



PORT COLBORNE

MEDIA RELEASE

City given grant to help small businesses with digital transformation

Port Colborne, ON (Sept. 21, 2021) – Through renewed investment in Digital Main Street's Ontario Grants Program (OGP), the City of Port Colborne has received \$19,000 to help local small businesses with digital transformation.

"With this being the first time Port Colborne will run the program, I want to thank the government for their support," said Mayor Bill Steele. "Building a strong online presence is key to reaching consumers and driving sales. I encourage Port Colborne businesses to take advantage of the Digital Main Street program and its free resources."

Renewed funding of the OGP — including investment from the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade — will provide qualified brick-and-mortar businesses with the assistance of a Digital Service Squad (DSS) member and the opportunity to receive a \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant. The OGP is administrated by the Ontario BIA Association, in partnership with the Toronto Association of BIAs (TABIA).

"Ontario small businesses are the heart of our neighbourhoods and the economic foundation of our communities," said Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction for Ontario. "Our government is committed to being there for them as they reopen. This additional support will give these businesses the digital boost they need to raise their profile and rebuild better than ever."

The cornerstone of Digital Main Street is its squad of trained specialists who deliver personalized, one-on-one technological assistance. This includes support for basic website set-up, Google My Business profiles, 360° photos, social media presence and much more. These specialists can also provide information on the ShopHERE program for digital storefront or e-commerce set-up and assist with applications for a one-time \$2,500 grant to implement a Digital Transformation Plan (DTP).

"In the past 17 months, as small businesses across the province fought to stay open and keep customers engaged online, Digital Service Squads were there to help," said Kay Matthews, Executive Director of OBIAA. "Squads jumped online themselves during lockdowns to help virtually, and businesses have consistently told us how important the DSS were to their success through the pandemic. We are thrilled to support the Port Colborne DSS and help them provide assistance to even more small businesses than ever."

Small businesses in Port Colborne can register now at digitalmainstreet.ca to receive a free assessment and access to online training modules at no cost. Follow-up meetings will be provided by Rob Fucile in the City's Economic Development & Tourism Division. All meetings are being conducted virtually at this time. The Digital Main Street program will run in Port Colborne until mid-February 2022.

About City of Port Colborne

Located on the south coast of the scenic Niagara Region, Niagara's Port of Call has found the perfect balance – successful industrial and commercial sectors, comfortable and scenic residential areas,

white sand beaches, unique culinary choices, the world class Sugarloaf Marina, fishing, golfing, trails, shopping districts along the historic Welland Canal and an energized festival and entertainment scene that includes live theatre – truly a community that adds to the overall Niagara Experience.

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 a program that helps main street businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and our Digital Service Squad, a team of street-level team members who help main street businesses grow and manage their operations through technology. Digital Main Street was created by the Toronto Association on Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) with direct support from the City of Toronto. DMS is also supported by a group of strategic business partners, including Google, Mastercard, Shopify, Microsoft, Facebook, Intuit QuickBooks, Square, and Yellow Pages.

-30-

Contact

Alex Pedersen
Corporate Communications Officer
905-835-2900 ext. 307
alexpetersen@portcolborne.ca