

MEDIA RELEASE:

\$1 Million Funding Announced for BruceGreySimcoe Tourism Projects

BRUCEGREYSIMCOE, May 3, 2013: Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) announced the intention to work with Bruce, Grey, and Simcoe municipalities, tourism organizations and operators through its new partnership funding program that will see \$1 million in jointly funded initiatives at work to develop tourism across the region.

The new projects include improvements in tourism signage, support for development of experiences, festivals and events, and projects to expand marketing efforts to draw more visitors to the region. The funding comes from existing and new money made available from the Province of Ontario, explained Executive Director Jeffrey Schmidt.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport has provided the organization with \$300,000 in new funding, provided matching dollars could be raised from tourism partners. Last November RTO7 – which promotes the region under the BruceGreySimcoe banner – announced plans to bolster this with an additional \$200,000 from its base funding.

"The tourism industry responded enthusiastically to this opportunity," said Schmidt. "In fact, we received 80 applications for funding that far exceeded our capacity. But the terrific news is that based on over \$500,000 in matching contributions from our partners, we have achieved our goal of putting \$1 million to work in the coming year to grow the region's tourism economy."

The program is a new venture for the tourism organization, and represents a departure from grants awarded by the Province, said Alexandra Hogan, Manager of Partnerships. "We'll be working in close partnerships with organizations to help manage and execute these initiatives. This is a win-win opportunity that will strengthen collaboration and the competitiveness of the region."

The selection of projects is only the first step in the program, noted Hogan. Funding is still subject to approval based on agreements that will be vetted by RTO7 and the Ministry, a process that she says will take a few weeks to finalize.

Approved Initiatives

The list of 32 approved projects range from support to promote established experiences including Saugeen Shores' successful Pumpkinfest, Jazz on the Mountain at Blue Mountain, and the Apple Pie and Ice Cream Trails. RTO7 looks forward to giving these and other events a boost, says Executive Director Schmidt, "But what has us really excited are ideas that came forward to develop new experiences, and those that reflected broad-based cooperation and support. These include a unique cultural tourism offering proposed by Simcoe and Grey museums, development of international tourism around Georgian Bay, and support for cooperative marketing of this summer's Tall Ships Tour, an initiative supported by all five involved municipalities and Huronia Historical Parks."

Particular projects that Schmidt said were "no brainer" when it came to approval were compelling applications by Grey County and the Township of Oro-Medonte to develop the growing cycling tourism market in the region. He went on to say that following consultation both partners readily agreed to join forces and consolidate their efforts.

"We couldn't be more thrilled to work with Grey County and RTO7 to develop cycling in the region," said Donna Hewitt, Director Corporate & Strategic Initiatives with Oro-Medonte. She added: "With the support that we have received from Tourism Simcoe County, and the combination of ideas and resources from our cycling partners this project is a golden opportunity to truly advance cycling tourism as a growing attractor of new visitation to the region."

The list of approved RTO7 Partnership Funding Initiatives for 2013 is as follows (figures represent RTO7 funding allocations only and do not include matching funds from partner organizations):

Initiative	Lead Partner	RTO7 Funding
Apple Pie Trail Promotion	Municipality of Meaford	\$8,000
BGS Golf Product/Experience Development	Resorts of Ontario	\$30,000
Cycle Route Signage	Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula	\$15,000
Cycling Development/Research & Marketing	Grey County & Township of Oro-Medonte	\$40,000
East Coast Music Festival Promotion	Meaford Hall	\$8,500
Glampalooza Thornbury	The Cheese Gallery	\$4,000
Grey County Paddling Signage	County of Grey	\$5,000
Grey-Bruce Campground Advertising	Summer House Park Ltd.	\$14,800
Ice Cream Trail Promotion	Township of Huron-Kinloss	\$6,000
Jazz on the Mountain at Blue Online Contest	Jazz on the Mountain Festivals Inc.	\$10,000
Lighthouse Blues Festival Promotion	Lighthouse Blues Festival Inc.	\$10,000
Lion's Head Signage	Lion's Head Promotions Group	\$2,500
Marketing Campaign for Campgrounds	Barrie KOA Campground	\$10,000
Marketing Campaign for Orillia F&E Co-op	City of Orillia Tourism Co-op	\$20,000
No Cottage? No Problem! Campaign	Fern Resort	\$15,000
Online Marketing	Mt. St. Louis Moonstone	\$10,000
Owen Sound Salmon Tour Development	City of Owen Sound	\$10,000
Photo & Video Database Development	Ontario's Lake Country	\$11,000
Pumpkinfest Promotion	Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce	\$10,000
Re-branding/Website Development	Tom Thomson Art Gallery	\$15,000
Saints & Sinners Trail Development	SUMAC	\$14,000
Sauble Beach Wayfinding Signage	Town of South Bruce Peninsula	\$25,000
Saugeen River Kiosk Signage	Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority	\$4,000
South Georgian Bay International Travel Trade	Georgian Bay Destination Dev. Partnership	\$17,000
Surfing Feasibility Study	Municipality of Kincardine	\$10,000
Tall Ships Tour 2013 Marketing	So. Georgian Bay War of 1812 Committee	\$44,000
The Art Map Marketing	ColourPix	\$2,500
Tourism Branding	Clearview Township	\$25,000
Tourism Workforce Training	RTO7 / County of Bruce	\$50,000
Wayfinding Signage	Municipality of Brockton	\$10,000
Wayfinding/Signage Implementation	Township of Huron-Kinloss	\$25,000
Wayfinding/Signage Plan & Implementation	Town of Midland	\$25,000

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About Regional Tourism Organization 7: RTO7 provides strategic and collaborative leadership to build, sustain and grow tourism in Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties. It is one of 13 independent not-for-profit corporations to which the Ontario government provides some \$40 million in annual funding to lead tourism planning, marketing and development. Quick facts about BruceGreySimcoe tourism:

- Each year the three counties that comprise the region attract an estimated 9.5 million visitors, who spend an estimated \$1.2 billion on everything from food & beverage to accommodation to transportation
- Tourism across the region accounts for almost 7% of over \$17 billion in total Ontario tourism spending and employs some 27,000 people
- 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:

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Or visit: The [partnership funding resource page](http://www.rto7.ca) at www.rto7.ca