



## Media Release

June 4, 2020

### **Bruce County offers \$100,000 in grants to support tourism businesses, part of \$1.75M Business Sustainability Fund**

**Bruce County, Ontario:** On May 12, Bruce County Council endorsed a \$1.75 million investment in grants and loans to support local businesses over the next two years. As part of the *Support the Bruce: Business Sustainability Fund*, a special edition of the Bruce County Tourism Innovation Lab's "Spark" program was launched today to help tourism businesses impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

Bruce County Warden Mitch Twolan comments: "Tourism businesses have been one of the hardest hit by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bruce County Council is pleased to support our local tourism providers as they recover and rebuild."

Tourism operators with up to 10 full-time employees can apply to "re-imagine" or "re-tool" their tourism business. With \$100,000 available, selected applicants will receive grants between \$3,000 and \$10,000. Successful applicants will also be matched with an experienced mentor.

"The Bruce County Tourism Innovation Lab was launched in 2019 to support the development of sustainable tourism initiatives on the Bruce Peninsula," says Kara Van Myall, Director of Planning & Development / Recovery Coordinator. "This special edition of the "Spark" program can now support tourism operators across Bruce County as they respond and adapt to the evolving tourism landscape."

Justin Lafontaine, Program Lead of the Ontario Tourism Innovation Lab, adds that, "tourism businesses can apply to upgrade their buildings or facilities, purchase new equipment that supports enhanced programming, or create a new digital platform, for example. The goal of the program is to inspire and support new tourism ideas and innovations."

Applications will be accepted from June 4 – 24, reviewed by a jury of local and provincial tourism leaders, and selected applicants will be announced in mid-July. Full program information and the application guide are available at [www.tourisminnovation.ca/reimagine](http://www.tourisminnovation.ca/reimagine). "Spark" is offered as a partnership between Ontario Tourism Innovation Lab, Regional Tourism Organization 7, and Bruce County.

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**For more information, contact:**

Jessie McGibbon, Marketing & Communications  
Coordinator, Bruce County  
226-909-2460 or [jmcgibbon@brucecounty.on.ca](mailto:jmcgibbon@brucecounty.on.ca)

Justin Lafontaine, Program Lead, Ontario Tourism  
Innovation Lab  
416-712-8819 or [info@tourisminnovation.ca](mailto:info@tourisminnovation.ca)

*Bruce County is an upper-tier municipality in Southwestern Ontario, Canada, made up of 8 lower-tier municipalities and 68,423 residents. The explorers who visit, live, and work here are the dreamers who take roads less travelled and see tried and true as an invitation to try something new. Be an Explorer and call Bruce County home.*