTO7 has taken an active role in the communication of the needs of the tourism industry within Region 7 and rural Ontario, appearing twice before the Standing Committee of Finance, co-chairing the Rural and Northern Ontario subcommittee of the Tourism Leaders Panel established in May 2020 to provide input and recovery recommendations and long term tourism strategy to the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, sitting on Economic Development Task Forces throughout the region, and providing a conduit for the distribution of current information to assist in the recovery efforts.

#### Quotes

“The need for this assistance is real and needed now. The ability to provide funding retroactive to April 1, 2020 for the purchase of PPEs was identified by the tourism operators as a need and RTO7 and the Province of Ontario stepped up to help this crucial industry in our region.”

- Kathryn Stephenson, Chair/President Regional Tourism Organization 7

“Cash Flow for the tourism operators is an ongoing problem throughout the region and Ontario. This funding will help 150 businesses now, when they need it most. RTO7 is reviewing other programs to determine what other additional support can be made available to the tourism industry of our region.”

- Bill Sullivan, CEO Regional Tourism Organization 7

### Quick Facts

- Tourism Region 7, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties, is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most overnight and trip visited region in Ontario. Environics Analytics – 2019 VisitorView Visitor/Trips/Nights Estimate.
- Region 7 had over 8,800 tourism related businesses and employed over 35,000 people prior to COVID-19. 8,600 of these businesses had less than 50 employees.
- Region 7 annual visitor spend was in excess of \$1.3 Billion with over 11 million visitors per year prior to COVID-19.
- When applying a Destination Canada and McKinsey and Company estimate, 58% of the annual visitor spend will be lifted out of the tourism sector within Canada (March 2020). *It is estimated that Region 7 visitor spend will decrease by \$700 Million and 9,800 FTE jobs due to COVID-19.*

### About

Regional Tourism Organization 7 provides strategic and collaborative leadership to build, sustain and grow tourism in BruceGreySimcoe. We are one of 11 Regional Tourism Organizations – independent, not-for-profit corporations - to which the Ontario government provides approximately \$20 million in annual funding to lead tourism planning, marketing and development in their respective regions.

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