

Regional Tourism Organization 7 (BruceGreySimcoe)

Media Release

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Regional Tourism Organization 7 takes more action to support tourism operators in Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties. RTO7 has now committed \$500,000 to support the tourism industry in its recovery from COVID-19.

Ontario Tourism Region 7, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties – Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) will allocate \$135,000 of its Base Funding allocation to support tourism operators throughout the region with the production of tourism operation specific Consumer Confidence videos.

IPSOS and the Government of Ontario conducted two surveys with the intention of gathering information on Consumer Sentiment and Behaviour. The first survey was completed May 29-31, the second survey was completed in mid-June. The key findings from the mid-June, 2020 survey to rebuild the Ontario Economy were:

Lead the way (model right behaviour, strike appropriate tone, be source of credible information)

Visual is best. Show rather than tell.

Tone for the reengagement: positive but cautious.

Tone for enforcement: educational, helpful diligent follow-up

RTO7 has been providing COVID-19 Recovery Support through **Phase One** of its COVID-19 Recovery Plan through the Operational Implementation Program (OIP) and the Partnership Program (PP) to tourism operators. RTO7 committed \$200,000 to support operators through OIP and other programs. The 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.

Phase Two of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan has Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) allocating \$150,000 of the Partnership Program allocation to support 150 tourism operators throughout the region with financial support for the purchase of PPE to combat COVID-19.

Phase Three will see RTO7 with its Agency of Record H-Visual Media produce 45 Consumer Confidence Videos with matching advertising videos for 45 tourism operators, 15 from each county. The Consumer Confidence Videos will depict the safety precautions that the operators are practicing to safely host their guests and to combat the spread of COVID-19, and the matching advertising video will go a long way to promote the business product offerings and help with the recovery efforts. The operators will be able to use the videos on their websites, digital advertising and on inhouse video systems. RTO7 will use the advertising videos on the BruceGreySimcoe.com website, YOUTUBE channel and in following years, in

BruceGreySimcoe Seasonal Campaigns.

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

“RTO7 is once again stepping up and assisting with rebuilding the tourism industry within Region 7. 10 years of using current and effective tourism advertising applications is allowing RTO7 to assist operators when they need help and the consumer is ready to return.”

- Kathryn Stephenson, Chair/President Regional Tourism Organization 7

“Without the IPSOS and Government of Ontario research we would have been hesitant in moving forward with this current phase. The IPSOS research clearly identified the messaging, tone and delivery method of this phase of recovery.”

- Bill Sullivan, CEO Regional Tourism Organization 7

Quick Facts

- Tourism Region 7, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties, is the 3rd 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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