

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL UPDATE



October 11, 2022





# Strategic Priorities

## **Economic Development Strategic Objectives:**

- Invest in people and places via rural revitalization
- Entice talented workers and entrepreneurs to relocate here by leveraging the pace of rural life and nearby urban amenities
- Attract investment in tech-based manufacturing, food production, and ag-tech
- Advocate for investment readiness and implement improvements in business development services



**While striving to achieve the goals of the 2021-2025 Strategy Update, the Economic Development Department assists in highlighting the priorities of the County's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan including but not limited to:**

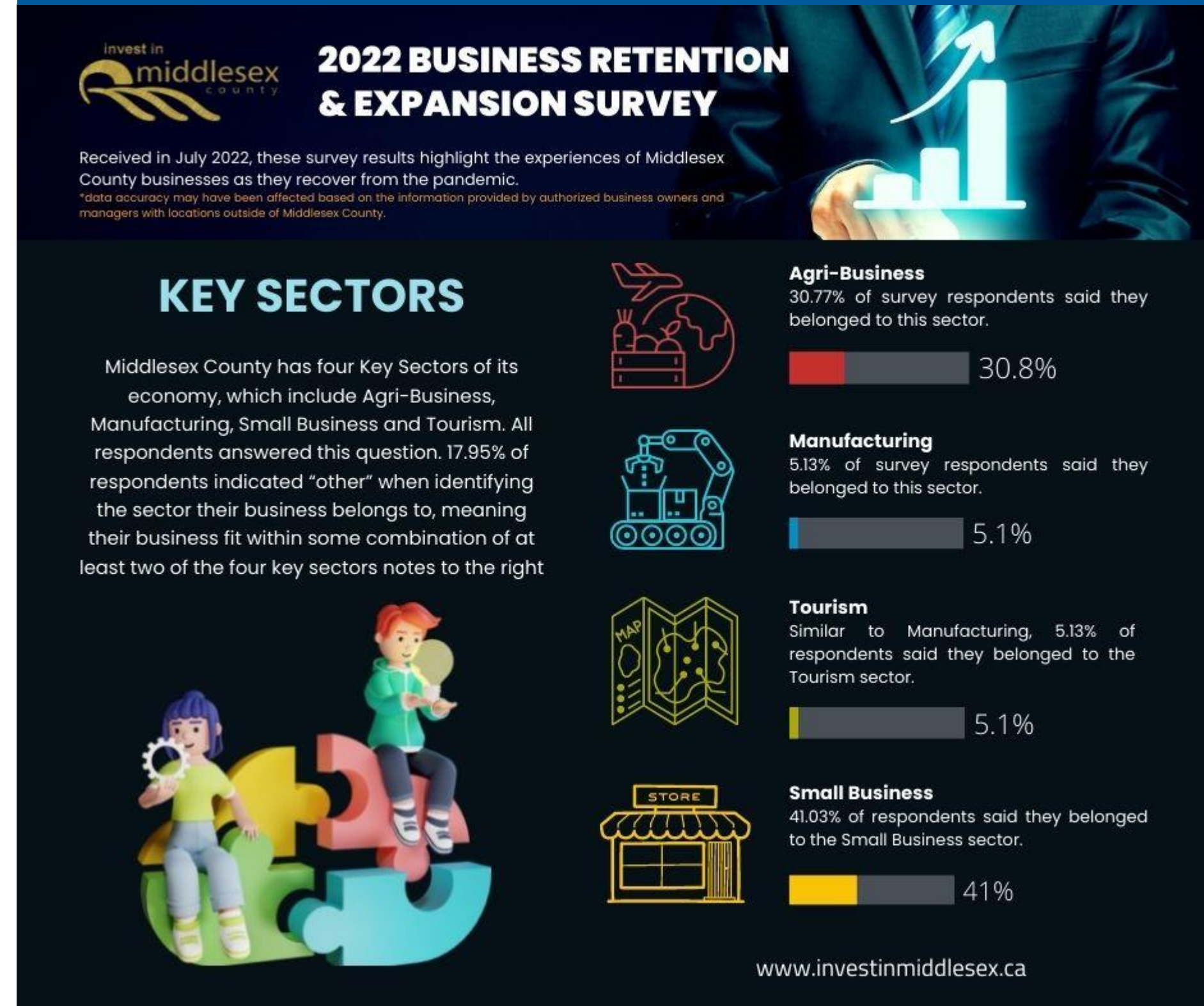
- Promote and support community wellness
- Attract, retain, and engage youth in our community
- Champion and encourage active transportation and public transit opportunities
- Support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector
- Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments
- Attract visitors to Middlesex County
- Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County





# Business Retention and Expansion Study

- Heard from business through a 25 question survey
- Created a report as a tool for benchmarking (report will be made public once interview results are summarized)
- Created a series of 7 infographics to illustrate what we heard, which will be shared across social channels in weeks to come
- In the midst of conducting follow-up interviews
- Through the survey, we gathered new contacts for quarterly newsletter, made people aware of our new Business Appreciation Program and gauged which businesses may be interested in hiring co-op students for our upcoming Work Integrated Learning project







# CIP Program

- We are very pleased to have been involved in the consultation and planning for the sixth Community Improvement Plan across Middlesex County. Council in Adelaide Metcalfe is currently finalizing their Plan which will begin implementation in 2023
- We continue working with our local municipalities to support those CIP investments that align with the County's Official Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan.



# Regional FDI

- 2<sup>nd</sup> year as Co-Chair for Ontario Food Cluster
- New membership with Ontario Manufacturing Communities Alliance (OMCA)
- Provincial Ministries are key advisors and partners in these organizations
- Majority of large scale site selection bids come through these channels
- Worked with several of our local municipalities to respond to such bids; with some great results like a major project in Strathroy-Caradoc to be announced this fall
- Together with colleagues from across Southwestern Ontario, we will conduct over 100 site selection meetings at 7 shows this year. Both groups have also met directly with the Canadian Consulate in Chicago to discuss trade relations with the US
- Middlesex was successful in garnering CanExport funding for the Ontario Food Cluster this year
- SOMA has indicated their interest in us becoming a member in 2023 and we will be invited to present to Council prior to the 2023 budget deliberations







# Middlesex County FDI

- Successful in garnering CanExport Funding for Middlesex County's FDI efforts – including travel expenses, lead generation and training for EDO
- A minimum of 30 meetings are expected to be held in total; split between virtual and in person for 2022





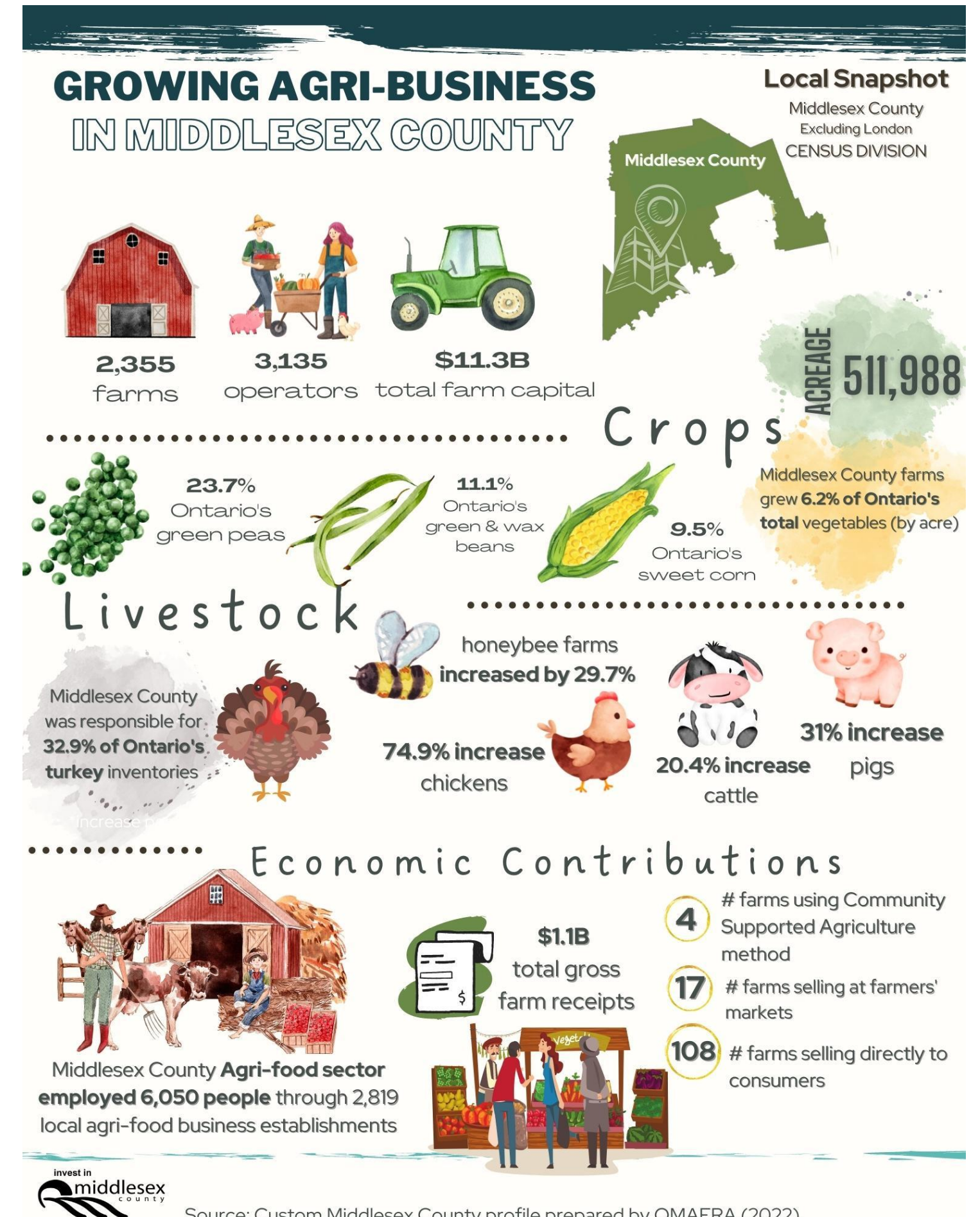
# Site Selection

- We are responding to broker, developer, and client requests for industrial and commercial land on a regular basis
- We are working directly municipalities with public lands still available as well as with municipalities such as Middlesex Centre to bring new lands on side
- Given the limited availability of publicly owned lands, we continue working directly with private land and property owners across the County to attract and place new and expanding businesses



# Ag Census Summary

- Using OMAFRA tabulated Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture data, we have completed an updated report summarizing key data about the Middlesex County agricultural sector
- The report illustrates what has changed between 2016-2021, contextualizes Middlesex County's agricultural presence compared to the rest of the province and will act as an important tool for farmers, visitors, and potential agricultural/ag-tech/food processing firms considering Middlesex as a place to invest
- The full report and corresponding snapshot is available now on our Invest in Middlesex website and we will be highlighting pieces of it throughout the coming months by way of info-graphics and blog pieces



Source: Custom Middlesex County profile prepared by OMAFRA (2022).



# Crop Education Project



- Through a partnership with the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture, we worked to produce 30 crop identification signs that have now been placed in local fields across Middlesex County.
- These attractive and commonly-styled signs serve a public educational purpose, identifying the crop growing in that specific field and the related end uses



# THE WAR FOR TALENT

## OVERCOMING THE TALENT DROUGHT

October 6th, 2022  
8am-10am  
Amy's Restaurant  
Strathroy, ON

**Ahria**  
CONSULTING

### Learn about:

- Market trends
- Attracting employees
- Supply & demand
- Trifecta of motivation
- and more!

Hear from workshop speaker, President & CEO of Ahria Consulting, Terry J Gillis who is considered by many to be one of Southwestern Ontario's "go to" consultancy for people solutions in the workplace.

[Register today through Eventbrite!](#)

Contact Michele Sands at Community Employment Choices with questions!

📞 519-245-4500 ✉️ [msands@communityemploymentchoices.ca](mailto:msands@communityemploymentchoices.ca)



# Workforce Development

Due to a successful application for \$50,000 in third party funding, we are able to carry out a number of workforce focused initiatives through March 31, 2023.

## Workshops:

- As in previous years, we will continue to work with the CFDC and other stakeholders to sponsor small business, employment and employer-directed workshops and roundtable sessions
- An initiative of the Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership in collaboration with Ahria Consulting, and Community Employment Choices, The War for Talent is a workshop held for local employers on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

## Young Entrepreneurs Business Plan Contest

- This summer, we were able to run a Young Entrepreneurs business plan contest which offered young people ages 8-12 and 13-18 an opportunity to present their business idea in hopes of winning a laptop to help them launch their new venture.
- Aurora Powers won in the 8-12 age group for her "Field Side Freezies" business that aims to catch the attention of young athletes as they look for a cold tasty treat after sport games. Katie Legg won for the 13-18 age group with her "Down to Earth Farms" business, with wide varieties of sweet and hot peppers at the forefront of sales



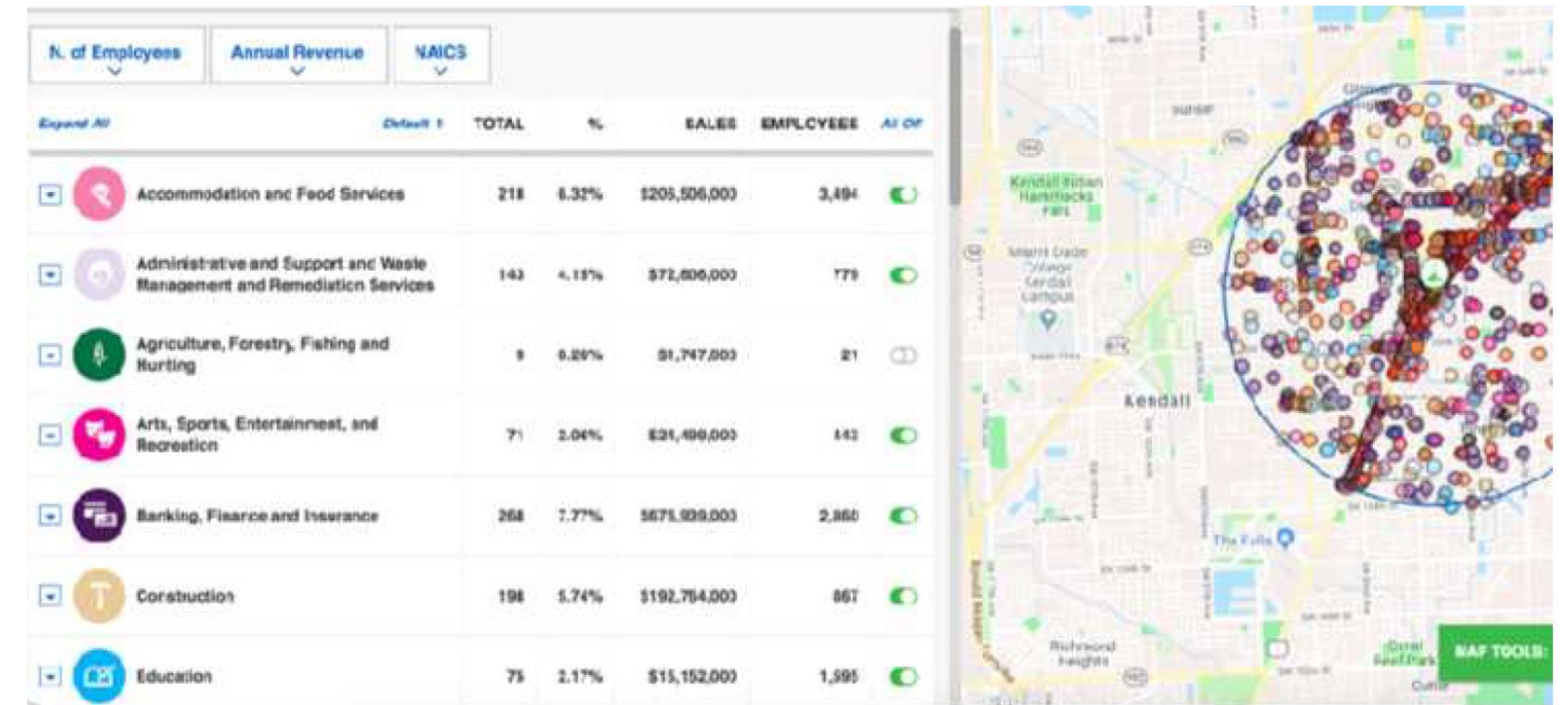
# Co-op Education/ Work Integrated Learning Project



- Due to a successful application for \$105,000 in third party funding, we are able to carry out this project commencing October 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023
- The project includes hiring a full-time Youth Workforce Education Coordinator who will be championing Co-operative education and work-integrated learning together with local employers, school boards, post-secondary institutions, and youth as a means to narrowing the labour gap in Middlesex County
- Videos showcasing youth in WIL across the County, a new WIL page on the Work in Middlesex website, and a major marketing campaign are all components of the project



# GIS Planning



- We are implementing GIS Planning's Zoom Prospector tool onto our Invest in Middlesex website
- Included will be consistently updated demographic reports, a new business directory, an automatic real estate feed, and customizable site selection and community reports
- Look for updates on this this fall as this will become an important data and site selection tool that will benefit all municipalities. In fact, one of our local municipalities has already decided to add GIS Planning to their own website for even more customization; taking advantage of a discount offered within the County
- Adding this suite of services to our website will reduce our costs for web updates, a separate business directory and demographic reports from other third party suppliers



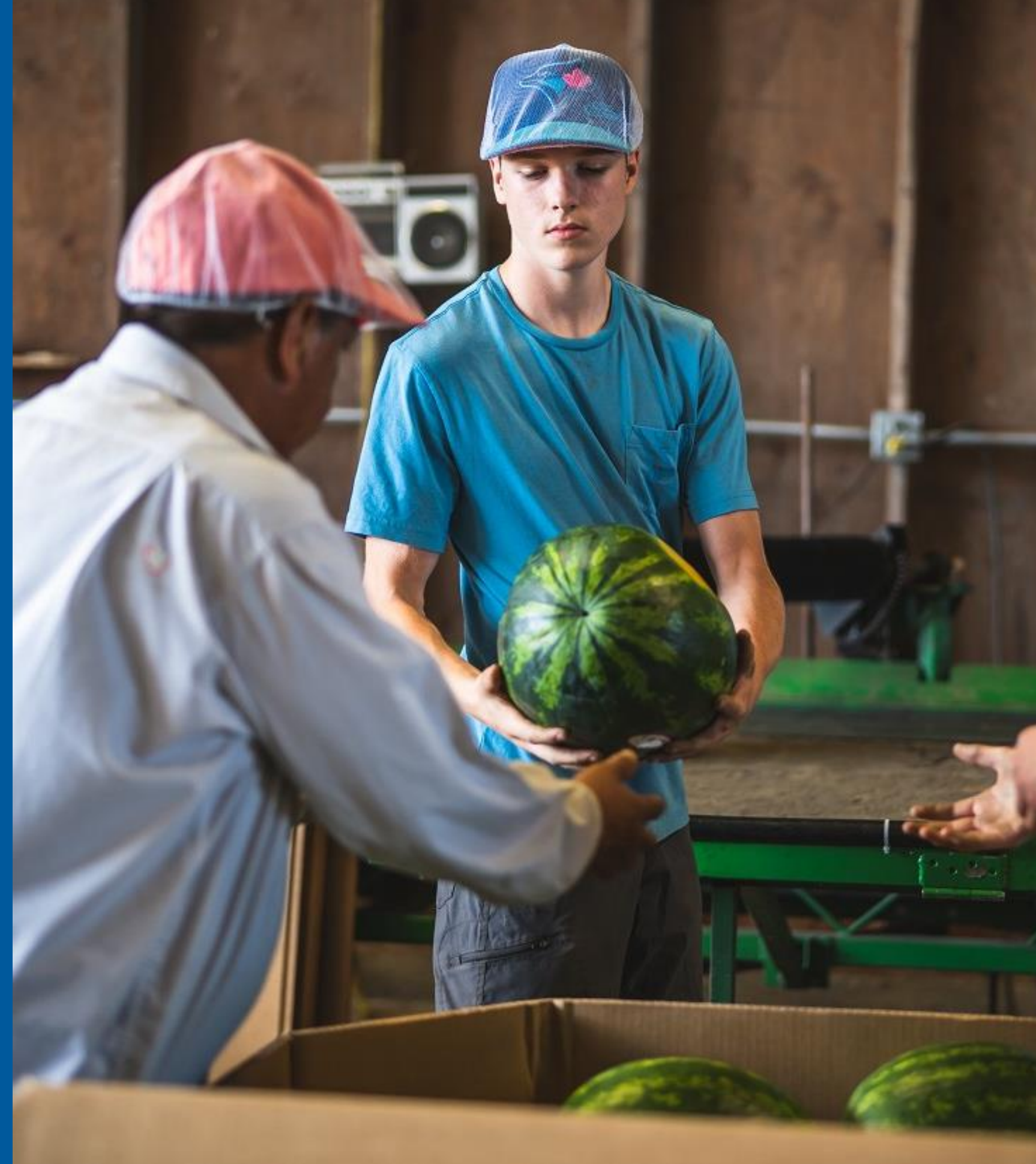
# New Video Projects

## Key Sector Profiles

- This year, we are producing four videos; each highlighting the County's key sectors; Small Business, Tourism, Manufacturing, and Agri-Business.
- Each video will include recorded narration along with key text as needed over footage showcasing operations at a variety of businesses in each sector. 30 second versions will also be produced for digital promotion
- Watch for these to be released next month

## ‘Making it’ in Middlesex: Stories of Business Success

- In addition to our key sector videos, this year we are producing four short story video each belonging to one of the County's four key sectors.
- These videos will have an accompanying article and be promoted across our social channels beginning this fall





## Public Art - "Makeover Middlesex Program":

- Funding up to a maximum of \$2,500.00 per project is available for public art installation within the County. This funding is to be used to support permanent art creation for the general public's enjoyment and for the purpose of attracting visitors. Public art is inclusive of murals, sculptures, memorials, landscape architectural work, community art, digital new media and more
- Public benches and/or bike racks showcasing the Visit Middlesex logo are also being considered for installation



# MAKEOVER MIDDLESEX

## About the Project

The purpose of the Middlesex Makeover Fund is to enhance the vibrancy of our rural area. Through this project, we invite artists and Middlesex County property owners and local organizations to submit their plans for public art they feel would be a great addition within the County. Funding up to a maximum of \$2,500 per project is available to help implement these works of art.

## Details & Criteria

Full program details and application criteria can be found at [www.visitmiddlesex.ca](http://www.visitmiddlesex.ca).

## For interest & inquiries:

[info@visitmiddlesex.ca](mailto:info@visitmiddlesex.ca)



# Specially Funded Tourism Projects

Due to a successful application for \$100,000 in third party funding, we are able to carry out the following initiatives until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.



## EV Chargers:

- We have received a number of RFQs and are in the midst of selecting the successful municipalities and locations we will be placing EV chargers in. Priority is for these to be placed in tourist locations that would not normally have the funding/opportunity to do so
- This is a partnership whereby the County will be paying for the chargers and installation while municipalities will be arranging for site prep and ongoing maintenance



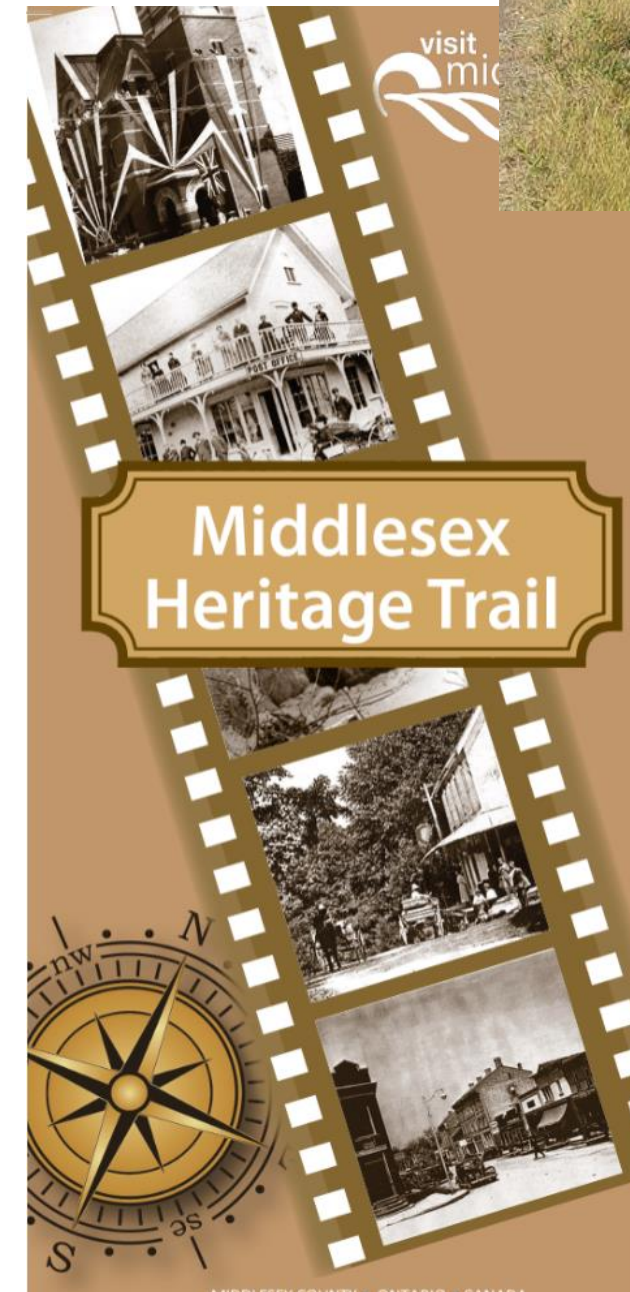
# Signage Programs

## Grassroutes Trail Signs

We've teamed up with our Roads Department to offer eligible businesses/organizations a free 90cm x 90cm Grassroutes sign for two years. We've added more than 10 free signs in the past month and the program has spawn new interest from businesses wishing to purchase the larger signs as well.

## Heritage Trail Signs

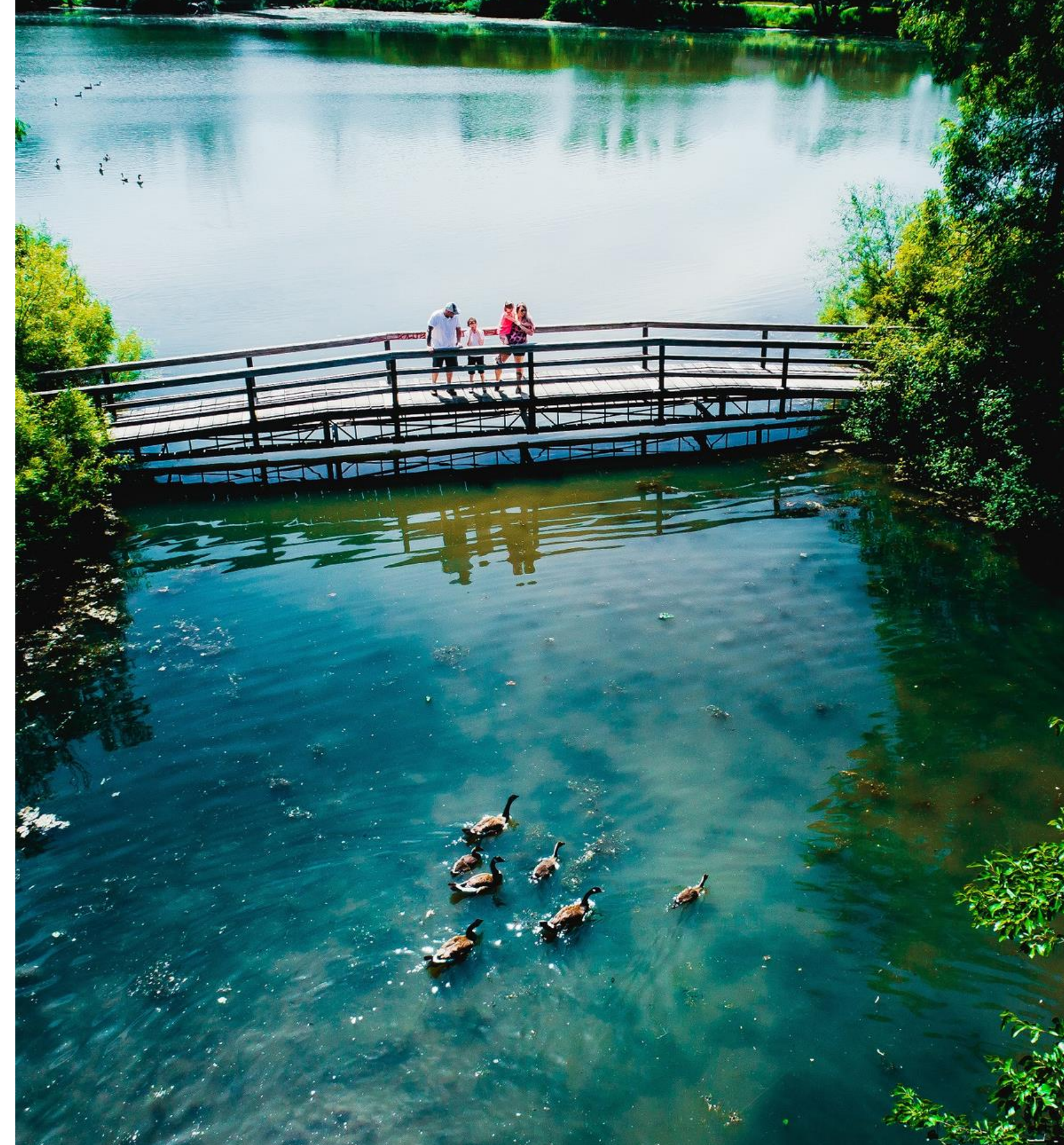
This fall, we planned to inventory and evaluate the condition of all of Heritage Trail Signs throughout the County and replace and/or repair several that require it.





## Content Creation:

- Currently building photo assets for marketing and website update purposes
- We are in the midst of producing a tourism sector video for promotional and informational use
- We will also produce a new commercial to showcase winter season attractions and activities for similar use





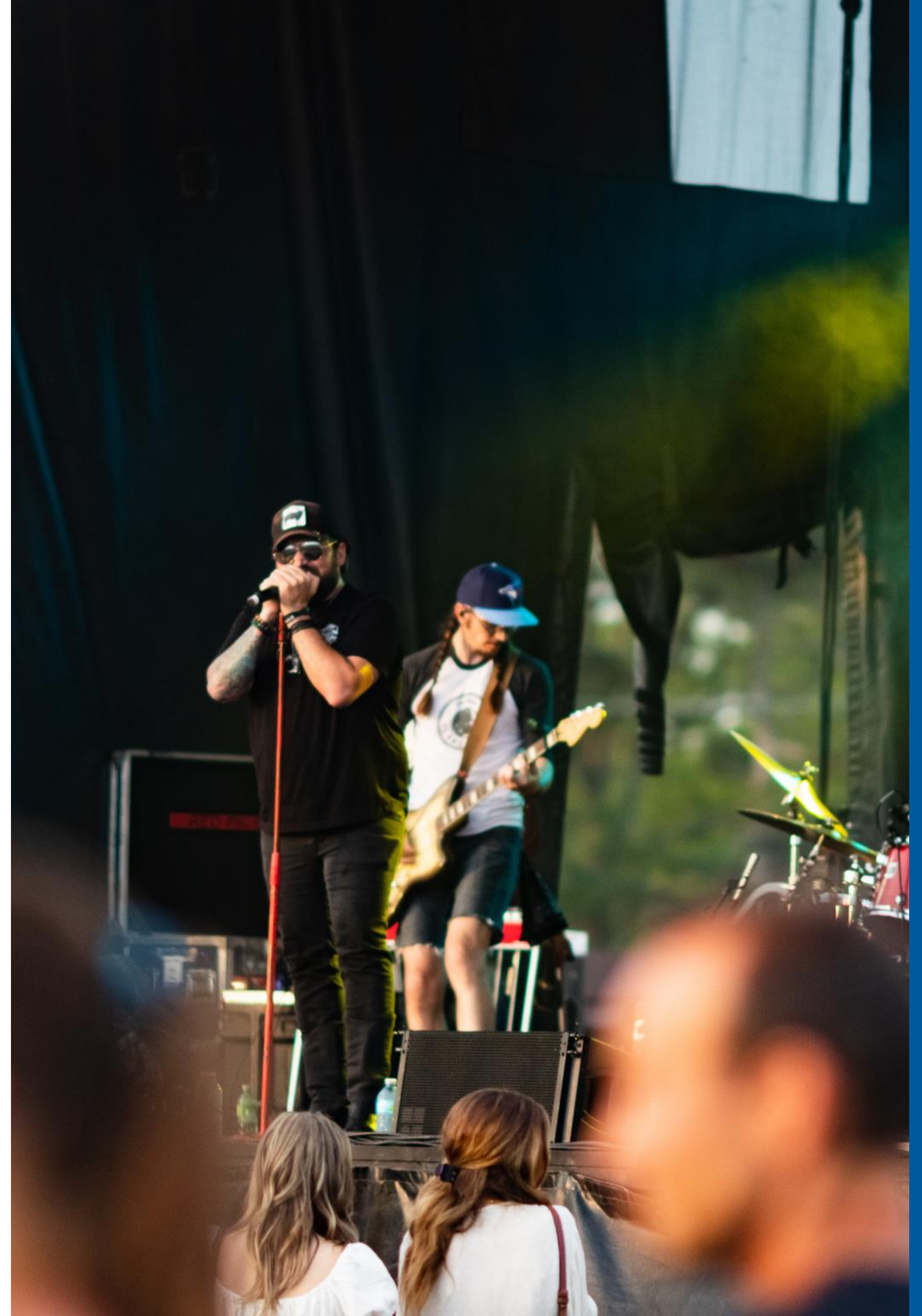
# Tourism Initiative Sponsorship

We were excited to be able to offer Tourism Initiative Sponsorship again this year as a means to foster partnership with local tourism stakeholders.

The intention of this sponsorship is to help stakeholders create new experiences that elevate community presence, attract new visitors, and support the local economy.

The 2022 program has been fully expended after approving sponsorship for events including:

- Lucan Summerfest 2022
- Dorchester Golf & Country Club Summer Country Bash
- Purple Hill RAM Rodeo
- Strathroy Street Patios
- The Shops of Sydenham Spring Market
- and more!





# Spark Program

Middlesex County

## WHAT'S YOUR NEW TOURISM IDEA?

✓ MENTORSHIPS ✓ GRANTS ✓ COMMUNITY

Apply by October 26, 2022 at  
[tourisminnovation.ca/Middlesex](https://tourisminnovation.ca/Middlesex)



George & Ana Taylor  
Purple Hill Country Music Hall



- A new program aimed at sparking and supporting innovative tourism ideas in Middlesex County launched September 20th, 2022
- The “Spark” Mentorships & Grants Program will match selected applicants with a mentor and provide a \$3,000 seed grant to help them get started with their new tourism idea
- We are especially interested in new tourism ideas that relate to year-round accommodations, building relationships and collaborations between culinary tourism and agricultural providers, and recreational and sport tourism
- Individuals 18+, entrepreneurs, small businesses, non-profit organizations and community groups are encouraged to apply with their new tourism ideas for Middlesex County from September 20th to October 26th. Following a juried review process, five finalists will be invited to a virtual Pitch Session where three winners will be selected to receive mentorships and grants



# From our Hands to Your Table



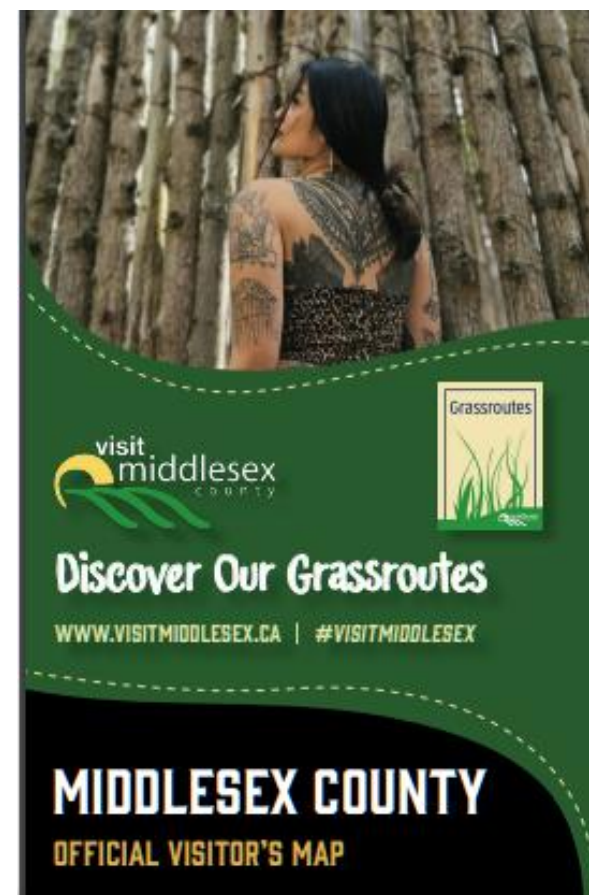
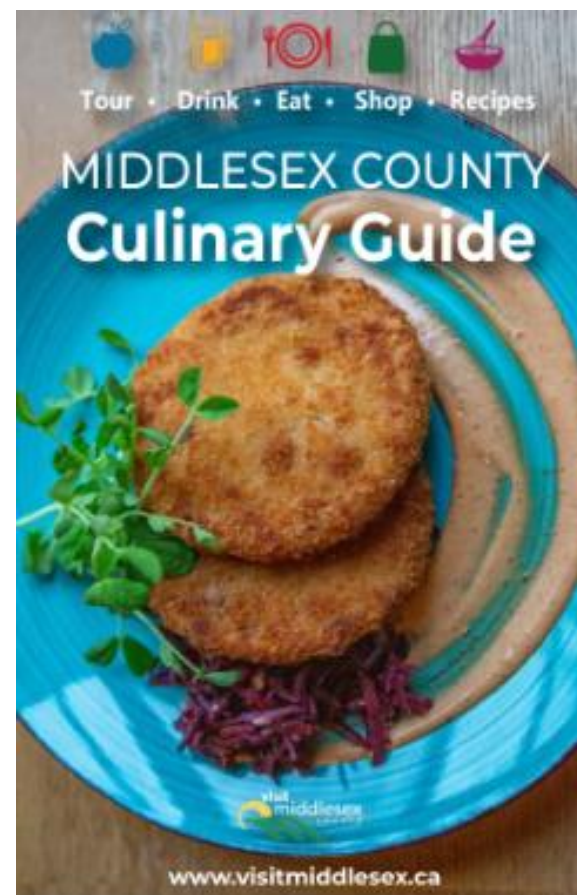
- Third installment of the series launched August 17th 2022
- Partners include Tourism Sarnia-Lambton, Middlesex-London Food Policy Council, Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership, Middlesex Federation of Agriculture and Lambton Federation of Agriculture as partners
- Partnership videos will be released on a staggered basis throughout the campaign
- Heeman's & Mill Pond Tap and Grill and Caradoc Sands & Slegers Organic Greens are Middlesex County's featured partnerships
- Lily Greens & Grind Kitchen and Call the Chef & Bluewater Beef are Sarnia-Lambton's featured partnerships
- The project has been so well received, partners have already begun to request another round to be advanced in 2023



# Publication Update

We are currently overhauling the Middlesex Trails Guide publication.

Updates to the Grassroutes Tourism Map and Culinary Guide will also begin soon as these publications continue to fly off the shelves across the region.





# Advertising

Visit Middlesex & Invest in Middlesex have active campaigns with a variety of outlets ranging from local television to international magazines.

## Visit Middlesex

- Spotify (Postmedia)
- CTV
- Global Heroes
- Villager Magazine
- Ontario Summer Fun Guide
- Thames Talbot Lands Trust Guide
- Great Taste of Ontario
- Daytripping Magazine
- MYFM
- Eat Drink Magazine

## Invest in Middlesex/Workforce

- Business Facilities Magazine
- Business Xpansion Journal
- MYFM
- CTV
- Vendo Media (Billboards)
- Expansion Solutions







## Hermes Award Winners

- As mentioned by Warden Warwick earlier this summer, four of the marketing initiatives produced by Middlesex County to promote and advertise local food and tourism offerings have received international recognition among the creative industry's best. These projects include "From our Hands to Your Table" (Gold), "Discover our Grassroutes Middlesex County Official Tourism Map" (Gold), "Ignite All Your Senses When you Visit Middlesex..." (Platinum), "Middlesex County Culinary Guide" (Platinum)
- The Hermes Creative Awards is an international competition held annually to recognize the creative industry's best marketing material produced for external or internal audiences. Administered and judged by the Association of Marketing & Communication Professionals (AMCP), winners of the Hermes Creative Awards are selected amongst thousands of entries and can range in size from individual talent to large media conglomerates



# Community Transportation



- Assisting Community Services with ongoing management of the current transportation system
- In the midst of hiring Special Projects Manager that will assist with the transportation project, along with the Needs Assessment for Countywide Transportation
- IBI Group is working closely with us on the assessment; the survey closed September 16<sup>th</sup> with nearly 400 respondents



# Thank you!

## We're here to help...

[www.investinmiddlesex.ca](http://www.investinmiddlesex.ca)  
[www.visitmiddlesex.ca](http://www.visitmiddlesex.ca)

