

Economic Development and Culture Activity Report

February 2025

Economic Development

- **Business at Breakfast** was held on Thursday, November 7 in partnership with TD Bank Group. There were 109 attendees, up from 82 in 2023. Leslie Preston, Managing Director and Senior Economist at TD Economics delivered the keynote presentation. A post-event survey was conducted; 85% of survey respondents were very satisfied with the overall event with 90% saying they would attend again.
- On November 26, the Town's EDC, Building, and Planning divisions partnered with the Orangeville and District Real Estate Board to host a **Real Estate Roundtable**. The event attracted a crowd of over 80 local realtors. A post-event survey indicated that 88% of survey respondents were very satisfied with the overall event and 100% said they would attend again. A follow-up event may be held in the spring with a focus on the new Building Code.
- [Dufferin County's Economic Development Strategy](#) was adopted in November.
- In response to ongoing parking challenges in downtown Orangeville, a new [online resource](#) was created to highlight the location of parking spaces.
- An online [Business Connection form](#) has been developed and launched. It will be used as a more formal way to gather important data on our local businesses, helping the EDC division to better connect and serve our business community.
- The EDC office has taken over responsibility for the Town's **Business Milestone program** and supports local businesses that are celebrating grand openings, expansions or anniversaries.
- Promotion of the [Community Improvement Plan](#) in 2025 will kick off with a targeted mail out to property owners in Priority Zone 2 with an invitation to an Information Session on April 8.
- In response to tariffs threats from the United States, the EDC office published a [Tariff Resource webpage](#) and is collaborating with Dufferin County, the Town of Shelburne, and the Workforce Planning Board to understand potential impacts to local businesses.
- Dufferin County is hosting a presentation "[What Trump Means](#)" on March 5. The event is **free and open** for all and is a unique opportunity for local businesses to enhance their understanding of cross-border economic dynamics.

Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)

- The July **Starter Company Plus** cohort completed their training program. The grant committee met on November 27 and awarded \$5,000 grants to five applicants.
 - o The five grant recipients have been provided with professional mentoring from a bookkeeper and a SEO consultant. Professional head shots and video business profiles of each business owner were also completed and will be used to help promote the Starter Company program.
- Five applicants have been selected to participate in the October cohort of **Starter Company Plus**. Bi-weekly training began on November 6 and will conclude at the end of February when the grant committee will meet to assess their business plans.
- Monthly **workshops** hosted by the SBEC included:
 - o Building your Brand Online – November 13, 12 attendees
 - o Intellectual Property – December 3, 8 attendees
 - o Starting a Small Business – January 14, 12 attendees
- **Applications** for both Starter Company and Summer Company opened on January 6.
- The next **Concept to Commerce** group is set to start in February.
- To promote Summer Company and support youth entrepreneurship, the SBEC coordinator attended ODSS to review student's business plans.

Tourism and Culture

- In November, a **marketing campaign** with [BlogTO](#) targeted the GTA to attract out-of-region visitors to Orangeville. The ad drove traffic to a [dedicated webpage](#) on the LoveOrangeville.ca website and to other linked pages.
- In November, holiday activities held in downtown Orangeville were supported with **photography, videography, and attendance counts**. The [video](#) of the Holiday Market was a hit on social media. All assets and data will be used to enhance next year's activities and events.
- The new [digital guide](#) was presented to the Heritage Orangeville Committee on November 21 to showcase the Footsteps from our Past walking tours. A postcard promoting the tours was included in the 1,000 Heritage Calendars printed for 2025.
- The annual **Christmas in the Park** event was supported with drone photos and [video](#), as well as an [influencer](#) visit in partnership with Central Counties Tourism on December 8.
- The original Hallmark movie [Trading Up Christmas](#), premiered December 19 and featured many locations from downtown Orangeville including Suzanne Gardner Flowers, Pear Home, and Le Finis. A business survey was conducted to gather feedback about the film production and was used to build a check list for future film production requests.
- The **Visitor Information Centre** closed permanently on December 20. Alternative ways to find visitor information continue to be communicated. The EDC office now offers visitor services during regular operating hours and a satellite downtown location is being considered.
- The **Love, Orangeville campaign** is running from January 31 to February 28 and includes:
 - o The LOVE sign, installed at Town Hall from January 30 to March 1. Changes for this year include the addition of a comma to match the Love, Orangeville logo, a graphic of the logo including the URL, changing light colours, and a new base to prevent any movement.
 - o The promotion of a suite of online tools including the [new tourism directory](#), [new digital guide](#) and the [event calendar](#). The directory and guide were developed on the Mapme platform to highlight the locations, details for each point of interest, self-guided tours, tourism businesses and downtown parking. The launch includes internal training and messaging to the public, tailored to various audiences. ([Tourism newsletter](#), [EDC newsletter](#), [press release](#))
 - o Outreach visits and branded materials to approximately 200 tourism businesses
- Staff continues to support **Dufferin County initiatives** by attending various tourism-related meetings and will participate in the Explore Dufferin guide review process and the Explore Dufferin Investors Tour (E.D.I.T) [networking breakfast](#) and [bus tour](#) on April 23.
- Staff continues to support **Central Counties Tourism initiatives** by sitting on their Board of Directors, reviewing their 2025 business plan, and attending their [Tourism Symposium](#) on February 10.

Communications, Administration, and Infrastructure

- Betty Ann Lusk retired from her position as Administrative Assistant in December 2024. An evolved position was created – Business Services Assistant – to better reflect the role and its responsibilities. Jade Bryan was hired and started on February 10. Jade is an existing Town employee and was previously employed as a Customer Service Representative at Town Hall and in Recreation. We're delighted to have her join the EDC team.