

# South Grey Home & Garden Show 2024 Report

*Prepared by:*

**South Grey Chamber of Commerce**



**Event:** 2024 South Grey Home and Garden Show

**Date:** Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Times:** 10am to 4pm Saturday and 10am to 3pm on Sunday

**Location:** Flesherton Arena Complex, Flesherton ON

## Event Summary

The 2024 South Grey Home & Garden Show was organized and operated by the South Grey Chamber of Commerce with the support and assistance of the Municipality of Grey Highlands, and in conjunction with the Municipality of West Grey and the Townships of Southgate and Chatsworth. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the organizations. The event took place April 27 to 28, 2024 in the Flesherton Arena and parking lot. The event hosted local vendors, residents and visitors.

### 1. Event Goals

- (1) Operate the show at a break-even financial level (or better)
- (2) Offer a variety of exhibitors (to attract a variety of attendees), setting the foundation to draw more attendees, attract big-name speakers, and justify higher booth prices in 2024
- (3) Attract over **1,800 attendees [2022: 1,000 goal; 1,400-1,800 actual]** (to make the show worthwhile for the exhibitors), setting the foundation to draw more exhibitors and an equally varied group of speakers and charging a higher booth price in 2024 if desired

### 2. Event Elements

As with any Trade Show that brings the exhibitors sales or leads, and the attendees the desire to tell others and to attend the next year, the South Grey Home & Garden Show had numerous elements.

**The Show included the following:**

- Beside the Arena we had a Tiny Home Model and Chief Burger Food Truck.
- The Fire Station brought a truck to the parking lot and interacted with the public on Saturday
- The welcome table in the Arena offered Show guides, Chamber of Commerce business directories, various local magazines, and an adjoining one had the ballots for draw prizes and the prizes themselves, as well as a goodwill donation plant pot.
- Draw prize ballots were free, and enabled us to capture age, town residence, and media success details. Winners were drawn hourly at the Show, with witnesses.
- Draw prizes were donated by Chamber members and other exhibitors
- Four food banks – Markdale, Flesherton, Durham, and Dundalk – took turns staffing a table just beyond the welcome table, to raise awareness and collect monetary and food donations. They all saw a strong benefit and were grateful for the opportunity. Print media had asked attendees for food bank support in lieu of an entry fee.
- When entering the Arena, attendees saw the Municipality's booth on the left, and the roughly **\$4,500 Grand Prize** display/Chamber booth on the right.
  - The Grand Prize elements were donated by Chamber members, as follows:
    - Transform Tree and Shrub Care - **\$500 gift certificate to Transform Tree and Shrub**
    - Century 21 In Studio Realty - **Fire Pit (\$600 value)**
    - Cold Turkey Trailer Rentals - **500\$ gift certificate to Cold Turkey Trailer Rentals**
    - Devonleigh Homes - **\$1000**
    - Sea and Ski Realty - **\$500**
    - Rural Net - **\$510**
    - Fawcett Funeral Homes - **\$500**
  -
- A bustling Arena floor had 48 exhibitors lining the “boards” and short rows within.
- At the far end of the Arena was the Speakers’ Stage, with risers, podium, white backdrop conveniently hiding table and chair supply, microphone, projector, and audience chairs. Presenters were scheduled on Saturday and Sunday, with one speaking both days.

**Presenters and their topics included:**

- Anne Bartlett, Riverwood Gardens: **“Dare to be Different- New, Uncommon & Unique Plants”**
- Ben Caesar, Fiddlehead Nurseries: **“Food Forest Abundance”**
- Robert Reid, Grey Bruce Design Studio: **“Why Hire a Professional Designer”**
- Jennifer Schwarz, Mill Pond Home Decor: **“From Drab to Fab- Revitalizing Old Furniture”**
- Paul Zammit, Niagara College: **“Creative Containers”**
- Mathew Hunking, Hunking Honey: **“The Buzz About Beekeeping”**

**Outdoors, kids could enjoy the fire and police vehicles, while inside the Arena, activities included the following:**

- o Markdale & District Horticultural Society’s flower planting area
  - o United Way of Bruce Grey- Decorate a wall hanging
  - o Balloons, stickers, stuffed animals, and games to play, offered by individual booths
- 
- Grey County Master Gardeners offered **“troubleshooting your plants”** assistance.
  - The OPP and West Grey Police were invited and participated on Saturday.

### 3. Outreach to Vendors

We reached out via email and telephone to roughly 300 businesses to obtain our Show exhibitors. As this was our third year hosting the Show, we were able to share the previous year's success and attendee demographics.

- We attracted **48 exhibitors** to the Arena. We limited exhibitors to 2 per category, with plans to increase that number to 3 if overall exhibitor count reached 60 booths.
- Booth prices varied according to booth size, South Grey Chamber membership status, and if electricity was requested.
- Exhibitors were required to sign an application, then sign a contract and provide payment insurance covering the Chamber and the Municipality for \$2 million liability.
- Many exhibitors ran draws or giveaways at their booth, with high uptake.
- Some booths were provided complimentary to the Chamber's 4 Municipal partners (with 3 taking part) and to suppliers of marketing services and Show elements.

### 4. Marketing for Attendees

The Chamber advertised the Show across the region using diverse media to reach a broad number of possible attendees in different ways, and was a key element in showing the exhibitors the support we were providing to draw a reasonable volume of potentially interested and active attendees.

Some booths were provided complimentary to the municipalities and to suppliers of marketing services and Show events.

Marketing included the following:

- placing 30-second radio ads on Mix 106.5 ("the Number One radio station in the Owen Sound Central Market, in the key marketing demographics of Adults 18-49, Adults 25-54 and Females 25-54") and Country 93 (playing "Today's Best Country" the number one listened-to station in Grey and Bruce Counties"), and 10-second Coming Events announcements on 560 CFOS ("the region's heritage AM station playing the oldies you want along with award-winning local news, weather, sports and talk shows")

	Most Popular With Ages	Female/Male Ratio	Highest Levels of School Achieved	Most Likely Household Income
<b>Mix 106.5</b>	45-64 56%	70/30	College/Trade 36% University 24% Post Grad 5%	\$50,000-\$74,999 <b>24%</b>
<b>Country 93</b>	65+ 30%	58/42	College/Trade 38% University 8% Post Grad 5%	\$50,000-\$74,999 <b>24%</b>
<b>560 CFOS</b>	65+ 74%	54/46	College/Trade 27% University 17% Post Grad 6%	\$50,000-\$74,999 <b>18%</b>

- recording a radio interview for playing in rotation on the “Community Calendar” and “Community Connection” feature, which ran 3 times per day on Mix 106.5 and Country 93
- creating and boosting Facebook and Instagram ads for Show elements, speakers, exhibitors, and dates and times, and cycling them as the Show date got closer
- building and promoting a Show website – SouthGreyHomeAndGardenShow.com – which provided information on show details, kids’ events, speakers, prizes, and searchable exhibitors
- encouraging an article the week before the Show in *The Advance* and *Dundalk Herald*, which are distributed throughout Grey Highlands and Dundalk in stores and by subscription, which extends down to Mount Forest
- working with *The Advance* to write, design, and produce an 8-page colour insert into the paper the week before the Show, with an additional 700 copies produced for handout at the Show entrance
- posting the Show in Grey County Events and on Events pages of local radio stations and event sites
- producing and mailing a full-colour, double-sided postcard with QR codes across Grey Highlands, Southgate, West Grey, and Chatsworth, with one side providing Show details and the other providing Chamber details and a link to the Chamber’s online business directory

## 5.Attendees Analytics

An estimated **1,700-1,800 individuals** attended the 2-day event. We drew demographics from the door prize ballots collected.

### **Attendees were encouraged to complete an entry for draw prizes:**

- Saturday was busier than Sunday
- Anecdotally, the exhibitors were thrilled with the attendance
- Attendee ages: **65.2% 51+ [2023: 69.9]**
- Attendee locales: Flesherton and Markdale **43.6% [2023: 50.1%]**
- Strongest marketing tools:
  - Word of Mouth: **23.1% [2023: 30.1%]**
  - Postcards: **22.4% [2023: 27.7%]**
  - Facebook: **18.5% [2023: 26.3%]**
  - Newspaper: **18.3% [2023: 35.7%]**
  - Radio: **8.7%**
  - Website: **5.7%**
  - Instagram: **2.5%**
  - Other (Sign/Drive by): **<1%**

### **Some interesting observations gleaned from our ballots:**

Not every ballot was filled out in its entirety, and some people indicated multiple marketing outlets (suggesting the multi-media approach was at least somewhat beneficial).

Newspaper readers were largely in the 66+ category.

Instagram viewers were in the over-51 category.

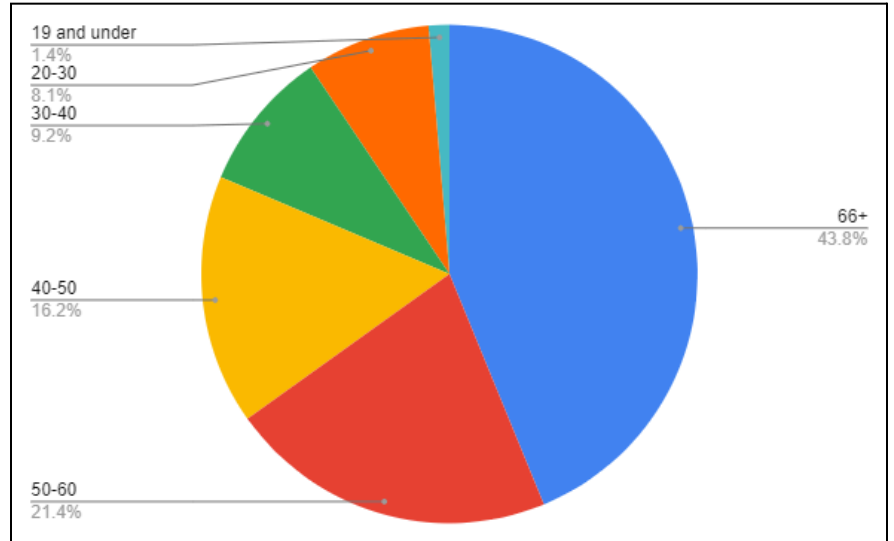
Some people indicated on the ballot that they were just out for a drive and saw signboards on the street so they popped in.

Radio listeners were generally 41+.

Facebook touched every age demographic consistently.

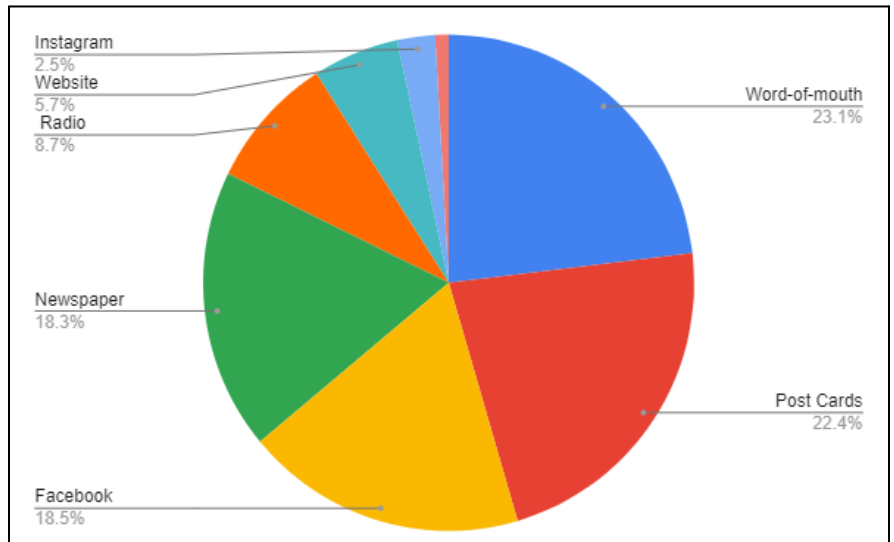
## Age Demographics 2024

AGE DEMOGRAPHICS
162 66+ (44%)
79 50-60 (21%)
60 40-50 (16%)
34 30-40 (9.2%)
30 20-30 (8.1%)
5 19 and under (1.4%)



## Marketing Channels (How they heard about the show)

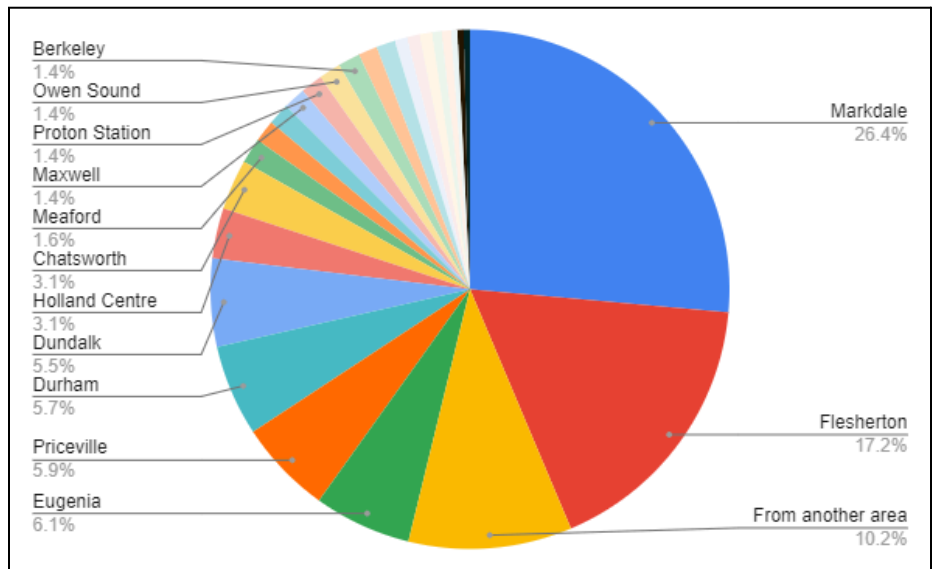
Marketing Channels
130 Word-of-mouth (23%)
126 Post Cards (22%)
104 Facebook (18%)
103 Newspaper (18 %)
49 Radio (8.7%)
32 Website (5.7%)
14 Instagram (2.5%)
5 Other (Posted signs, drove by)





## Geographics (Where people came from)

CITY/TOWN
135 Markdale (26%)
88 Flesherton (17%)
52 from another area (10%)
31 Eugenia (6%)
30 Priceville
29 Durham (5.8%)
28 Dundalk (5.6%)
16 Holland Centre (3.1%)
16 Chatsworth (3.1%)
8 Meaford (1.6%)
7 Feversham (1.4%)
7 Hanover (1.4%)
7 Maxwell (1.4%)
7 Proton Station (1.4%)
7 Owen Sound (1.4%)
7 Berkeley (1.4%)
6 Singhampton (1.2%)
6 Kimberely (1.2%)
4 Thornbury (0.8%)
4 Holstein (0.8%)
4 Southgate (0.8)



3 Collingwood (0.6%)
3 Shelburne (0.6%)
2 Clarksburg (0.4%)
2 Rocklyn (0.4%)
2 Mount Forest (0.4%)

## 6. Notes for a Successful 2025 Year

- Seek additional day-of volunteers (front door, draw ballot table, Chamber table, AV, setup, teardown, parking lot setup; event coordinator is show manager)
- Identify a practical and cost-effective parking solution; perhaps the field next to the arena?
- Obtain more municipal barricades, ~8
- Reduce the number of outdoor exhibitors, as they take up valuable parking space
- Ask Kate from Grey Heron is a teacher, she may be willing to do a kids' workshop
- Profile and advertise the speakers strongly, including to member organizations that will offer support
- Electrical cord junction box placement can create booth placement issues; this must continually be considered in booth layout stage
- Ensure electrical outlets and cords in Arena and Kinplex are tested well in advance
- Stage setup was agreeable to presenters and audience
- Try to arrange food bank shifts of Saturday 10-11:30, 11:30-1, 1-3, and Sunday 10-12:30, 12:30-3 among our region's 5 food banks
- Ensure radio station can bring Cruiser and make live reports
- Send exhibitors more communication; e.g., home show best practices, media and marketing toolkits, hashtags
- Find out what stopped some exhibitors from being able to process payments via the Arena's unsecure internet; and either warn exhibitors and find a solution
- Ensure a diverse speaker series

- Do not have speakers at the first or last hour each day
- Look into purchasing or renting a portable PA system to announce speakers and door prize draws
- Send newspaper rate card out with the fall pitch for deposits
- Confirming the speaker series, and collecting photos, bios, presentation topics, and AV requirements, no later than December of the prior year
- Set a hard cutoff date of end-of-March to requests for electricity and booth sizes/locations, thereby ensuring accurate ordering of municipal resources, drapery setup; that leaves April to focus on advertising
- Confirm West Grey Police and Markdale OPP and clarify if they want inside and/or outside and how many booths; ask for presence Sunday
- Include printing show posters in budget
- Speak with grocery and drug store to place flyers in orders
- Begin planning for 2025 Show immediately, with exhibitor outreach and request for deposits in fall 2024