



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Northern Wellington partnership of the Township of Mapleton, Wellington North and the Minto Chamber of Commerce receives \$26,695 Digital Main Street Grant to help main street businesses use digital tools more effectively.

September 21st, 2020: The Northern Wellington partnership of the Township of Mapleton, Wellington North and the Minto Chamber of Commerce announced today that they have received a \$26,695 grant from Digital Main Street (DMS) to fund a Digital Service Squad to help downtown small businesses across Northern Wellington County to improve their online capabilities. Funding for the grant is provided by FedDev Ontario, a federal government program.

“This is great news for Northern Wellington, and we are excited by this opportunity to assist main street small businesses” said Aly Cripps Economic Development Coordinator for the Township of Mapleton and spokesperson for the partnership. “A vibrant downtown is key to a strong community and because of this grant we will be able to provide our businesses with the opportunity to take advantage of trained specialists who can teach them how to use new technologies and provide tools and training in order to stay competitive in today’s digital world.”

Established in 2018, The Digital Main Street program has already made a huge difference to small businesses in many communities during COVID and with this new round of funding both Minto and Wellington North will be able to continue to provide this support while Mapleton will be offering the service for the first time. Digital Main Street funding was recently extended thanks to an investment of \$42.5 million from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) and \$7.45 million from the Ministry for Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT). The almost \$50-million investment will help small businesses across Ontario to pivot their operations to include online business models, regain lost revenue and become more resilient and competitive as the economy recovers. The Ontario BIA Association administers the DMS grant program to Ontario’s main street small businesses.

“Ontario’s small businesses are the backbone of our economy and the keystone of our economic recovery,” said Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. “That is why we have invested in Digital Main Street to help these enterprises adapt to doing business in a digital world and take advantage of the record number of people shopping online. Congratulations to Mapleton, Minto, and Wellington North for partnering together on this initiative. The work you’re doing with small businesses in your community will help keep our main streets vibrant, support good local jobs and help our economy come back strong.”



Fundamental to DMS's design are Digital Service Squads, trained specialists who meet with small businesses, at no cost, to help them improve their online presence. The squads assist with several activities, including developing a Google My Business profile, enhancing their social media presence, and providing support for basic website and e-commerce set-up. Squads will also assist qualified small businesses through the application process for a \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant, which includes an online assessment, online training modules and the development of a Digital Transformation Plan (DTP).

"The COVID-19 pandemic hit Ontario's main streets hard, so Digital Main Street is needed more than ever," said Kay Matthews, executive director of OBIAA. "We know that businesses that participated in Digital Main Street last year were better able to cope when the pandemic hit, and we're excited that FedDev Ontario and MEDJCT are providing the funding to extend this important program to help businesses in communities like northern Wellington County."

After an extensive interview process the Digital Main Street specialist who has been hired to lead the Northern Wellington Digital Service Squad is Ashley Noble. Ashley is a resident of Harriston and will graduate from the Business Marketing Program at Conestoga College later this year. Ashley will start in this position on September 21st.

Additional Quotes

*"We are thrilled that the Federal Government and OBIAA are investing \$26,695 to help our local main street businesses use digital technologies to re-emerge from COVID-19 more successful and resilient than ever. Our downtown businesses attract visitors, create jobs, support families, and make life better for everyone who calls Northern Wellington County home. Thanks to the Federal Government and OBIAA for recognizing the importance of our main street businesses". **Andy Lennox, George Bridge & Gregg Davidson, Mayors of Wellington North, Minto & Mapleton***

*"Entrepreneurship can do a lot of great things when leaders are focused on meeting challenges with new ways of approaching the market, introducing new products or services, or solving day to day challenges through collaborations. The Digital Main Street program provides basic support to enhance online presence, allowing entrepreneurs to find new ways of connecting with their customers in these challenging times, and position them for growth going forward. Congratulations to Mapleton, Minto and Wellington North for partnering on this program and bringing this opportunity to your businesses." **Randy Pettapiece MPP Perth Wellington***

ABOUT OBIAA

OBIAA is the network that represents unique and vibrant BIAs across Ontario. The Association supports and advocates on behalf of its members through the building and nurturing of strong relationships and partnerships. OBIAA is a leader in the development and sharing of information, tools, resources, and best practices, and is the ONE voice on common issues.



ABOUT Digital Main Street

Digital Main Street is an innovative program designed to help main street small businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, grants and Digital Service Squads teams of street-level experts that help main street small businesses manage and grow their operations through technology adoption. The program was originally created in 2016 by the Toronto Association of BIAs (TABIA) and a group of strategic partners including Google, MasterCard, Microsoft, and Shopify. For more information, please visit digitalmainstreet.ca

ABOUT Digital Main Street Ontario

Digital Main Street was expanded across all of Ontario in 2018 with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs through the \$38 million Main Street Revitalization Initiative. It has been further extended through a funding from FedDev Ontario and MEDJCT. The new round of funding includes \$42.5 million from the Government of Canada's [**Regional Relief and Recovery Fund**](#), a national recovery initiative delivered by Canada's regional development agencies. With \$7.45 million from MEDJCT, this combined federal and provincial project will strengthen Ontario's economic capacity for innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration, and will promote the development of a strong and diversified Ontario economy. For more information, please visit digitalmainstreet.ca/ontariogrants

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