

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County provides funding to help small and medium-sized businesses go digital

Midhurst/May 27, 2020 – In response to challenges facing area businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the County of Simcoe is providing \$60,000 in funding towards a unique program to help local businesses adapt their sales models to meet the needs of the ever-changing online consumer world. The funding will cover portions of the costs for a Digital Service Squad to provide one-on-one training to local businesses and their employees. The Digital Service Squad program will be administered by the Barrie, Simcoe County and Orillia Small Business Enterprise Centre and the South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Centre.

“We are pleased to provide this funding to support local businesses with immediate digital needs and help them diversify to meet the changing consumer economy,” said Warden George Cornell. “We know that many of our downtowns and our small and medium sized businesses have felt the financial pressure of this pandemic. With training and professional digital advice, our local businesses will be better served to adapt and transition to online service and sales for future growth and sustainability.”

County Council approved the funding based on staff recommendations from the analysis of the County’s Business Impact Surveys completed by local businesses in relation to urgent COVID-19 needs. Eligible businesses will receive up to 10 hours of free one-on-one coaching from Digital Service Squads and other digital supports through Digital Main Street and Beyond. A team of highly trained professionals will work with businesses to gain a basic web presence or enhance their existing web presence by activating free and easy to use tools such as Shopify, Google My Business and social media. For more information, including full eligibility criteria, visit <https://edo.simcoe.ca/Pages/COVID-19-Government-Supports.aspx>

This program is an expansion of a provincially funded initiative and provides opportunities for additional businesses throughout Simcoe County.

To sign up for Digital Service Squad assistance contact the Barrie, Simcoe County and Orillia Small Business Enterprise Centre at 705-720-2445 or digitalsquad@barrie.ca, or the South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Centre at 705-446-3355 or digitalmainst@collingwood.ca.

About Digital Main Street and Beyond

Digital Main Street and Beyond is a program and service that helps businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and a Digital Service Squad, a team of highly trained professionals who help businesses grow and manage their business through the adoption of digital tools and technology. When businesses join Digital Main Street and Beyond and complete the onboarding process, they receive a free Digital Assessment and recommended to-do list that identifies technologies and tools that can help their business meet their digital goals. Along with the Digital Assessment, they also have the opportunity to work with the Digital Service Squad. The Digital Service Squad can work with businesses one-on-one to activate free and easy to use tools, while also providing recommendations for other technologies.

County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at simcoe.ca.

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