

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Economic Development Update  
**Prepared By:** Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator  
**Department:** Economic Development  
**Date:** August 13, 2024  
**Report Number:** ED2024-01 **File Number:** C11ED

### Attachments:

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### Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby accepts Report Number ED2024-01 - Economic Development Update, prepared by Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator, for information purposes.

### Report:

#### Background:

The Community Development Coordinator (CDC) provides regular updates to Brockton Council to inform on activities relating to community and economic development. This report specifically touches on the following:

- East Ridge Business Park
- Walkerton Summer Streetfest
- Business Recognitions
- Business Improvement Grants
- Student Businesses in Brockton
- Bruce County Economic Development Training Programs
- Newcomer Familiarization Tour
- EDCO Regional Event in Brockton
- Hometown Christmas Market
- Tourism Updates

#### Analysis:

It's been a busy spring and summer in economic development with numerous projects underway, many involving regional partners such as Bruce County's economic development department, the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), and the Economic Development Council of Ontario (EDCO).

The CDC has been involved with various training programs at the municipal and county levels, issued two business newsletters, assisted with the organization of Summer Streetfest, and facilitated several new marketing and promotional campaigns.

### **East Ridge Business Park**

Phase 3 lots in the East Ridge Business Park are now for sale. These lots are being advertised through various media, including two new videos launched August 12. An updated brochure has been sent to print, and ongoing inquiries are being responded to by staff.

### **Walkerton Summer Streetfest**

The Municipality of Brockton hosted a very successful Summer Streetfest on July 19. Space in the Market Garden was well used for this event, with a wide variety of free entertainment for children and families. Merchants offered shopping and dining specials throughout the day and many reported that business was steady.

### **Business Recognitions**

The Municipality of Brockton has recognized several new and expanding businesses thus far in 2024:

- Brockton Family Dental (new business in Walkerton)
- Birdie Barn (new business in Walkerton)
- The Cook's Cupboard (new business in Walkerton)
- Pizza Pizza (new business in Walkerton)
- Fat Bastard Burrito Co (new business in Walkerton)
- Goose Eatery (new business in Walkerton)

Next up we will be recognizing the re-locations of Tee & Co. and Essential Wellness, the expansions of Luxury Woodworking and Balaklava Technology Simplified, the new ownership of Old Joe's Cabin, and the openings in Walkerton of Young's Home Hardware, Marigold Media, and Dance Unlimited.

### **Business Improvement Grants**

The CDC has been in communication with several business owners who are interested in applying for Business Improvement Grants before the end of the year. Three are looking at new signage and one is interested in the property conversion funding.

### **Student Businesses in Brockton**

The Student Start Up Program, run by the SEDC, is coming to an end in a few weeks. Four (4) Brockton youth were selected for the program this year, which is support financially by the Municipality of Brockton. Council members have been invited to the year-end barbecue in Neustadt on August 28 to congratulate the students on their summer businesses.

One university student was also successful in obtaining a \$3,000 grant from Bruce County's Summer Company Program. This program provides students with training and mentorship. The Brockton student is running a

professional video editing business, which is being promoted by the county and the municipality on social media.

### **Bruce County Economic Development Training Programs**

The CDC is midway through a six-session training program with Bruce County senior economic development staff. The bi-weekly sessions are offered in a one-on-one format and cover a wide range of topics including investment and resident attraction strategies, building collaborative relationships, tourism destination framework, and practical implementation skills.

The County is also offering a one-day training course on September 11 for municipal staff and elected officials involved with economic development. In partnership with the University of Waterloo, training will be offered locally on the topics of investment attraction and readiness, handling investment inquiries, working with site selectors and more.

### **Newcomer Familiarization Tour**

The Municipality of Brockton is participating in a Newcomer Familiarization Tour on September 17, in partnership with Bruce County and the Newcomer Centre of Peel. Approximately 50 newcomers to Canada will be taking a bus tour of the area, with stops in various communities including Walkerton. The CDC is working with some larger employers in the area who can speak to the newcomers about employment opportunities in Brockton while they are in town. A short tour of the amenities available in the municipality will also be included.

### **EDCO regional event in Brockton**

Brockton has been chosen to host one of EDCO's four regional events in 2024. This professional development forum will be held September 24 at the Best Western Plus Walkerton. And will be attended by approximately 75 economic development professionals from both the public and private sectors. The program allows members to learn and share information on current issues that affect the profession.

### **Hometown Christmas Market**

Plans are underway for the annual Hometown Christmas Market on November 21. The Market Garden will be the focal point again this year, featuring local vendors and entertainment for shoppers to enjoy. Durham Street will be closed to traffic for this event. The Shop Walkerton and Win promotion is also returning for the holiday season, with Brockton Dollars to be awarded as the grand prize.

### **Tourism Updates**

Brockton's Visitor Information Centre opened in May at Lobies Park, with brochures and information also available at the Municipal Office. Brockton is featured in the Escape to Grey Bruce tourism magazine and partnered with the Walkerton Herald-Times to produce the annual Brockton Visitor Guide. A rack card of 2024 events in the municipality was also released in the Spring. Website updates are underway on the Municipality's tourism website, VisitWalkerton.com. In conjunction with Bruce County, an online visitor survey

has posted there, seeking feedback from those who visit Brockton in 2024. The survey closes December 31 with a prize to be awarded at random at the end of the year.

The CDC has also engaged a professional photographer to take photos throughout Brockton this summer. These pictures feature the Municipality's parks and trails, and attractions such as the Saugeen River, Schmidt Lake lookout, Victoria Jubilee Hall and more. Amenities such as Lobies Camp Campground and the Bruce Power Regional Soccer Field are also included. The photographs will be highlighted on the new municipal website, and in future print and social media advertisements.

### **Strategic Action Plan Checklist:**

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

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|---|-----|
| • Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision                       | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community              | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life                               | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development                          | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance                          | Yes |

### **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:**

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

#### **Reviewed By:**



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

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#### **Respectfully Submitted by:**



Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator

#### **Reviewed By:**



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer