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January 2023

WESTERN ONTARIO
WOWC
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Monthly
Update

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WOWC Advocates for Region at ROMA 2023



The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) continued to advocate strongly for its four major priorities as part of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) 2023 Conference, through a series of constructive discussions with provincial government representatives from January 22 to 24, 2023.

Joining thousands of other rural municipal colleagues in Toronto, WOWC members met this week with several Provincial Ministers as well as Opposition Parties to discuss its key priorities for the 2022-2023 year, which include:

- Affordable and Attainable Housing

- Mental Health and Addictions
- Workforce Development
- Broadband and Cellular Infrastructure

[View the briefing package](#)

Connecting More Homes and Businesses in Western Ontario



Lambton County

- High-speed fibre-optic internet service is now available to more than 2,010 homes and businesses in Lambton County.
- SWIFT in partnership with the federal and provincial governments and private sector investors has committed a combined investment of \$18.8 million, including an additional investment of \$2.5 million from Lambton County, to bring high-speed internet service to nearly 5,000 underserved homes and businesses throughout Lambton County.

Middlesex County

- 640 additional homes and businesses throughout the municipalities of Thames Centre, Adelaide-Metcalf and Strathroy-Caradoc, now have access to fast reliable broadband connectivity as the Southwestern Ontario regional broadband expansion program marks the completion of two high-speed fibre-optic projects in Middlesex County.
- In partnership with SWIFT, Xplore (formerly known as Xplornet) has completed construction of a 38-kilometre fibre-optic network in the Municipality of Thames Centre to provide more than 460 homes and businesses throughout the communities of Putman, Crampton, Avon, Mossley, Harrietsville and Gladstone with access to high-speed internet service.
- Within the Townships of Adelaide-Metcalf and Strathroy-Caradoc, Execulink Telecom has completed the construction of a 17-kilometre fibre-optic network to provide 174 homes and businesses throughout the communities of Kerwood, Napperton and Strathroy with access to high-speed internet service.

[View the press releases](#)

Bruce County Promotes Affordable Housing Toolkit at ROMA



On Monday, January 23, 2023, Bruce County's Director of Human Services, Christine MacDonald, participated as a member of a concurrent panel on housing affordability and development at the 2023 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference in Toronto.

In the session, called "Attracting Housing Development to Rural Ontario", Director MacDonald shared creative approaches to addressing the impacts of Ontario's housing affordability and availability challenges and providing the full spectrum of housing options, particularly rental accommodations, for residents regardless of income or stage in life.

Director MacDonald highlighted the need for greater direct engagement by the municipal sector with the non-profit and private development sectors and explored approaches and tools to attract housing development, which is often a challenge for rural communities. Bruce County's Affordable Housing Toolkit was showcased as a key strategy in the County's Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Developers and builders are encouraged to explore Bruce County's Affordable Housing Toolkit at: www.brucecounty.on.ca/AffordableHousingToolkit

Help Design a Housing Project



The public is invited to get involved in the design of a new municipal housing project and park in Wallaceburg.

The plan calls for the creation of 60-70 rental apartment units in two new buildings on Westcourt Blvd. The project will be the municipality's first affordable housing project incorporating net-zero emissions principles for residential construction.

The buildings will be constructed on a 4.8-acre site and will combine affordable rent and market rent units that are a mixture of bedroom unit sizes. A municipal park will be developed on the property to enhance the area and better integrate the development into the existing neighbourhood.

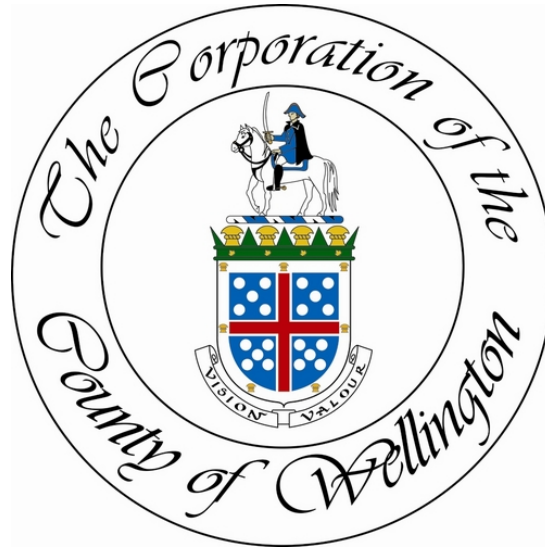
The public is encouraged to provide input and share ideas through a survey. Residents have until February 28, 2023 to complete the survey.

The municipality has obtained a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation SEED funding grant for the pre-design phase.

Pending project funding, construction on the site could begin in 2024.

[View the Press Release](#)

County and Provincial Partners Launch Children's Early Years Campaign



The County of Wellington's Children's Early Years Division is partnering with all 47 of Ontario's Early Years and Child Care Service System Managers to launch a province-wide marketing campaign. The campaign, which launches today, is aimed at generating an increased understanding of, and support for, Ontario's licensed child care sector.

The goal of the campaign is to increase public awareness and provide key facts to ensure the province is able to maintain a stable early education system that is equitably available, accessible, and affordable.

Quality child care supports the economy.

Quality child care is important for a child's development and future success.

Early Childhood Educators are essential for quality child care.

[View the Press Release](#)



Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

RED Program Intake Open

The Rural Economic Development (RED) intake will open for applications on January 23, 2023. You can find all program information including how to apply on the [program's homepage](#) on January 23, 2023.

Ontario Expanding Mental Health Services for Children and Youth in Every Corner of the Province

The Ontario government is investing \$4.75 million to expand the "One Stop Talk" virtual "walk-in" counselling program to connect children, youth and their families with more convenient and timely ways to access mental

Let's Talk Budget 2023

After nearly three years of historic turmoil, Canada is navigating a changing global economy—one that is presenting both challenges and opportunities for Canadians and Canadian businesses.

Information Sessions
OMAFRA staff will be conducting two public webinars to provide an overview of the RED program and discuss the process for applying to the program. Please bring your questions as there will be a Q&A period. The sessions will be on the following dates:

February 1, 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Ontario's Rural Economic Development (RED) program provides cost-share funding to rural municipalities, Indigenous communities, and not-for-profit entities to support activities that create strong rural communities in Ontario and open doors to rural economic development. For more information on how RED can help your community, visit Ontario.ca/REDprogram or call 1-877-424-1300.

health counselling no matter where they live.

The "One Stop Talk" service offers convenient ways to talk to a clinician by phone, video conference, text and chat without an appointment. The program began as a pilot in November 2022 with six participating mental health organizations and is now being expanded to additional organizations and their waitlisted patients. When fully implemented, the program will eventually be available to all children, youth and their families.

The government is also significantly expanding the number of [Youth Wellness Hubs](#) across the province to make it faster and easier for young people to connect to mental health and substance use support, primary care, social services, and more.

The federal government is focused on building a resilient economy that works for everyone, and ahead of Budget 2023, we want to hear your ideas about how to help Canadians succeed while building stronger, greener, more competitive, more innovative, and more inclusive Canadian economy.

This is your opportunity to share what is most important to you! What challenges do you see ahead of us? What should the government be focused on? What great ideas do you have?

The questionnaire will take about five minutes to answer and will be available until February 10, 2023.

In addition, Canadians are welcome to their ideas and comments with the Department of Finance through the Formal Submission.

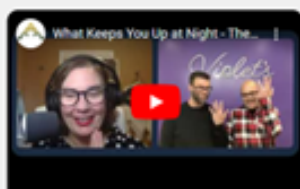
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[View the press release](#)

[View the press release](#)

What Keeps You Up at Night The Life of an Entrepreneur Vlog Series

Success Stories



What Keeps You Up at Night – The Life of an Entrepreneur: Episode 4

On this episode of What Keeps You Up at Night – The Life of an Entrepreneur, host Shauna Rae sits down with partners Brad Kaiman and Nathan Wilcox, owners of Violet's of Strathroy. During this interview, the married couple point to the strengths of each partner as to why Violet's of Strathroy is already a [...]



What Keeps You Up at Night – The Life of an Entrepreneur: Episode 3

On this episode of What Keeps You Up at Night – The Life of an Entrepreneur, host Shauna Rae sits down with Meghan Snyder, owner of Snyder's Family Farm to discuss the joys and struggles that come from running a farm and how she wouldn't have it any other way. [...] Dan's cat episode de [...]



What Keeps You Up at Night – The Life of an Entrepreneur: Episode 2

On this episode of What Keeps You Up at Night – The Life of an Entrepreneur, host Shauna Rae sits down with female entrepreneur Allie Hughes, CEO, and founder of Hughes&Co to discuss the responsibilities of being a business owner in a male dominated industry and shares her frustrations around the inaccessibility of women's healthcare [...]

Community Futures Western Ontario now has four episodes in the vlog series 'What Keeps You Up at Night – The Life of an Entrepreneur', featuring Community Futures clients in Western Ontario by delving into the good, the bad and the success of rural entrepreneurs.

In each episode guests share their own unique story, as each story has the ability to connect us and remind us that every path we take can be messy and unique, but the results are worth it.

The host of the series is Shauna Rae, of the popular podcast Clearing a New Path.

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