

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**Year 1 - Economic Development,  
Tourism & Culture Master Plan**



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & CULTURE TEAM



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“As the EDTC team, we will foster a systems approach and work in concert with our colleagues and partners to share resources, build capacity and bring value. We will focus on internal and external communications and be the best leaders, ambassadors, and champions we can possibly be”

– EDTC Master Plan.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Collectively, the EDTC team works to create an enabling environment for people and businesses to invest. We also work to create a sense of pride and belonging in our communities, where our people can enjoy their lived experience.

Year one of EDTC Master Plan implementation focused on performing foundational work, providing the base tools and frameworks, necessary to enable our collective efforts and strategic maturing over the life of the Plan.

In 2024, staff focused on building capacity internally within our teams, and for our member municipalities and community partners across the region. For Economic Development and Tourism, this meant pulling ourselves out of the weeds and focusing on a high-level regional role. For Grey Roots, this meant shifting our focus to place a higher priority on supporting community partners through programs and events.

As per the Master Plan, a conscious effort is made to look inward at Grey County. We focus, specifically and strategically, on who we are and what we have to offer. The people, the pride and the resources available here, in Grey County. External influence—regional, provincial, national and global—is always considered, but only as it applies to what is happening and what could happen locally.

Don't lament what you don't have.  
Take inventory of what you do”.

– Dan Mathieson  
Former Mayor, City of Stratford

As highlighted in the department's first annual report, staff found success in this approach. In this first, foundational year, staff across the department did the work to unpack the situation on the ground, using and developing data to inform decision making. They built further relationships with the business community, industry representatives and community groups. They focused on partnerships and programs to seed mutual success.

Now, through the first year of implementation, the dedication and expertise of the EDTC team, gives great confidence, that together, we are moving forward in a meaningful and impactful way, to care for our people and place – past, present, and future.

Savanna Myers  
Director, Economic Development,  
Tourism & Culture

“Be bold. Make a long-term vision and understand that some decisions you make today will have some incredible unintended consequences for the better as you go along your journey. Communicate well. Build a big tent. Get lots of partners in there. Nobody’s in a silo”.

– Dan Mathieson



# REGIONAL OVERVIEW

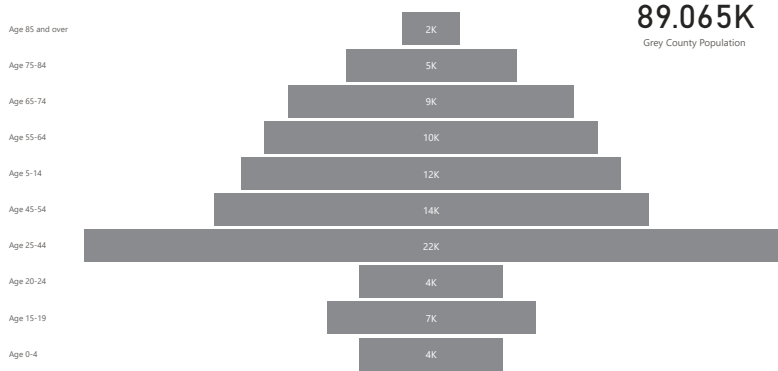
Data analysis drove foundational work in 2024. This included procuring and developing shared tools and resources to enable real time understanding of regional demographics and sectors. Grey County has seen record growth, which began ahead of the pandemic, and continued through to today. This has been felt and noted across the County, particularly across our younger generations. That said, when we look at the population pyramid, it becomes exceptionally clear that it is not enough to maintain our population, let alone grow.

It is no surprise that our County has an aging population, but the extent to which it is aging out, is now being understood more broadly, beyond staff. When we compare this to the demographic pyramid in 2021, we see a stark difference. At that time, the boomers were our key workforce, today, the last cohort is preparing to retire.

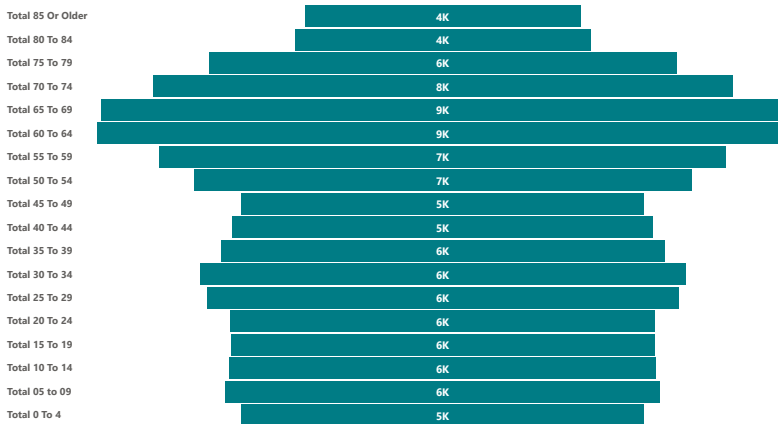
The EDTC Master Plan identifies a path forward, and it is now clearer than ever, the urgency of action required. By 2030, in the next term of Council, we will begin to feel the shock.

By working as a region, alongside our partners, we can make a positive impact, and build communities for the future.

2021 Grey County Population by Age



2024 Grey County Population by Age



# CORE SECTORS



AGRICULTURE

**\$240.5M**

EXPORTS

**2,246**

JOBS

**1,869**

BUSINESSES



MANUFACTURING

**\$1.8B**

EXPORTS

**2,739**

JOBS

**544**

BUSINESSES



TOURISM

**\$1.19B**

ANNUAL SPEND

**8,337**

JOBS

**908**

BUSINESSES

<b>109,825</b>	<b>3M</b>	<b>21M</b>	<b>13K</b>
POPULATION	UNIQUE VISITORS	TOTAL DAY VISITS	BUSINESS

## LARGEST EMPLOYERS



GREY COUNTY'S LARGEST ATTRACTION AND TOURISM EMPLOYER





# 10-YEAR VISION

PER THE EDTC MASTER PLAN, 10 YEARS FROM NOW...

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Grey County in connection with our Member Municipalities will be active as Team Grey, where we collaborate through trust and seed mutual success. We will speak with one voice and achieve goals effectively, in a timely manner and with fewer resources. Grey County will share a cohesive vision that is carried out through effective and true collaboration to benefit us all.

Grey County and its partners will have access to shared tools and resources at their fingertips and have moved from investment readiness to attraction.

Grey County will further diversify, moving clean energy, healthcare and culture industries from emerging to core sectors, joining alongside agriculture, manufacturing and tourism as our robust and foundational economy.

Grey County and its partners will continue to flex their innovative and entrepreneurial muscle through Sydenham Campus, to feed thriving regional networks.

Our world-class four-season destination is being built through well planned investment, enriching the lives and experience of all visitors and residents alike.

## GREY ROOTS

Grey Roots sits in the foreground of culture and connection in the region, leading by example and assisting others to build capacity.

Diverse relationships and partnerships are established and incorporated into the heart of operations of Grey Roots.

Experiential learning is achieved through workshops, interactive displays and different methods of programming using arts, technology, and skills.

Grey Roots is a top-of-mind destination for tourists and residents to learn, experience, connect and reflect.

Grey Roots has more control over site use and can generate more revenue through diverse offerings, driving increased attendance.





# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

**BUILDING COMMUNITIES  
FOR THE FUTURE**



# 1. LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

## PRIORITY 1

**GOAL: BUILD COHESION** Grey County takes a regional approach to economic development, tourism and culture working on behalf of all nine of our member municipalities. Everything we do happens in our municipalities for our people. Our top priority is therefore building Team Grey, where we focus on collaboration, not competition, to build trust and seed success. Collectively, we carry a stronger voice and better the likelihood of achieving goals more effectively, in a timely manner and with fewer resources required. A cohesive vision, followed by effective and true collaboration will benefit us all.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
1.1 Host an <b>Annual Economic Development Leadership Forum</b> to build regional perspective, cohesion and pride among CAOs, senior leadership and elected officials.					
1.2 Conduct regular environmental scans to assess trends and pursue <b>strategic advocacy</b> opportunities as Grey County, with the support of municipalities and partners.					
1.3 Develop <b>municipal partnership and boundary adjustment case studies</b> to unleash mutually beneficial development and resource sharing opportunities; coordinate research; and site tours of best practice examples.					
1.4 Develop and sign a <b>'Team Grey' Memorandum of Understanding</b> with member municipalities to clearly define roles, responsibilities, resources, and expectations.					

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP FORUM (1.1)

*Together, we are stronger.  
We need to think and act as a region,  
Team Grey.*

On November 21, 2024 Grey County hosted its Inaugural Economic Development Leadership Forum. The event welcomed elected officials and senior staff from all nine Member Municipalities and the County. The theme, Building Communities for the Future was thread throughout the day, as delegates were inspired by keynote Dan Mathieson, Stefano Sanguini (Invest Ontario), Luigi Presta (Think Compass), Dave Shorey (Georgian College) and James Sconjack (Bruce Power). Economic Development staff also shared regional demographics and employment lands, drawing an eye to regional economic development potential.





A DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE,  
IS AN ECONOMIC CHALLENGE.

**35%** OF THE POPULATION IS **60 YEARS +**

**59** POTENTIAL SITES  
1+ ACRE EXIST IN GREY      **7** ARE INVESTMENT READY

It's the actions and decisions we make now that will have defining impacts on our region for years to come. Economic development takes time and we need to be thinking ahead and making investments now to benefit our future.

### **STRATEGIC ADVOCACY (1.2)**

In 2024, staff advocacy efforts focused on the Ministry of Rural Affairs' Rural Economic Development Strategy, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade's Provincial Program Review of Small Business Enterprise Centres and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Three Year Immigration Targets Level Plan impacts on post-secondary education and rural workforce development.

“Do not shirk away from the long-term investments because they are really the ones that set the next generation up for success”. - Dan Mathieson

# 2. INVESTMENT READY

## PRIORITY 2

**GOAL: BUILD CAPACITY** Grey County is uniquely situated to help build capacity with and among our partners. We are the great connectors. Taking a systems approach, we can follow the trends and lead in the development of resources. This is an important role understanding that our partners are running at full capacity, yet all investment, activity and experience happens on the ground, in our municipalities.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
2.1 Collate, research and prepare data reports to develop a <b>data sharing program</b> to serve member municipalities, partners, and businesses.					
2.2 Engage in systems mapping to identify the most relevant municipal, provincial, federal and industry programs that strategically align with our core and emerging sectors.					
2.3 Build <b>shared tools and templates</b> at the county level to support municipal and partner efforts, as collectively identified, from policy frameworks, such as the CIP Program, to digital marketing assets.					
2.4 Explore options to create <b>municipally owned employment lands</b> , including three large-scale industrial parks strategically positioned across the Region.					
2.5 Identify and resource <b>significant regional economic development projects</b> that will generate generational wealth, to positively impact Grey and its member municipalities.					
2.6 Strengthen <b>welcoming communities' infrastructure</b> to meaningfully integrate and retain residents.					

### SPOTLIGHT

The SPOTLIGHT platform by Environics Analytics was purchased through EDCO on behalf of our municipalities. Within a two percent variance, this platform can forecast demographics and provide real time spending data, to assist staff and partners in market analysis, trends analysis and forecasting.





## DATA SHARING PROGRAM (2.1)

### COMMUNITY PROFILE

In partnership with the County's GIS team, staff developed a digital dashboard to centralize key demographic information for Grey County and its member municipalities, featuring real-time updates, interactive visualizations, and seamless website integration.

### LIGHTCAST

The license available through OMAFA is utilized by staff to monitor business counts, and regional market data, including municipal runs.

## TOOLS & TEMPLATES (2.4)

### DIGITAL ASSET LIBRARY

This tool was developed as an internal municipal tool. It hosts photos and video made accessible to our member municipalities, including drone video, point of view and professional photography. These assets can be used for advertising and marketing, including attraction efforts geared towards physicians, students and newcomers.

### SECTOR PROFILES

Grey County's leading sectors: Agriculture, Tourism and Manufacturing. The purpose is to communicate regional facts and figures that build a better understanding of our foundational economy, and support municipalities, partners and businesses in accessing data to better plan for the future.

### INDUSTRIAL LAND TOOL

In partnership with the County's GIS team, staff developed an internal Industrial Land Tool to identify vacant lands based on MPAC definitions and zoning.

The digital tool is intended for internal staff to use to collectively verify, examine and disperse information with the goal of understanding the true availability of industrial lands and furthermore, determine which parcels are investment ready or have the potential to become investment ready.

## SIGNIFICANT REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (2.5)

Grey County is continuing its work with Think Compass in 2024 on four major economic development projects, either in play or proposed, across the region.

Staff also sit at several regional tables and working groups. Those specific to significant regional economic development projects include: Clean Energy Frontier, Southwestern Ontario Isotope Coalition, TC Energy Working Group.

# 3 - BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

## PRIORITY 3

**GOAL: BUILD PRIDE** Caring for the businesses who call Grey County home is first and foremost. Here, we listen, learn, and take action in support of business. Through programs and partnerships, we set an enabling environment for our businesses to invest, create jobs and build strong, inclusive communities. With understanding, we tackle broad issues with partners and employers to build capacity and take steps toward solving workforce, housing, childcare and transportation challenges. We also celebrate and champion our partners, businesses, and people, to build community pride.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
3.1 Develop, celebrate, and promote a Made in Grey Program, inclusive of regular networking and education events, workshops and mixers, marketing communication campaigns and exhibits.					
3.2 Host regional sector roundtables, tours and BR+E programs with member municipalities and community partners to understand current trends, challenges and opportunities.					
3.3 Focus investment efforts on core and emerging sectors in Agriculture, Tourism, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Clean Energy, and Culture Industries.					
3.4 Collaborate with and support Georgian College's growth as a change engine in the region through program development, capital investment and capacity building.					

### MADE IN GREY PROGRAM (3.1)

Partnering with the internationally renowned Chef & Artist, Roger Mooking, Grey County proudly introduces its first Culinary Ambassador.

This campaign marks the beginning of a multi-year effort to leverage Grey County's strengths in agriculture and tourism. The objective is to attract visitors and new residents by showcasing the region's beauty and sustainable lifestyle, while also fostering community pride and excitement among locals. Through engaging storytelling and digital content, the campaign aims to position Grey County as a premier destination for food tourism and a vibrant place to live.



[gath-er]

**7** VIDEOS **14** LOCATIONS



## NETWORKING & EDUCATION EVENTS

REGIONAL GREY COUNTY JOB FAIR

**94** EMPLOYERS  
**725** JOB SEEKERS

POST JOB FAIR EVENTS:

**18** EMPLOYERS REPORTED:  
**71** INTERVIEWS. **52** HIRED.

M.S. CHI-CHEEMAUN CRUISE  
AND CONNECT

**350** PROFESSIONALS

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS  
NETWORK (YPN) MIXER

**75** YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

### TEENY TINY SUMMIT SERIES

Partnership between OMAFRA, Grey County and Southgate, funded by ROMA. The theme was Community Wealth and Well-Being and was the first of the three in-person sessions held throughout Ontario.

## REGIONAL SECTOR ROUNDTABLES, TOURS AND BR+E PROGRAMS (3.2)

**4**

SECTOR SUMMITS:  
SMALL BUSINESS,  
TOURISM,  
AGRICULTURE AND  
MANUFACTURING.

**54**

RETENTION  
VISITS

**18**

REGIONAL  
EVENTS  
ATTENDED

**13**

REGIONAL  
COMMITTEES

# 4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

## PRIORITY 4

**GOAL: BUILD NETWORKS** Honing our entrepreneurial spirit is the cornerstone of this priority. It's about building networks, services, and partnerships to meet the evolving needs of our clients. As we've learned, innovation is the only competitive advantage, everything else can be duplicated or replicated, so it's about doing things differently and creating that Made in Grey solution.

ACTION		2	2	2	2	2
		4	5	6	7	8
4.1	Position the <b>Business Enterprise Centre and Catapult Grey Bruce</b> as the region's leader to support entrepreneurs to start, expand and scale their business; strengthen the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.					
4.2	Facilitate a regional training and innovation network through <b>Sydenham Campus</b> to coordinate resources, support local hubs and create a custom and direct pipeline to employment.					
4.3	Facilitate connections to encourage <b>information sharing and multisolving</b> on common problems facing Grey County (internal), member municipalities and partners (external).					

### BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE (4.1)

A new plus-one transfer payment agreement for the Business Enterprise Centre was executed for 2024-2026, including an additional \$50,000 in funding towards grants and programming funds as announced through the Ontario 2024 budget. Summer Company and Starter Company programs were oversubscribed, and all grants were filled.

New trends in clientele demographics and food businesses reemerged this year. Additionally, the Centre saw an increase in consults, though the trend is surrounding individuals trying to supplement income instead of jumping full time into self-employment. Many of these individuals are on ODSP or OW.

Staff continue to meet with the Province, participating in the Provincial SBEC Program review, advocating in support of the SBEC network, recognizing the critical role it plays in community economic development.

#### BEC HOSTED WORKSHOPS

**25** GENERAL WORKSHOPS

**596** PEOPLE REGISTERED

**1** SMALL BUSINESS CELEBRATION EVENT

**119** REGISTERED

**1** BUSINESS BOOTCAMP

**8** REGISTERED





2024  
RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

**3.7:1**

**\$60,000** invested through  
Provincial grant funding leveraged

**\$222,000** invested  
privately into the local businesses.

SUMMER COMPANY

**5** SUMMER COMPANY  
IN-SCHOOL  
PRESENTATIONS

**4** SUMMER COMPANY  
TRAINING SESSIONS

**8** PARTICIPANTS

**7** GRANTS

STARTER COMPANY

**5** STARTER COMPANY  
PLUS  
TRAINING SESSIONS

**33** PARTICIPANTS

**15** GRANTS

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2024 STATISTICS

**42**

BUSINESSES STARTED

**39**

BUSINESSES SUSTAINED

**14**

BUSINESSES EXPANDED

**495**

INQUIRIES

**179**

CONSULTATIONS

**7**

BUSINESSES  
PURCHASED

**54**

JOBS CREATED



# SYDENHAM CAMPUS

The partners and tenants of the Sydenham Campus form a collection of trainers and businesses that support workers, entrepreneurs, and local organizations by providing access to education and training, business services, labs, and technology. The Campus provides employees and businesses with the skills and advantages they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

**315  
RENTALS  
IN 2024**

Short-term rentals continue to increase, as long-term lease space remains at capacity. All Campus users, including short-term rentals fit the following categories: training, education, research and innovation, entrepreneurs, business/employee support services and government services.

**BRINGING THREE  
YEAR TOTAL TO  
MORE THAN 1,000.**

## Tenant Changes in 2024:

DEPARTED: YMCA Employment Services, Catapult Grey Bruce, A.I. Vali Inc., Eat Local Grey Bruce

JOINED: Georgian College Early Childhood Education, Educational Assistant, Child Development Practitioner, Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre, STEMVOX

EXPANDED: Reading Rescue, STEMVOX

## GRAND OPENING

On Thursday, May 30, Grey County proudly celebrated the official grand opening of the Sydenham Campus in Owen Sound.

A pivotal component of this milestone is the unveiling of the eagerly anticipated 8,000-sq.-ft. makerspace, a dynamic addition equipped with eight dedicated fabrication zones catering to woodwork, metalwork, clean lab environments, digital technology, and marketing. The membership-driven makerspace supports two key functions for entrepreneurship and industry through prototyping and training.

More than \$1 million was invested by the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) to support Catapult Grey Bruce and the makerspace.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs invested more than \$100,000 in the facility and equipment.

## ONTARIO YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP SKILLS COMPETITION, MARCH 1

**50+ COMPETITORS** who participated in the welding, electrical installations, hairstyling, culinary and carpentry groups. The awards ceremony and electrical installations competitions were held at Sydenham.

## NUCLEAR INDUSTRY JOB FAIR, MARCH 27

**15 NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS**  
**187 JOB SEEKERS**



## SYDENHAM CAMPUS GRAND OPENING & COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE, MAY 30

**100 DELEGATES**  
**150 COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

## SYDENHAM FALL FAIR, SEPTEMBER 19

**800+ STUDENTS**  
from East Ridge Community School

## MARKERS MARKET AND COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE, NOVEMBER 23

**468 VISITORS 25 VENDORS**

## CRICKET PITCH PILOT

Students from Georgian were able to play three games of cricket in the rear yard of the Campus.

 **Georgian**

**700**

**APPRENTICES** (UP FROM 100 IN 2017)

**2,100 MARINERS** trained

**22% INCREASE**

in enrollment

**39% INCREASE**

in domestic enrollment

## HENRY BERNICK ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE (4.2)

With the strategic vision and support of Grey County, entrepreneurs in the region have new services to support them through the various stages of their entrepreneurial journeys – from training and networking to funding and mentorship – via Georgian College’s Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre (HBEC).

HBEC first launched at Georgian’s Barrie Campus more than a decade ago, and, following its successful programming in Simcoe County, opened a second location out of a dedicated space at Sydenham Campus. This collaboration builds on the strong foundation of Catapult Grey Bruce and highlights a shared commitment to nurturing the region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem and bringing vital business development resources to the region.



*Amanda Mejia, Business Development Manager for Georgian College’s Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre (HBEC)*

## GREY BRUCE MAKERS (4.2)

In the past six months, Grey Bruce Makers has made incredible strides in growth and community impact. Their membership has climbed to 58 active members, reflecting a growing interest in the makerspace. They have hosted an impressive 62 courses, with 195 participants benefiting from hands-on learning and skill development. Beyond programming, they continued to solidify their role as a vital community resource, offering valuable skills training and fostering connections that empower individuals and strengthen the region. These achievements are a testament to the dedication of the team of volunteers and the enthusiasm of the members and participants.



### MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

**1 CORPORATE  
MEMBER**

**4 ENTREPRENEURS**

**50 HOBBYISTS**

**3 STUDENTS**

**NOTABLE!** GBM has launched a student membership to make the space more available to youth 16-23, and turned the wall of the main hallway into a gallery space for members and local artists to showcase and sell their work.

# GREY BRUCE LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

**67** COMMUNITY PARTNERS,  
INCLUDING ALL 17 MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES  
IN GREY AND BRUCE COUNTIES.

A smile is the same  
in every language.

Together, let's welcome  
every new neighbour.

## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

**CONVERSATIONS FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY:** Equity Diversity and Inclusion Trainer Project has trained over 340 individuals from more than 50 organizations. This included individuals from service providers, municipalities, non-profits, and community groups.

**#IMMIGRANTSWORK PROJECT:** Grey-Bruce is one of five communities in Canada participating in the program to help community partners collaborate with local employers in designing solutions to identify, recruit, hire, and retain local immigrant talent.

**FIRST IMMIGRANT SURVEY:** This survey was launched to understand the varied experiences of diverse groups and extract research findings that will inform how service providers, multi-tier government, businesses and the community at large can foster a more welcoming and inclusive space for immigrants and newcomer. Through

the sharing of this report, GBLIP intends to support organizations who have a direct impact on these findings to grow their capacity to develop policies and programs.

**DIVERSITY AND BELONGING CONFERENCE:** This Conference marks a significant first step towards engaging a diverse range of participants to maximize its impact, with aim to promote a more inclusive, collaborative, and culturally sensitive approach to their services. This will lead to better outcomes and greater trust within the community. Additionally, it will encourage dialogue, shared learning, and joint efforts to address the diverse needs of the community.

**6 PARTNERS.  
150 ATTENDEES.**



## SMART21 INTELLIGENT COMMUNITY

For the second consecutive year and third time since 2017, Grey County was named one of the world's Smart21 communities of the year by the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF). The annual competition recognizes communities that embrace technology to realize economic, social, and cultural growth.

## EDTC MASTER PLAN WINS EDCO AWARD

Grey County was recognized with an Award of Excellence for its Economic Development, Tourism and Culture (EDTC) Master Plan by the Economic Developer's Council of Ontario. EDCO Awards identify unique ideas that lead economic development best practices of the future. The EDTC Master Plan, known as 'The Grey't Reset', was recognized in the Excellence for Planning and Strategic Development – Urban category.

# 5. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

## PRIORITY 5

**GOAL: BUILD PLACE** Grey County covers a significant geographic area with a diverse natural landscape; from Georgian Bay waterfront to the Niagara Escarpment to farmland, forests, and water ways, as well as urban centres, villages, and hamlets. We are a leader in tourism, attracting nearly three million visitors each year, and playing an important role in wealth creation for the region. Tourism and culture go hand in hand, and both play a crucial role in community development and retention. It is here where the lived experience of everyday life is created and enjoyed.

ACTION	2 4	2 5	2 6	2 7	2 8
5.1 Work with the Outdoor Management Group (OMG), municipal partners and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to develop destination protocols, including consistent facilities, wayfinding, messaging to improve the visitor experience and balance carrying capacity.					
5.2 Facilitate strategic investment in tourism infrastructure, particularly accommodations and demand generators to build-out a four-season destination.					
5.3 Lead regional destination marketing, including new product development and out of market promotions.					
5.4 Communicate, promote and celebrate our diverse communities, so visitors and new residents can see themselves here.					

## DESTINATION PROTOCOLS (5.1)

### OUTDOOR MANAGEMENT GROUP

County Planning and Economic Development, Tourism staff facilitate an Outdoor Management Group (OMG) inclusive of landowners, trail user groups, tourism organizations, conservation authorities, municipal and provincial representatives to share information and coordinate management protocols/actions since no single authority owns, manages and markets these spaces.

Continuing to strengthen our role in regional destination marketing, staff adjusted development tactics in 2024, and once again began flexing to reaching out of market.

### SHARE THE ROAD

Supported by the Agriculture Advisory Committee, the seasonally focused multi-media campaign continued into year two, with billboards, radio and digital mediums.

### CYCLING ROUTES

Share the Road and Route signs were installed on northern county roads in 2024. The project will be completed in 2025 with sign installation on southern county roads. Signs were delivered to participating municipalities at the end of 2024 for installation on local roads.



## REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING (5.3)

Continuing to strengthen our role in regional destination marketing, staff adjusted development tactics in 2024, and once again began flexing to reaching out of market.

### OUT OF MARKET TRADESHOWS

Staff attended Toronto Auto Show in partnership with Cobble Beach and the Outdoor Adventure Show alongside regional neighbours and partners. More than 4,000 brochures were distributed.

### ANNUAL GREY BRUCE BROCHURE SWAP

Hosted in partnership with Bruce County on May 7 at Saugeen First Nation with Cultural Demonstration and Pow Wow Regalia Fashion Show. More than 130 representatives participated in the event.

### DIGITAL MARKETING

- 14 Feature Website Blogs
- 3 Weekly Instagram Features
- 2,000 Recipients of weekly events newsletters
- 3 Collaborations: Cobble Beach, Apple Pie Trail, and the Ontario Culinary Alliance

### CAMPAIGNS:

#### Maple – Spring Marketing Campaign

March 1 to April 15, featuring six local events, eight maple producers and seven additional businesses that sell/produce or feature local maple syrup.

**ACCOUNTS REACHED: 530,000**

(up from 340,000 in 2023).

#### Boundless Living – Fall Social Media Campaign (Instagram)

The fall campaign strategically targeted couples, highlighting regional destinations. These included: Owen Sound Salmon Tour, Meaford Scarecrow and Apple Harvest, Fall Colours/Hiking/Wine, Scandinave Spa, Holiday Magic at Blue, Neustadt Springs Brewery, Gateway Casino and Match Pub, Cobble Beach, Station 87 and Back 40 Glamping.

**ACCOUNTS REACHED: 641,332**

**PLAYS: 806,471**

### MIXED MEDIA

Grey Bruce Kids, Boomers Summer Edition and Sydenham Sportsmen Salmon Spectacular Magazine. The largest mixed media effort came with participation in Global Heroes, Ontario August Edition. The target was specific to the GTA and Ontario, with a total reach (print & digital) of just under 1.6 million.

### VISIT GREY STATISTICS

Staff strategically supported a website content driven summer, with less emphasis on social media given the noise and dilution.

**WEBSITE 276,529 USERS**

(up 28% from 2023)

**FACEBOOK 474,833 REACH**

(down 39% from 2023)

**INSTAGRAM 238,115 REACH**

(down 6% from 2023)

### REGIONAL BROCHURES

In coordination with member municipalities, staff developed a brand-new product for the market: Community Trails brochure, alongside an update to the Regional Map and Cycling Map. In place of Made in Grey Magazine, the Gather digest was developed to support the broader regional campaign. Distribution is scheduled for 2025.









# GREY ROOTS MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

HISTORY LIVES HERE.



Grey  
County

Colour It Your Way



### GREY ROOTS MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

2024 marks the 20th Anniversary of Grey Roots Museum & Archives—Twenty years of presenting world class exhibitions, events and programming to visitors and residents of Grey County. Two decades of developing Moreston Heritage Village into a beloved living history site, of providing exceptional service to any and all, from simple tourism inquiries to generation spanning research projects. Over the last twenty years, we've been honoured to work alongside a multitude of exceptional volunteers, community organizations, cultural institutions and municipalities - following our vision to help build better communities.

The milestone year was celebrated through a variety of events and experiences including a PA Day kick-off event featuring family activities and complimentary ice cream; The Roots of Grey Roots lecture by historian and author, Richard Thomas who presented a look back on the origin and early years of Grey Roots Museum & Archives; 20th Anniversary Fundraising Gala - a grand soirée celebrating twenty years; and seven special admission by donation days throughout the year - our way of saying thank you to our visitors for all their support.



I contacted GRMA to inquire about historical photographs of Owen Sound related to businesses owned by my family to use in my Greek Community video project. Staff informed me of their process to accommodate my request and I was impressed with the efficiency and the information they provided, so much so that I asked to volunteer in 'The Archives'. Thank you for preserving our past.

- Lili Anne Holding

*Visiting the Bruce Peninsula? Don't miss Grey Roots Museum! Our visit to Grey Roots was an incredibly enjoyable experience. The grounds are well-kept, the buildings and displays laid out well. But most of all, we were impressed by the enthusiastic, knowledgeable volunteers we met inside these buildings! Fabulous! Although we know the area well and have visited several pioneer villages/museums, we learned a lot about the Indigenous residents and settlers, and their struggles to live on the Bruce Peninsula. We also learned about the impact of various technological advancements. So glad we went!*

- Trip Advisor Review – July 2024

# 1. LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

## PRIORITY 1

Positioning Grey Roots in the foreground of culture and connection in the region, reflective of community and visitor interests, is the cornerstone of this priority. We will work to be recognized as a community cultural hub that sparks curiosity and a love of human and natural history and local culture.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
1.1 Foster a hub and spoke model to lead by example and nurture and support regional museums, community organizations and aspiring individuals to build capacity.					
1.2 Establish relationships with the business and arts communities to enable public-private partnerships that support enhanced delivery of service.					
1.3 Lead as cultural development officers to cultivate and connect culture industries and talent across the region; promote the diverse offerings in Grey.					
1.4 Be expert stewards in the collection, storage and display of human, natural and living history stories and collections.					

## COLLECTION AND EXHIBITS (1.4)

Grey Roots accepted an estimated 155 items across 49 accessions. In 2024, Council approved a deaccession as staff work to bring the collection in line with our mandate.

# 10 IN-HOUSE EXHIBITS

- YEAR OF THE DRAGON – LUNAR NEW YEAR 2024
- BLACK HISTORY MONTH DISPLAY
- ERSKINE BROWN: CARVING MEMORIES
- ARTEFACT FOCUS – GREY ROOTS 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY
- CARRYING CULTURE: NEWCOMER KEEPSAKES FROM HOME
- CRUISING THE COUNTY: THE HISTORY OF THE CAR IN GREY
- MEAFORD 150<sup>TH</sup>
- GREY COUNTY GALLERY – CONNECTION
- GREY COUNTY GALLERY – PERMANENCE
- 20 YEARS IN 20 OBJECTS

### CARRYING CULTURE:

#### NEWCOMER KEEPSAKES FROM HOME

was developed in collaboration with Grey Bruce Settlement & Language Services and the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce. This exhibit focused on what newcomers to the area brought with them from their home countries and their stories of relocation and hopes for the future in Grey

County. We had 14 participants loan over 40 items that were shown from May to October.

### MEAFORD 150<sup>TH</sup>

was developed and cross-promoted in collaboration with the Meaford Museum which mounted their own original version at Meaford Hall for the summer months. Curatorial Information 2024



## GREY COUNTY GALLERY

There are now 278 of our own artefacts on exhibit in the Grey County Gallery.

Alongside loans from the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Community Waterfront Heritage Centre and a local Quilting Masters group.

The exhibit includes: 25 archival pieces, 110 historic and modern images and maps, 7 newly created Grey County maps showing various features and 5 infographics.

## ARCHIVES

### 2024 COMMUNITY AND HERITAGE ORGANIZATION SUPPORT EXAMPLES:

- *Northern Terminus: The African Canadian History Journal*
- 'Road Warriors' Negro Creek Road event at Williamsford. Presentation on Grey Roots' archival resources relevant to Negro Creek including research support and maps of Negro Creek and Negro Lakes
- Owen Sound Emancipation Festival
- Supporting the Georgian Bay Folk Society's '50 Years of Summerfolk Over 50 Weeks' social media campaign.
- 175 Markdale Jubilee – Holidays in the Highlands
- S.S. #11 Bentinck School Reunion
- South Grey WWI Home Front performance
- 4th Canadian Training Division, Meaford, 1995 Freedom of the City ceremony
- Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership – historical immigrant groups research projects
- Nahneebahweequay/Catharine Sutton research or image queries: Moccasin Identifier project and related video creation project by Bawaadan Collective, Pier 21, Parks Canada, Changing the Narrative Project, Western University Indigenous Studies, Rural Voice

**JUST FOR INTEREST!**  
 WHEN WE COMPLETE HOPE IN  
 2025, THE GREY COUNTY  
 GALLERY WILL TOTAL EXACTLY  
**300**  
**ARTEFACTS**  
 ON EXHIBIT.



In addition to ongoing municipal inquiries, research assistance in 2024 included complex and professional research or image queries: ex. fiction and non-fiction books, textbooks, newspaper, magazine and journal articles, websites and other online portals, film creators; environmental, architectural and heritage reviews and assessment reports; student projects and teaching at all levels through postsecondary, committed genealogists and local history pursuits. We've noticed out of area and out of province research is returning post-pandemic.

At 4,497.93 square kilometers (1,736.66 square miles) Grey County is the 4th largest county in Ontario. Both Collections and Archives have a geographic collecting scope which is the entire County, with an objective to represent the County as a whole, including each of its nine municipalities, past and present. We collect materials that speak both to the area's human and natural history on the topics of **community life, government, communication, local organizations, families, business, industry, military, transportation, cultural groups, Indigenous peoples, settlement and immigration**, and beyond.

#### BEHIND-THE-SCENES:

Grey Roots' permanent collections are securely stored in a temperature, humidity, and light-controlled environment where they are protected from handling, fire, mold, pests, pollution, and environmental disasters. The goal of these preventative conservation measures is to care for and prolong the lives of the materials for as long as possible. Following receipt of a donation (or municipal transfer) and signed Deed of Gift, processing must be completed before the material is fully available for use.

## FACILITIES SPECIAL PROJECTS

### VILLAGE

- General Store - extend deck, wrap porch posts, eavestrough
- Sewing Shop Sign Install
- School House Water Heater & Circulation Pump Replacement
- Replace Bandstand Roof
- Farm House Repairs - Front porch stairs and railings, window replacement
- Install wooden floor in wood shop
- Caboose - Painting and finishing exterior
- Install internet sensor on barn, trench for wires to SH.
- Barn Quilt installed on Big Red Shed
- Repair shingles blacksmith shop.
- Remove chimney log woodworking shop

### MAIN BUILDING PROJECTS

- Grey County Gallery Demolition
- Flat Roof Replacement (Section 2 of 3)
- Refurbish Package Rooftop Units



# 2. INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING

## PRIORITY 2:

Connecting with our diverse community including Indigenous, Black, Immigrant and Newcomer groups is the critical first step in engaging new audiences and presenting a more complete history. Building strong and meaningful relationships may evolve into partnerships over time, producing a more inclusive and diverse representation of Grey County.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
2.1 Continue to work with the Indigenous Advisory Circle for guidance and feedback to increase the representation of Indigenous history and culture in programs, exhibits, events, and capital projects.					
2.2 Invite authentic and diverse voices to influence, collaborate and lead programs, exhibits, events, and capital projects.					
2.3 Enhance community cultural programming and use of the site by community partners.					
2.4 Nurture continued dialogue with communities; encourage discussions; ask for advice and sincerely consider feedback.					

### INDIGENOUS ADVISORY CIRCLE

The Indigenous Advisory Circle met twice in 2024 - April 2 and October 16. Two individual meetings were also held with Elders Shirley John and Miptoan (Anthony Chegano). The focus of these meetings was the development of content for the Grey County Gallery as we discussed the best way to share the stories of the impact of residential schools on local First Nations, the displacement of the Anishinaabe village at Nawash (Owen Sound), disputes around fishing rights, and the Anishinaabe cultural significance of the land and waters in Grey. Advisory Circle members were invited to write sections of the exhibit text to create space for authentic representation of local First Nations. The group also advised staff on the refresh of the medicine garden at the front of the Grey Roots main building, and IAC member, Robyn Jones was invited in January 2024 to share a best practices presentation on land acknowledgements with Grey County Council.

Each summer, Grey Roots staff participate in interpretive hikes at Cape Croker Park, through the Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences program. These

hikes have been valuable learning opportunities for our team. The knowledge and stories shared by Anishinaabe guides deepen our understanding of the rich, long-standing First Nations history in this area.

### GREY COUNTY COMMUNITY CULTURAL INITIATIVES FUND

\$5,000 in support was provided to the Negro Creek Descendants and Community Friends Group. As appropriate land is confirmed, the group will focus on the development and fundraising for a monument to recognize the historic Black settler communities on Negro Creek Road and recognize the historic Black settler communities on Negro Creek Road. The initiative will culminate in an unveiling celebration planned for 2025. These funds are being held by the Township of Chatsworth who are assisting in the financial management of the project.



### BLUEWATER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD PARTNERSHIPS

Grey Roots collaborated with John Diefenbaker Senior School to host and promote 'Bringing History to Life', a 10th grade history project on local WWI soldiers.

### SPECIALIST HIGH SKILLS MAJOR – AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Bluewater District School Board entered into a pilot agreement in 2024 to move its SHSM Program In Agriculture to Grey Roots. The program combines theoretical and practical teachings through classroom learning and onsite in the barn, greenhouse and maple syrup production facility, to allow students to explore various career paths in food production, raising livestock, crop management and horticulture.

**HIGHLIGHT!** Grey Roots' displays on Black History are drawing interest from outside the area. The two visits by the Toronto-based Afrika Outbound youth group in 2024 were preceded by their first visit in the fall of 2023, and they promise to return. Each visit is co-hosted with a volunteer from the local Black descendants community. We also arranged for a volunteer to co-host the two tours from the Unifor BIWOC Committee, based in Kitchener.





# 3. INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

## PRIORITY 3

This priority focuses on further embedding interactive experiences throughout Grey Roots. This engagement model appeals to a variety of learners and can create more diverse access, both on and off-site, led by Grey Roots staff or others, to encourage memorable and connected experiences.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
3.1 Continue to develop new interactive experiences throughout Grey Roots for diverse visitors of all ages and abilities—physically across the site and digitally.					
3.2 Develop expert partnerships with individuals and community groups to lead and implement interactive, diverse programming.					
3.3 Introduce more young family and youth focused products and experiences to better serve and grow the priority target segments.					
3.4 Develop a roadshow and travelling exhibit series to embed products and experiences offsite, across the region.					

**29**  
WORKSHOPS

**32**  
SCHOOLS  
**43**  
PROGRAMS  
**1,530**  
STUDENTS

**41**  
KIDS  
PROGRAMS

### WORKSHOPS

PIEROGI, PASTA, PICKLES, PEACHES, SALSA, PIZZA, CREATIVE BAKING

The introduction of workshops was a strategic focus in 2024. Participants joined from across Grey, Bruce, Simcoe and Huron, and as far as Florida. Ages ranged from children and youth to adults and seniors. Children participated with parents, aunts, grandparents, and we saw many groups book together as families, friends and working colleagues who coordinated schedules. Two Syrian participants were booked in by residents who were helping the girls learn English and traditions.

### EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Students travel from across Grey and Bruce to attend Grey Roots Education Programs. 2024 curated programs included: Animated Village Exploration, Designed by Nature, Settler Savvy, Cooking by the Calendar, Doing the Chores, and Keeping with Tradition.

- Toddlers Take the Museum (with EarlyON)
- PA Day Activities
- March Break
- Christmas Break



## KIDSCAMP

In 2024, KidsCamp supported 63 different families, and attracted 32 returning campers.

Nine spots were earmarked for BWDSB special programming, After School & Summer Partnership Program led by Deborah Richardson, Behaviour Expertise Professional with BWDSB. These are students with exceptionalities who may not always be able to attend traditional camp spaces.

Two spots were donated to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Grey Bruce and Western Simcoe.

Four Specialized Programs:

- Cooking Quest
- Nature's Rhythm
- S.T.E.A.M. Fusion
- Our Community In Motion

**7** WEEKS **85** KIDS

**31**  
RENTALS

**29**  
EVENTS

**5,439**  
ATTENDEES

**8**  
EVENT SPONSORS,  
TOTALING  
**\$14,000**

### SPECIAL EVENTS

- Lunar New Year**
- Family Day**
- Black History Event**
- Bluewater Railday**
- Our Roots Are Showing
- Concert Series (4)
- Members Preview
- Specialist High Skills Major Open House**
- Spring Into Moreston
- Multicultural Day**
- 20th Anniversary Celebration
- Delton Becker Day**
- Emancipation Speaker's Corner**
- Emancipation Gospel Sunday**
- Antique & Classic Car Show**
- Welcoming Week**
- Harvest Fest
- Spring and Fall Lecture Series (7)
- Halloween Fright Night**
- 20th Anniversary Gala
- Moreston by Candlelight (2)

*\* Bold are community partnered events, hosted at Grey Roots*

### COMMUNITY EVENT PARTICIPATION

- Owen Sound Pride Parade
- Cars and Coffee Car Show
- Concourse d'Elegance Car Show
- Owen Sound Santa Claus Parade
- Owen Sound Volunteer Fair



# 4. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

## PRIORITY 4

Recognizing Grey Roots as a key tourism asset in Grey County, as both destination and hub of information and access underpins this priority. It's about inspiring return visits and positioning Grey Roots as top-of-mind among our community and visitors by sharing key tourism information and offering unique experiences.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
4.1 Establish Grey Roots as Grey County's foremost tourism information hub.					
4.2 Utilize the substantial outdoor property to create year-round roadside and outdoor attraction experiences.					
4.3 Investigate opportunities to curate an itinerary of experiences between Grey Roots and other attractions, helping to attract overnight visitor stays					
4.4 Explore the possibility of creating a connecting trail link between Grey Roots and Inglis Falls, in conjunction with the Bruce Trail to provide day long or multi day experiences.					



### TRAVELLING EXHIBIT

*Inspiring Nature, Inspired Techno* ran at Grey Roots from May to September. The family-friendly exhibit explored the intersection between nature and transportation technologies. Hands-on, interactive components and eye-catching displays showcased numerous technologies inspired by the natural world.

### TOURISM INFORMATION HUB

Hub development began with a greater tourism presence in 2024. Grey County's two Tourism Summer Students spent more time at Grey Roots, setting up a visitor booth, sharing information and answering questions for guests looking to explore the region. In addition to having more readily available tourism information, a new regional map wall was installed as the first permanent installation of the transformation.



# 5. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

## PRIORITY 5

Through this priority, we look internally at our operations to consider how we do business, and how we can continue to do things differently. It's also about making sure all our people can access the products and services we so proudly offer.

ACTION	2	2	2	2	2
	4	5	6	7	8
5.1 Prioritize programming over new construction to increase visitation and revenue, fully utilizing the assets already at Grey Roots.					
5.2 Work with the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) to amend property permissions and enable further use of the property, including Moreston Heritage Village.					
5.3 Perform an annual operations review to understand trends, refine the business model, explore new revenue generation tools and plan for sustainable growth.					
5.4 Explore methods of improved access and inclusion across product and service offerings.					
5.5 Enhance strategic target marketing to residents and visitors, encouraging greater participation in product and service offerings, and boosting customer relationship longevity.					
5.6 In conjunction with economic development and tourism, develop a Made in Grey program that celebrates our present – people, place and business - bringing to life our motto, 'History Lives Here'.					

### LEAN PROJECT

Staff engaged Lean Advisors to assist in planning Village operations for 2025. The project consulted staff, volunteers and the public to recommend an operating model that better aligns with current experience and future trends.

### MUSEUM ASSISTANT

Bianca Nam was hired in November 2024 in a purposeful adjustment to continue the course of prioritizing programming, enabling coordinated delivery every Saturday at the museum. One student position was realigned to assist with program delivery and support education programs and special programming across PA Days, March Break and Christmas Break.



### FRIENDS OF MORESTON

The Friends of Moreston is a volunteer-driven, not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting Moreston Heritage Village at Grey Roots Museum. This group plays a vital role in preserving, maintaining, and promoting the village, which is constantly evolving. The Friends undertake a variety of projects, such as gardening, construction, cleaning, painting, and fundraising. They organize seasonal workdays in the spring and fall to help keep the village in excellent condition year-round. Additionally, the group holds quarterly meetings, during which Grey Roots staff provide updates on museum plans and activities, seeking feedback and recommendations from the Friends to guide future initiatives.

## VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

Volunteers at Grey Roots are essential to everything we do. Whether presenting Grey County's history to the public, supporting the museum's artifact and archival collections, restoring antique vehicles, assisting with exhibit changeovers, or contributing to educational programs, our volunteers play a vital role.

In 2024, we have made it a priority to keep our volunteers informed about museum plans and to maintain strong connections throughout the year. This includes sharing updates on performance measures, discussing future plans, and gathering valuable feedback and input from our dedicated and experienced volunteers.

**86** ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

**4,327** VOLUNTEER HOURS

## DIGITAL STATISTICS

### WEBSITE

**204,316** views

**85,871** sessions

**67,470** users

Most visited pages

- Homepage
- Hours/Directions/Admissions
- Events
- Exhibits
- Archives

### FACEBOOK

**628,006** views

**418,516** reach

**26,906** interactions

### INSTAGRAM

**67,064** views

**26,161** reach

**4,239** interactions

## GRANTS, CAPITAL SPONSORSHIPS & DONATIONS

**\$ 203,978.00**

Federal Funding:

Canada Cultural Spaces

**\$63,500**

Provincial Funding:

Community Museum  
Operating Grant

**\$15,716.98**

Donations:

Pay by Donations days, donations in memory of loved one

## Capital Sponsorship:

Thomas Wheildon - \$50,000 for Theatre Upgrades \$10,000 per year over 5 years.

Wheildon Investments Inc - \$8,000 in year four of \$40,000 Arnott General Store.

Fairmount Security - \$3,500 in year four of \$20,000 Children's Gallery.

## 2024 TOTALS

**280**  
MEMBERS

**21,259**  
ATTENDEES

**\$166,904**  
REVENUE

(30% PROGRAMS, 19% GENERAL ADMISSION, 16% SPECIAL EVENTS, 16% MUSEUM STORE, 12% MEMBERSHIPS, 7% RENTALS AND TOURS)







# Grey County

Colour It Your Way



Grey.ca

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