



News Release

For Immediate Release

January 28, 2021

Betty's Place Benefits from the Digital Main Street Program

County of Brant, ON – The County of Brant's Digital Main Street Program has been busy supporting Brant businesses to get online.

"Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses in the hospitality and accommodation industry have shown tremendous resilience," said Russell Press, Director of Economic Development and Tourism. "Betty Johnston, owner of Betty's Place Bed and Breakfast, embodies this resilience and has taken advantage of the Digital Main Street Program to help prepare her business for when she can welcome visitors back to downtown Burford."

Digital literacy is often a barrier to many main street retailers and their ability to compete with larger, big-box companies. The Digital Main Street Program, funded by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario and administered by the Ontario BIA Association, looks to provide traditional "main street" businesses with the training and resources to establish and grow their online presence. The Digital Main Street program also offers a \$2500 Digital Transformation Grant to these small businesses to invest in their digital presence. This can include paid social media advertisements, hiring external marketing agencies, and purchasing software to name a few uses. The program also allows municipalities to apply for funding to hire specialists known as Digital Service Squad members. In the County of Brant, two Digital Service Squad members have been working with Brant businesses like Betty's Place to help improve their digital presence.

"Before the Digital Service Squad began helping me, I had little experience in how to market my business online," said Johnston. "The Squad member was so personable, knowledgeable and could translate my ideas into a reality on my website and on social media. With the \$2500 Digital Transformation Grant, I was also able to hire a marketing company in St. George to create and manage (for a three-month period) a social media presence with videos and photography. The grant has opened up the possibility for my business to actually succeed." The video on Betty's Place social media had been viewed over 5000 times in a two-day period.

Betty's Place Bed and Breakfast was one (1) of 19 Brant businesses that received the Digital Transformation Grant. In total, \$47,500 in funding has been distributed to Brant businesses to grow their online business.

"A business in Burford sought expertise from a business in St. George supporting our local Brant economy, and helping to keep fellow local small businesses going. The Digital Main Street program and Betty's story truly embodies the spirit of the #BrantWorksTogether COVID-19 economic response," said Press.

Businesses looking for support and to learn more about the County of Brant's COVID-19 Economic Response, visit www.brant.ca/BrantWorksTogether.

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Media Contact:

Russell Press
Director of Economic Development and Tourism
County of Brant
Russell.Press@brant.ca
519.44BRANT