

2014

YEAR IN REVIEW



WELCOME MESSAGE



Hello and Welcome to the 2014 Year in Review

This Year In Review will outline the activities undertaken by the Elgin County Economic Development department to advance the County's economic interests and to seek out strategic opportunities for Elgin's residents and businesses.

In 2014 we completed two Business Retention and Expansion programs for Elgin County in the tourism and manufacturing sectors designed to improve communications and foster deeper relationships with the local business community. The County also maintained its commitment to entrepreneurs by providing business support through our two satellite offices in Aylmer and Dutton.

The department continued to work with tourist attractions and partner businesses to create successful programs and campaigns that will position

Elgin County as a leading tourism destination in Ontario. The Savour Elgin and Elgin Arts Trail programs continued to thrive and new members were added to both in 2014.

We also laid the groundwork for several programs that focus on County-wide community improvement and investment in Elgin's downtowns, ports and agri-businesses, all of which will be formally implemented beginning in 2015.

Elgin County Economic Development looks forward to strengthening existing partnerships, forming new ones and continuing to promote Elgin as a great place to live, work and raise a family.

To explore opportunities in Elgin's vibrant communities, please contact us at **519-631-1460 x 168** or visit **www.progressivebynature.com**.



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LAND AND SPACE



Elgin County's Land and Space program involves the marketing and promotion of Elgin County's employment lands and vacant facilities.



Dutton Lands Project

The County of Elgin, the Municipality of Dutton-Dunwich and five private land owners are working together to market and sell 145 acres of commercial and light industrial land adjacent to Highway 401. Marketing materials such as a logo, signage, webpage and detailed specification sheet are currently in development.

Realtor Outreach

Elgin County continues to cultivate partnerships with realtors in the area in order to promote available commercial and industrial spaces and available agricultural land to prospective business owners. Elgin County Economic Development partners with the London St. Thomas Association of Realtors (LSTAR) to sponsor several events throughout the year including the LSTAR Annual General Meeting, Commercial Breakfast and Christmas Gala. The Economic Development department also partners with LSTAR to offer a property listing feature on the Progressive By Nature website. Using up-to-date MLS data feeds from LSTAR, the feature conveniently displays a comprehensive listing of available industrial, commercial and agricultural properties in Elgin County in one convenient location. These listings can be searched by property type, community and price.

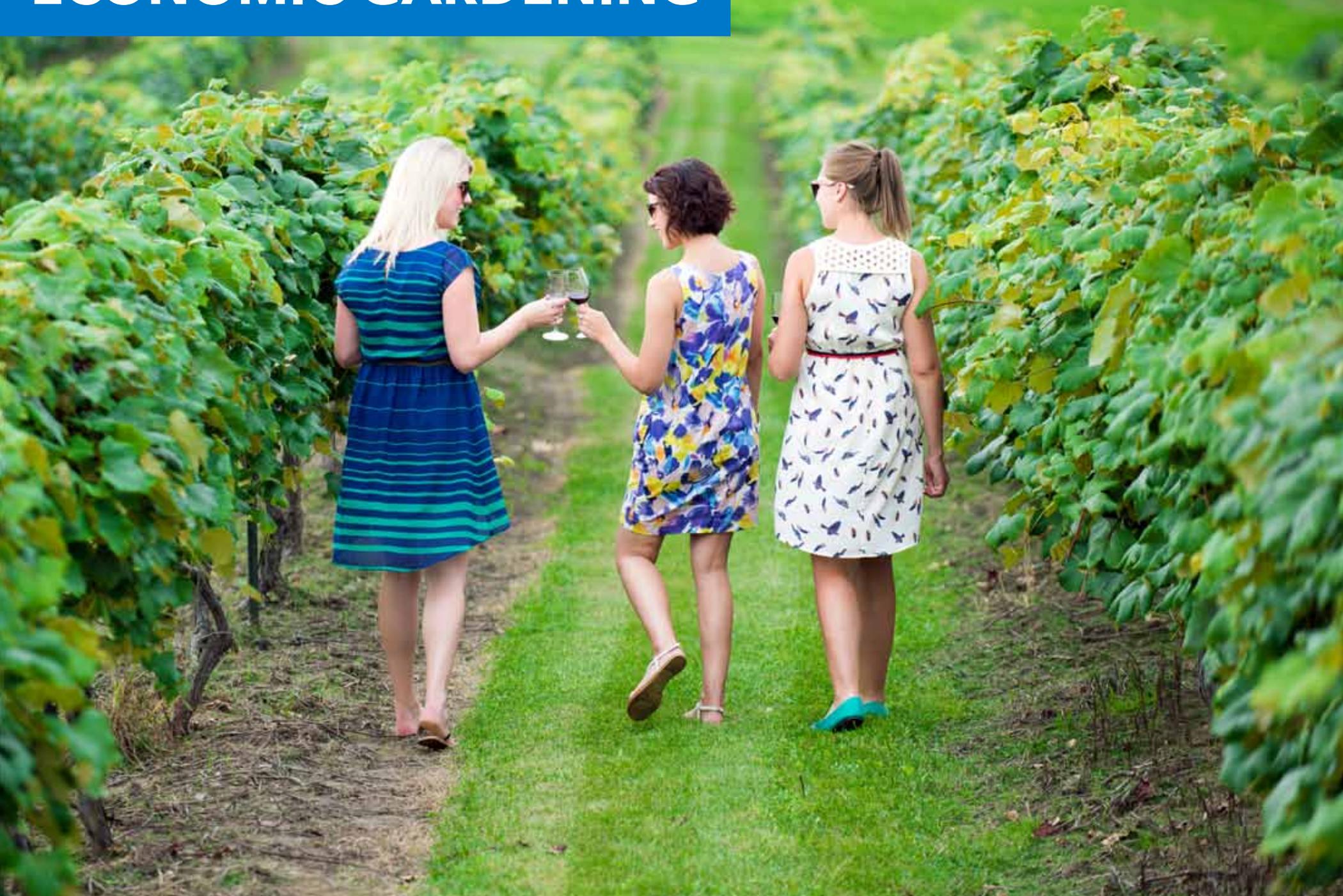
Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

Elgin County has initiated the development of a County-wide Community Improvement Plan that will help promote the unique economic development advantages of the County. A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a planning and economic development instrument that sets out tools and strategies for improving the built, economic, and social environment of a municipality and region. Through the development of a CIP, the County will be able to offer financial incentives, called Elgincentsives, to local businesses and landowners to assist with improvements to private property.

Specifically the CIP will focus on assisting with downtown revitalization efforts, supporting new and existing agriculture and agri-business opportunities and development in lakeshore areas.



ECONOMIC GARDENING



Elgin County's Economic Gardening activities are comprised of a broad set of actions that work together to create a fertile climate for new and existing local businesses through workforce development, Business Retention and Expansion activities, partnerships with local organizations and the provision of business support services.

Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E)

In 2014, Elgin County Economic Development completed two Business Retention and Expansion survey programs in order to obtain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the region's businesses.

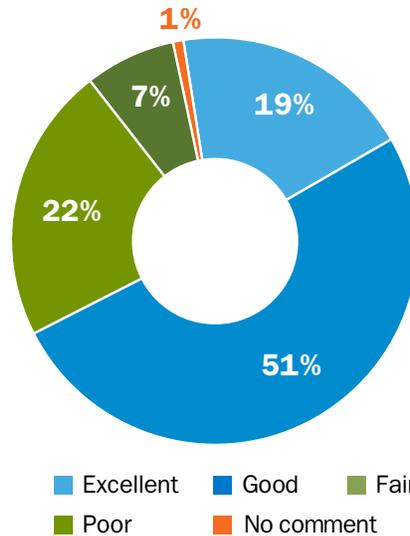
Tourism Sector

BR&E interviews were conducted in 2013 surveying 71 businesses in the tourism sector. The results became available in early 2014 and key themes that came from this program were:

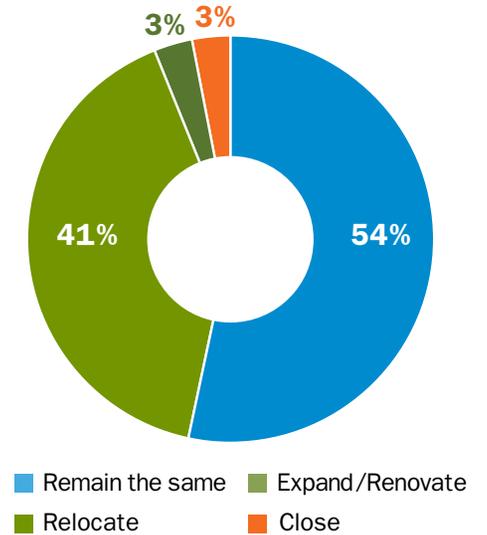
- Elgin has a positive local business environment.
- Positive three-year outlook for both sales and growth.
- Need for Succession, Financial & Business Planning.
- Cycling, Arts & Culture viewed as key attractors for the area.
- Main target markets to consider; within 100km and leisure travelers.

The full report can be accessed online at www.progressivebynature.com.

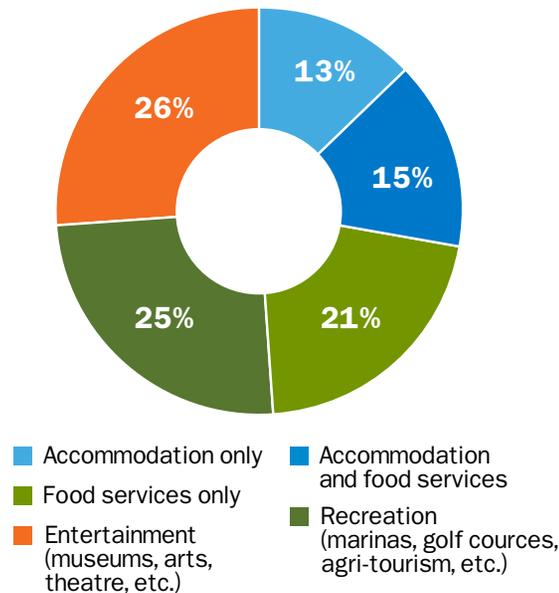
GENERAL IMPRESSION OF ELGIN COUNTY AS A PLACE IN WHICH TO DO BUSINESS



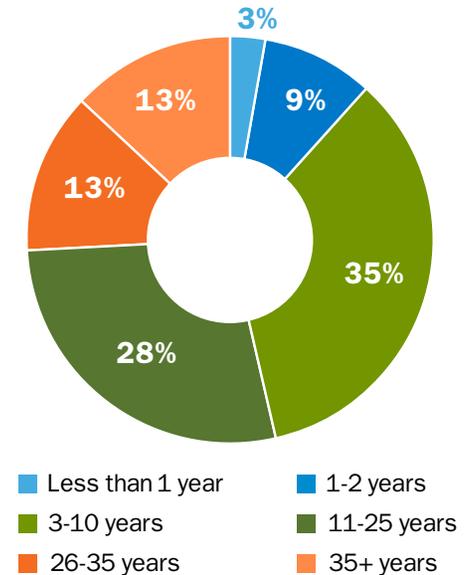
PERCENTAGE OF PLANNED BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS



TYPES OF TOURISM BUSINESS



YEARS BUSINESS HAS BEEN OPEN



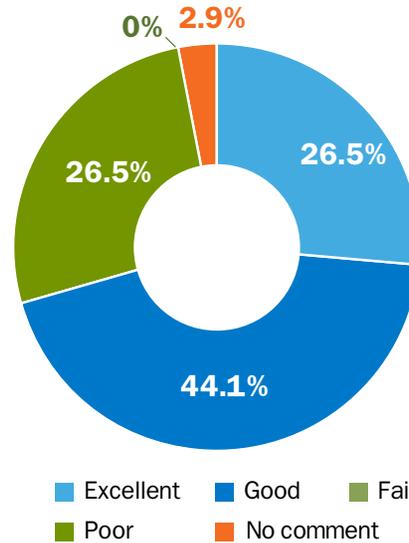
Manufacturing Sector

Small and medium sized manufacturing operations remain a significant part of the Elgin County economy. In 2014, 34 manufacturing businesses were surveyed with the following results:

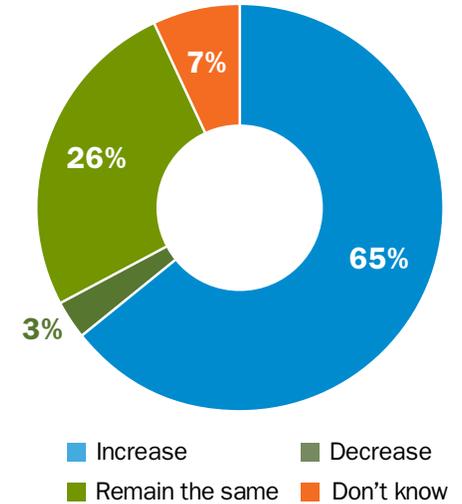
- Many businesses surveyed were family owned (85%), and 79% of owners are from the area.
- Most companies indicated that between 75 and 100% of their workforce are from within the County.
- Overall, only a quarter of all businesses surveyed had succession plans, leaving them exposed to the effects of unforeseen changes in upper management or ownership.
- Nearly 75% of businesses surveyed consider Elgin County a good or excellent place to do business.
- 48% of businesses were concerned about the availability of skilled labour and its effect upon the ability to expand.
- No businesses surveyed expect to close within the next three years, but three expect to downsize, all for differing reasons; retirement, declining business in the sector, and lack of contracts.
- Most business expansion is expected in the Aylmer area, followed by Central Elgin, and the types of businesses expecting to expand are varied, with the largest proportion being miscellaneous forms of manufacturing, followed by food related manufacturing or fabricated metal product manufacturing.

The full report can be accessed online at www.progressivebynature.com

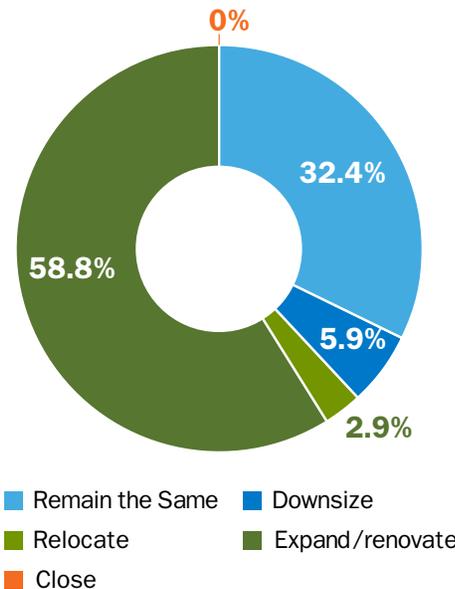
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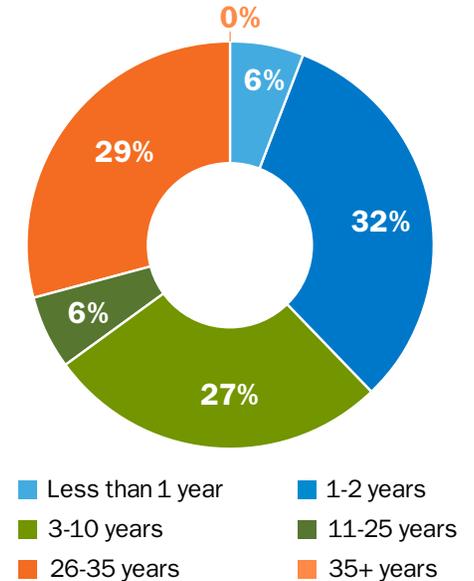
EXPECTED CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS



PERCENTAGE OF PLANNED BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS



PERCENTAGE OF YEARS BUSINESS HAS BEEN OPEN



Workforce Development

As workforce demands continue to evolve and change, it is important for Elgin County to understand these changes and to work together with the community to prepare the workforce for shifting requirements and opportunities.

The department has representation on the Elgin Workforce Planning and Development Committee. Each year the committee conducts the EmployerOne Survey, designed to collect information annually from area employers on a range of labour issues, such as labour turnover, hard-to-fill positions, recruitment difficulties, current and future skills shortages, as well as any issues in training and education practices.

In March of 2014, the Elgin Middlesex Workforce Planning and Development Board launched www.worktrends.ca in partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the London Economic Development Corporation. This website provides current local and regional labour market information in one convenient and easy to use online location. The resource is designed to be useful for several different groups including students, job seekers and employers. It provides users with accessible and relevant data including market conditions, industry information, changes in the internal and external business environments, future hiring and employment trends, wage and salary expectations and education and training information. Data can be searched by job or by industry and results displayed compare trends from Middlesex, Elgin, London, St. Thomas and Oxford to trends at the provincial and national levels.

Canadian Business Patterns tracks the number of business and categorizes them by the number of people that they employ. Employers range in size from 1–4 employees to 500+ employees. Also included are the number of employers of ‘Indeterminate’ size. Canadian Business Patterns classifies businesses as “Indeterminate” if they have no employees or indeterminate number of employees. This includes businesses that make use of a contract workforce or

family members. The table below shows the numbers of businesses in each category over the past five years in Elgin-St. Thomas.

Elgin-St. Thomas has had consistent growth in the number of small businesses over the past five years. Medium and large employers have remained relatively stable in terms of absolute numbers over the past five years although there have been some fluctuations.

ELGIN BUSINESSES BY SIZE

Elgin All Industries CBP	09-Jun	10-Jun	11-Jun	12-Jun	13-Jun	14-Jun
Total	4982	5023	5267	5270	5541	5748
Indeterminate	2828	2849	3000	2955	3214	3318
Subtotal	2154	2174	2267	2315	2327	2430
1-4 Employees	1110	1186	1236	1258	1301	1325
5-9 Employees	492	466	506	508	483	523
10-19 Employees	271	263	262	281	295	304
20-49 Employees	184	167	174	176	151	186
50-99 Employees	62	57	57	54	55	55
100-199 Employees	19	20	16	21	24	22
200-499 Employees	9	9	10	12	12	10
500 + Employees	7	6	6	5	6	5

Source: Canadian Business Patterns. Note: St. Thomas data is included.

Youth Projects

Economic Development has representation on the board that operates Employment Services Elgin and manages the Talbot Teen Centre. The department also provides funding to the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) which runs the Summer Company and Starter Company programs.

Local Workshops and Events

Bridges to Better Business

Elgin County was pleased to sponsor the Small Business Enterprise Centre's fifth annual Bridges to Better Business Conference on November 20, 2014. The Bridges to Better Business Conference is an important educational resource for small businesses in Elgin County. The day began with a WordPress Website seminar by Dave Murray of Blackcat Concepts. This

seminar was followed by a networking session, dinner catered by local chef James Meadows, a local business awards ceremony and Keynote Speaker Nikki Pett from Sigma Promotions. The sold-out event was a success with 120 participants in attendance.

Elgin Business Women's Network

The department is a member of the Elgin Business Women's Network and attends regular networking meetings to promote the County's services to the group's members.

Elgin County Conference Series

Elgin County Economic Development provided local businesses with the opportunity to learn successful methods of creating a strong brand and attracting their target market at the eighth installment of the Elgin

County Conference Series, Essentials of Marketing, held in May, 2014.

This one-day workshop featured presentations from experts in print, TV, radio, and online marketing. The Keynote Speaker was Sean Irvine an award winning reporter, videographer and occasional anchor on CTV News London and Windsor.

Local Business Shows

Elgin County is a sponsor of the Aylmer Home and Garden Show and the Western Elgin Christmas Market (formerly the West Elgin Business Expo). These events provide valuable opportunities for local businesses to network with one another and promote their goods and services within the community.



Local Food

Buy Local Buy Fresh

Elgin County is a sponsor of the Buy Local Buy Fresh Map. The map shows visitors and residents where to locate fresh Elgin vegetables, fruits, meats, wines, and other specialty agricultural products such as honey and lavender. In 2014, the map celebrated its 10th anniversary in print by adding an interactive website at www.buylocalbuyfresh.ca.

Sustainable Food Project Southwest Economic Alliance (SWEA)

In 2013, Elgin County was chosen by the Southwest Economic Alliance to participate in a sustainable food pilot project. In 2014, a group comprised of Elgin County, the Elgin Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs met several times to discuss the development of a business

plan to develop a food processor to Elgin County. The process is on-going.

Ontario Food Cluster (OFC)

In 2014 Elgin County continued its membership in the Ontario Food Cluster an organization whose mandate is to drive international investment to Ontario's food and beverage industry.

www.ontariofoodcluster.com

Ambassador Program

The Elgin County Ambassador Program was established in 2009 and now has over 35 regularly active members. Elgin County Ambassadors are people who volunteer their time to help promote business throughout Elgin County and actively participate in the growth and development of the area. Ambassadors attend quarterly

breakfast meetings, recruit new members, promote Elgin County during their daily business activities and inform the County's Economic Development staff about new or potential businesses in the area. Each year an Ambassador of the Year is chosen based on points that are awarded for performing a variety of the aforementioned tasks. Elgin County is pleased to announce that John Robinson, co-owner of Stan Portley's Antiques in Port Stanley, was awarded Elgin County's Ambassador of the Year for 2014.

Elgin County Economic Development encourages interested community leaders, volunteers and business owners to attend Ambassador meetings. For more information on the program please call **519-631-1460 ext. 168** or email info@elgin.ca.



St. Thomas – Elgin Local Immigration Partnership (STELIP)

Elgin County Economic Development is a member of the St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership. The organization is a collaborative initiative funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to strengthen the role of local agencies, stakeholders and service provider organizations in serving and integrating newcomers in Elgin County. The Business Development Coordinator is currently the Chair of the organization's Board of Directors.

In 2014 STELIP introduced Caring and Inclusive Communities Signage available for municipalities to include on their gateway signage indicating to newcomers that they are a welcoming community. The organization also hosted “Walk With Me” and “Moving Forward” two events designed to bring newcomers and service providers together. Newcomers learned how and where they can access various services and service providers learned about how to work with and for newcomers.

Southwold Economic Development Committee

Councillors, staff and community volunteers of Southwold Township with Elgin County Economic Development successfully launched a sustainability plan for the community. Next steps for the Committee are participation in Communities in Bloom in 2015, engaging Fanshawe College students to develop a marketing plan for Southwold and investigating the attraction of residential home builders.

Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)

The County of Elgin delivers business counselling and support to youth through the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC). SBEC is funded by Elgin County, the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation and the Ministry of Economic Development and Infrastructure and focuses primarily on the delivery of the Summer Company and Starter Company programs.

Summer Company provides eligible youth summer businesses with \$1,500 in start-up money to kick start their business, and ongoing local advice and mentorship. Students also receive an additional \$1,500 in the fall after they successfully complete the program. Of the 15 Summer Company businesses started through SBEC in 2014, 10 came from the County of Elgin.

SBEC STATS FOR JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2014

	2013	2014
Businesses Started	7	14
Jobs Created	*85	15
Total Inquiries	1743	1755
Total Events Hosted	N/A	26

*This number includes temporary workers hired in the summer of 2013 to staff the Ojibwa Submarine

Summer Company Success Stories

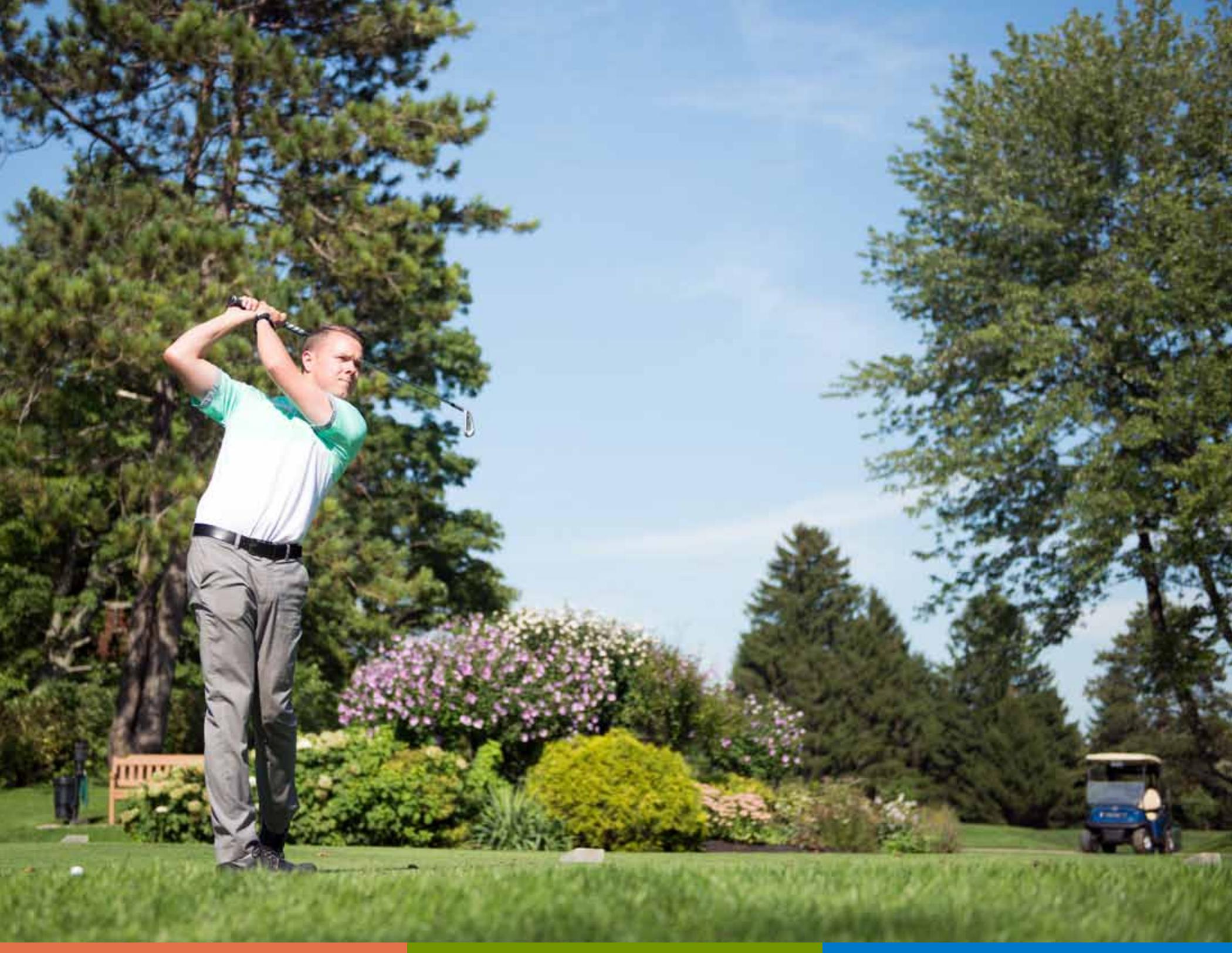
Mr. Cool Ice Cream, Josh Self

Josh Self of Iona Station bid on a tender at Pinafore Park to open “Mr. Cool” Ice Cream. For a summer that was incredibly cold and wet, Josh made a very positive financial impact. He was able to expand the business during the summer and purchased a travelling ice cream cooler. During the week he worked at Pinafore and on weekends he attended events. He was even able to hire employees to work the Pinafore Park location while he was attending events. His experience with Summer Company prompted him to open a new business and he is currently operating a successful Tae Kwon Do business in Dutton, Ontario.

Turbo Tinder, Jason Kerkvliet

Jason Kerkvliet manufactured fire starters at his family farm on Fingal Line and was successful in getting Turbo Tinder into a number of local retailers, including Berry Hill, Briwood Farm Market, St. Thomas and Port Stanley Foodlands, Firetech, Country Grocery, and Dixie Dairy Bar and Tackle Shop.





Elgin Business Resource Centre (EBRC) Satellite Offices

Entrepreneurs and small businesses are the backbone of Elgin County's economy and Elgin County Economic Development has made the support and cultivation of these businesses a priority. In 2014, Elgin County fostered entrepreneurship and small business development by providing business counselling for new and existing businesses, access to loans and grants, a resource library, educational workshops and networking opportunities through its satellite offices in Aylmer and Dutton. In addition to helping entrepreneurs navigate the complicated waters of the business world, these offices also provide valuable services to existing businesses. A considerable portion of satellite office staff time is spent on outreach in the business community as well as helping existing businesses remain open and maintain employment levels.

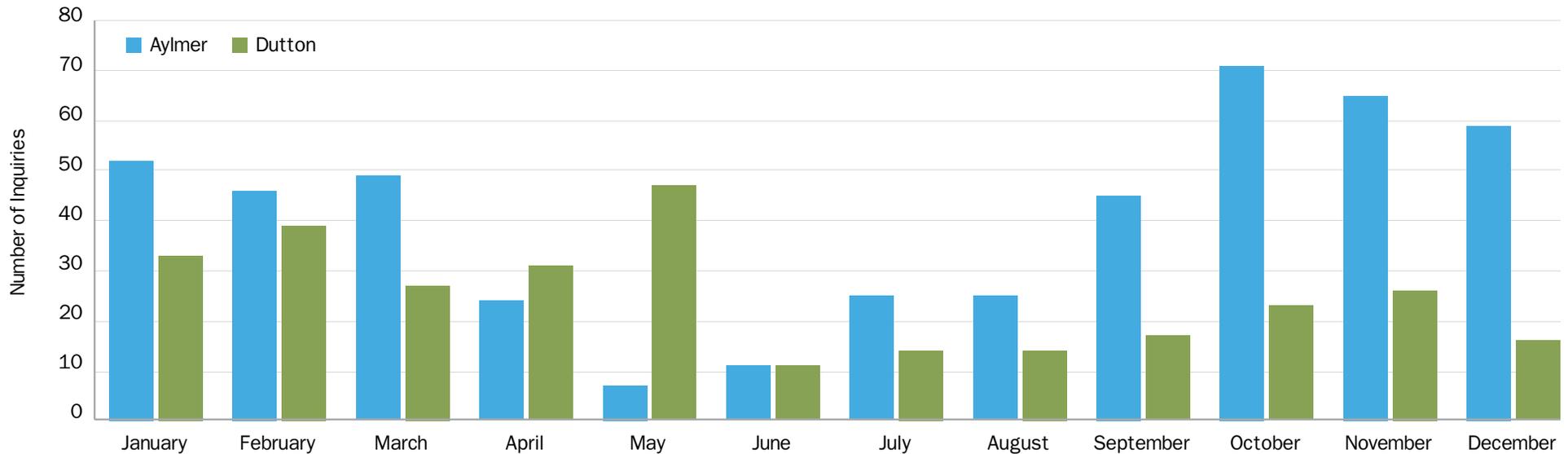
AYLMER OFFICE

	2013	2014
Total Inquiries	315	479
Businesses Started	15	18
Jobs Created	35	18
Jobs Maintained	83	73
Loan Inquiries	14	24
Events/Outreach Activities	N/A	68

DUTTON OFFICE

	2013	2014
Total Inquiries	276	298
Businesses Started	7	6
Jobs Created	14	15
Jobs Maintained	39	89
Loan Inquiries	2	23
Events/Outreach Activities	N/A	128

INQUIRIES JANUARY – DECEMBER 2014



Satellite Office Success Stories

Mel's Bookkeeping & Tax Services (MBTS) – Rodney

Melissa Wardell, the owner of Mel's Bookkeeping & Tax Services (MBTS) has been growing her business out of a store-front location in the town of Rodney. Like many small businesses in rural communities Mel's struggled with the challenge of reaching a broader audience, attracting new clients and obtaining the small business financing required to grow a business. When Mel discovered the nearby business of Marg's Accounting & Tax Services (MATS) in Dutton was for sale, she felt this was the perfect opportunity to grow her bottom line and ensure these businesses continued to serve their respective communities.

Meanwhile, Marg Gruenbauer, owner of Marg's, had let it be known that her business was for sale and began to entertain offers from firms across Southwestern Ontario. Marg's commitment to pursuing local ownership, ensuring local jobs were maintained and her continued support of downtown businesses lead her and Mel through the doors of the Elgin County Satellite Office in Dutton.

A meeting was scheduled to review the obstacles facing rural small businesses and to create a plan allowing the deal to move forward. The resulting business counselling sessions lead to the creation of a Purchase Sale Agreement between Mel's & Marg's. After a thorough financial review the EBRC determined this venture was within the scope of its mandate and met the necessary financial conditions.

Due to the Elgin Business Resource Centre extending the required commercial financing through the County of Elgin Satellite Office, Melissa Wardell is proud to

announce the merger of Mel's Bookkeeping & Tax Services and Marg's Accounting & Tax Services. With a strong commitment to the local communities they serve Mel and her staff look forward to serving both present and future clients throughout all of Western Elgin County.

MARgoClean – Aylmer

In July of 2014, Marg Wall had a dream to open her own business. She became aware of the free business counselling services at the Satellite Office in Aylmer, and decided to pay the office a visit.

Ms. Wall had two ideas and was not sure of which direction to take. After subsequent counselling sessions, Ms. Wall decided that she wished to open a cleaning business in Aylmer and was able benefit from the Ontario Self Employment Benefit Program (OSEB).

Since July Ms. Wall has been successful in obtaining admittance into the OSEB Program. In November she registered her business, has set long-range goals and continues to use the counselling services in Aylmer on a regular basis with regards to operational plans, marketing plans and contracts.

Business Success Update

In 2008, Roxanne Esseltine switched her dogs to raw food and after inquiries from others she began manufacturing raw-meat products and selling them from her home. In 2010, she opened a small storefront in Springfield to sell kibble, dehydrated products and frozen raw meat. In 2012, Esseltine closed her Springfield location and moved into the Elgin Innovation Centre in Aylmer. With support from the Aylmer Satellite Office she has been able to grow her business. In 2014, Raw For Pets had 12



full-time and 2 part-time employees on its payroll and finished the fiscal year with \$1.2 million in sales. Their products are now sold in most pet retail stores across Canada including Pet Valu and Petsmart and they did a rotation in Costco. The business recently launched into the American market with online sales. In 2015, Raw For Pets will be introducing several new products including an all natural cat treat line formulated especially for cats and a line of all natural dehydrated bones.

PEOPLE AND PLACES



People and Places is a marketing program that seeks to attract creative individuals and entrepreneurs to Elgin County by promoting Elgin’s superior ‘Quality of Place’ through print and online advertising and extensive media outreach.

Elgin County’s idyllic rural landscapes, diverse cultural experiences and vibrant communities make it the perfect location to live, work and raise a family.

Advertising



Social Media

Economic Development uses social media websites Facebook and Twitter and an “Experience Elgin Blog” to promote Elgin County as a great place to live, work and start a business. Social media is a great way to stay connected with residents, visitors and potential business owners. Elgin’s social media accounts are used to promote everything from available property listings, to event listings, to business success stories.

Facebook – 2,121 Page Likes

www.facebook.com/ElginCounty

Twitter – 1,205 Followers

www.twitter.com/ElginCounty

Experience Elgin Blog – 6162 Pageviews

<http://experienceelgin.blogspot.ca/>



Publication	Type	Distribution/ Impressions per Month	# Months
On – The –Go Magazine	Print /Digital	400,000 printed	5
Horizon Travel Magazine	Print /Digital	60,000 printed	2
Lake Erie Living Travel Guide	Print /Digital	100,000 printed	Year Long Publication
Ontario Summer Fun Guide	Print	250,000	Year Long Publication
Ontario Parks Guide (Port Burwell)	Print	115,421	Year Long Publication
Trade and Industry Development Industry Listing	Digital	N/A	12
SmallFarmCanada.ca	Digital	20,000	12
BetterFarming.com	Digital	30,000	12
LondonCommunityNews.com	Digital	40,000	12

*General Advertising – unrelated to a specific summer contest or tourism campaign.



Economic Development Website – www.progressivebynature.com

Elgin County's Economic Development website www.progressivebynature.com is an extremely important tool that potential investors and business owners can use to learn about the benefits of locating a business in Elgin. The website has valuable information on Elgin's key business sectors, tax rates, demographics, business resources, available properties and more.

	2013	2014
Visits	5631	8280
New Visitors	75.1%	75.1%
Returning Visitors	24.7%	24.9%

Most Accessed Content According to Google Analytics Data

- Elgin County Economic Development Newsletter
- Business Directory
- Key Sectors – Tourism
- Key Sectors – Agri-business

Where are website visitors from?

- London
- St. Thomas
- Toronto
- Guelph



Elgin County Tourism Website – www.elgintourist.com

	2013	2014
Visits	32,715	33,270
New Visitors	80.6%	81.05%
Returning Visitors	19.4%	18.9%

Most Accessed Content According to Google Analytics Data:

- Port Burwell
- Ojibwa Submarine
- Events Listings
- Attractions Listings

Where are website visitors from?

- London
- Toronto
- St. Thomas
- Aylmer
- Kitchener

Newsletter

A newsletter profiling Elgin's successful businesses, upcoming events and business resources is sent out monthly. The newsletter is sent to all of Elgin County Economic Development's contacts including business leads from tradeshows and conferences. To sign-up to receive the newsletter please visit:

www.progressivebynature.com/newsletter-sign

Elgin in the Media

Elgin County Living

In 2014 Economic Development staff filmed the third season of Elgin County Living, a weekly show that appears on the local Rogers TV station and promotes interesting businesses and attractions across the County. This partnership has been a great opportunity for the department to raise the profile of local businesses.

Travel Bloggers

Elgin County partnered with the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation to bring several travel bloggers on tours of the area in 2014. Of particular note was Jim Byers a Travel Blogger and Columnist for the Toronto Star who featured Port Stanley in several articles after visiting the area in early August.

- **Port Stanley is Three Great Ontario Towns in One**
- **Lake Erie Small Town Charm on Ontario's South Shore**
- **Ontario's Forgotten Coast**



Awards

In 2014, Elgin County Economic Development received two Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Marketing Awards of Excellence. Awards for the Elgin County 2013 Year in Review Report and the Artastic Elgin Event were presented at the EDCO annual conference in Toronto on February 6, 2014. Winning

these awards positions Elgin as a leader in innovative and creative economic development practices, raising the County's profile across the province and internationally.

TOURISM



Elgin County Tourism at a Glance

Elgin County Visitor's Guide Distribution

Print – 40,000

Digital Downloads – 2,777

of Tourism Members – 120 (with 13 being affiliate members located outside of Elgin)

Tourism Kiosks

Elgin County operates three tourism kiosks from Victoria Day weekend until Labour Day weekend each summer. Students staff these kiosks providing attraction brochures, maps and information to visitors. The Elgin County Tourism Cruiser, a mobile tourism kiosk, travels to summer events across the County providing information to attendees.

“Where in Elgin?” Campaign

During an 11 week period from June to August 2014 a specific location, attraction or activity in Elgin

County was highlighted using a GoPro Camera video and posted to the Facebook page. The location was not revealed in the video and Facebook users were required to guess the location for the chance to win a gift certificate to a local tourism establishment. The campaign was a great success with each of the videos being viewed approximately 1000 times, for a total of **11,443 views**.

Experience Elgin Summer Contest

Each summer Elgin County runs a contest designed not only to increase visitors by drawing attention to the area's tourism attractions and natural assets, but also to help the department populate its newsletter database.

Contest Entries – 2575

Newsletter Sign-ups – 1200

Heritage Campaign

Elgin County undertakes a number of initiatives to promote the area's rich history. The tourism website contains a comprehensive heritage section (www.elgintourist.com/heritage) that includes listings of heritage attractions across the County, historical plaques, heritage trees, walking tours, churches and cemeteries, barnquilt trails and museums. In 2014 the department partnered successfully with the local publication Elgin This Month to provide a monthly article featuring a different aspect of Elgin County's unique history each month. The department also helps to promote local Doors Open initiatives.





Ports of Elgin

Elgin County is fortunate to be home to over 120 kilometres of pristine Lake Erie shoreline, a primary driver of tourism to the area during the summer months.

Boat Fishing and Leisure Show

Each February Elgin County is an exhibitor at the London Boat, Fishing and Leisure Show. This show gives Elgin the opportunity to meet and talk with many potential visitors in our target market who are looking for information about Elgin County's marinas, beaches, fishing spots and four port communities.

Waterfront Map and Birding Map

Elgin County as a member of the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation, is included in the **Waterfront Getaways Map**. This map highlights Elgin's sandy beaches, boating marinas and special fishing spots, as well as beautiful Provincial Parks, Blue Flag beach and Conservation Areas.

Elgin is also part of the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation's **Birding Trail Map**, and several Elgin locations including Aylmer Wildlife Management Area, Hawk Cliff and Port Burwell Provincial Park have been noted as points of interest along the route.

Recreational Rentals at Port Stanley Beach

Sport in Port, a sports outfitter, recently opened for business in Port Stanley carrying unique retail products related to outdoor living in Elgin County. The store sells running gear, cycling equipment and cottage accessories while also hosting weekly running, hiking and cycling groups. In the summer of 2014, Sport in Port made stand up paddle boards and kayaks available for rent directly from Port Stanley Main Beach. These equipment rentals were greatly anticipated filling a long standing void for recreational rentals in the area.

Cycle Tourism

Elgin County has identified Cycle Tourism as a growing market in Ontario and has taken steps to develop cycling facilities, create partnerships and educate local businesses on the attraction of cycle tourists.

Waterfront Trail

Elgin County is one of 68 communities connected by the Waterfront Trail, a fully signed cycling route that stretches over 1400km along the Canadian shores of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and the Niagara, Detroit and St. Lawrence Rivers.

www.waterfronttrail.org

Certified Bicycle Friendly Workshop

Elgin County offered tourism businesses and organizations key insights on how to become a certified bicycle-friendly business or business area through the

Ontario By Bike Network's Certified Bicycle Friendly Workshop. Becoming Certified Bicycle Friendly will help these businesses to generate revenue through the attraction of cycle tourists.

Branded Bicycle Racks

Elgin County partnered with the Specialist High Skills Major Program at Parkside Collegiate Institute to create a branded bicycle rack program.

Parkside Collegiate Institute was able to leverage funding from the Healthy Community Partnership Program and use it to purchase a CNC Plasma Cutter Machine. The SHSM Program at Parkside is the only program in the Thames Valley District School Board to integrate this type of project into its curriculum. Students use this machine to cut logos or words into steel bicycle racks that are finished with black

powder coat abrasion and corrosion resistant paint. Organizations in Elgin County and St. Thomas are then able to purchase these racks for \$175 to be installed at their locations.

For more information about bicycle racks click [here](#).

Cycle Master Plan

In September, 2014 the Cycle Master Plan was adopted by County Council as a planning and resource tool. Imperial Road, Sunset Road and East Road were identified as routes to receive paved bicycle lane shoulders using monies already contained within the 2015 Capital Budget. This implementation strategy supports Elgin County Cycle Tourism initiatives by developing key cycling facilities in a fiscally responsible manner.





wildflower's tea

C

calm

An herbal blend to calm and soothe the body, mind and soul. A lovely combination of fragrant lavender and anise seeds, with chamomile and lemon balm. Perfect for a relaxing evening or a soothing morning ritual.

Directions: Place 1 tea bag in warm bath and let steep for 10 minutes or longer. Hop in and soak up the heavenly benefits of the herbs! Tea bags are fully compostable.

Ingredients: lavender, nettle, lemon balm, scullion, sage.

WILDFLOWER'S TEA, 100% ORGANIC, 100% NATURAL
www.wildflowers-tea.com | 1-800-555-1234

Savour Elgin

Savour Elgin is the County's culinary trail that takes visitors on a journey to the area's finest food and drink establishments, farmers' markets and agri-tourism operations.

ElginLicious

Elgin County held two installments of ElginLicious in 2014: one in the spring and one in the fall. ElginLicious was designed to encourage visits to Savour Elgin members during shoulder seasons. The event provided the opportunity to enjoy Elgin's restaurants, specialty food shops and agri-tourism destinations at fixed price points. There were increased visits to savourlelgin.ca during each ElginLicious period and members noted an increase in business to their establishments during the campaign.

Savourelgin.ca

	2013	2014
Visits	3816	4556
New Visitors	79.6%	79.6%
Returning Visitors	22.4%	20.4%

Most Accessed Content According to Google

Analytics Data:

- Events
- Restaurants
- Recipes
- Farmers' Markets



Where are website visitors from?

- London
- St. Thomas
- Toronto
- Sarnia

New Savour Elgin Members

Wildflowers Farm

Along a tree lined drive, nestled in amongst the flowers sits a farm store, home of Wildflowers Tea and Honey. The store offers a variety of handcrafted herbal teas and herbal products, cut flowers, honey and local artisanal foods.

Chuck and Jane Magri along with their three children are living their dream of thriving in harmony with the land and offering to share this with the community. Wildflowers Tea was born after the first year of

harvesting the herbs that naturally grew around the farm. With the recent addition of 1200 perennials, Wildflowers Farm now offers floral arrangements for special occasions.

The farm's visitors come to shop and sip tea, stroll through the gardens or attend one of the many workshops, classes or seasonal festivals.

Simply Scoops

Just a short walk from the sandy beaches in Port Burwell, sits Simply Scoops; a family friendly ice cream shop you don't want to miss. Established in 1995, Simply Scoops has become a staple in the heart of Port Burwell and a hot spot to cool down on a warm summer's day. Simply Scoops is truly a local treasure, serving the finest locally sourced ice cream, burgers and fresh cut fries.

Elgin Arts Trail

The Elgin Arts Trail provides comprehensive resources to explore local artists, artisans, galleries and theatres. The Trail features original paintings, pottery, stained glass, candles, live shows and more.

Artastic Elgin

The award winning event Artastic Elgin returned for a second installment on September 27 and 28, 2014. Members of the Elgin Arts Trail presented two days of interactive workshops, gallery events, speakers and more giving residents and visitors the opportunity to discover their inner creativity while exploring the abundance of artistic talent in the area. The event was held in conjunction with Culture Days, a national celebration each September where artists and cultural organizations across the country come together to promote awareness, participation and engagement in arts and culture activities.

New Elgin Arts Trail Members

Aylmer Performing Arts Council

For over 20 years the Aylmer Performing Arts Council (APAC) has been delivering quality and dynamic entertainment. From September to May, APAC features live performances, including new and old acts, and Juno and Grammy winning artists. Performances range from drama, comedy, singing/dancing, and instrumental music. Performances are held in The Old Town Hall, one of Aylmer's historic gems. Built in 1874 and completely restored in the 1980s, this beautiful building is home to the incredible Union Jack painted on the ceiling.

Port Stanley Festival Theatre

Located in the heart of the scenic lakeside village of Port Stanley, the Port Stanley

Festival Theatre presents professional live theatre



from May to September, and musical performances from October to April each year. Live entertainment draws crowds to the intimate 150-seat summer theatre, which was once the former town hall of Port Stanley. The appealing productions highlight Canadian comedy, musicals and dramas, all showcasing top quality entertainment.



Posh Fine Art Gallery & Jewellery

Ian McLay returned after 60 years to his hometown of Aylmer, ON to open Posh Fine Art in the very home he grew up in. Ian's love for art began in his teenage years and 15 years ago, after many successful businesses and raising a family, he and his wife Saousan realized their dream of opening an art business in Muskoka.

Now, back in Aylmer, Posh Fine Art is located at 24 Pine St. E in a stunning heritage home. Beautiful, original images by quality Canadian artists are complemented by Saousan's one-of-a-kind handmade fresh water pearl necklaces, earrings and bracelets.

Elginartstrail.ca

	2013	2014
Visits	2759	3194
New Visitors	83.7%	84.3%
Returning Visitors	16.3%	15.7%

Most Accessed Content According to Google Analytics Data:

- Artastic Elgin
- Arts Trail Map
- Events and Workshops

Where are Visitors from?

- London
- St. Thomas
- Toronto
- Aylmer

Savour Elgin/Elgin Arts Trail Discovery Guide

In June 2014, the Savour Elgin/Elgin Arts Trail Experience Guide was distributed to over 175,000 people as an insert in the Summer Edition of the LCBO Food & Drink magazine.

By partnering with Food & Drink magazine, Elgin County was able to reach a wide audience specifically interested in culinary and cultural attractions. These promotional efforts were supported by the Local Food Fund administered by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

This year the guide also included the chance to win one of three Elgin Experiences each valued at \$700. The contest was designed as a way to track the public's engagement with the insert. In total the contest had 4,144 visits to the contest website between June 2014 and December 2014.



Savour Elgin
a taste experience
www.savourelgin.ca

2014
EXPERIENCE GUIDE

Elgin
arts
trail
www.elginartstrail.ca



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info@elgin.ca | twitter: @ElginCounty | www.facebook.com/ElginCounty | www.progressivebynature.com