

Members' Choice Awards 2024

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Name of Business/Project	Name of CFDC	Description
<p>Bleeding Edge Tattoo Ink Supply</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Sarnia Lambton Business Development Centre</p>	<p>The inception of Bleeding Edge Tattoo Supply Inc. is directly tied to the difficulties its founding entrepreneur was experiencing in the operation of his successful tattoo studios. Will Graham started Neon Crab Tattoo & Piercing studios in 2010 as a tattoo artist with \$20,000 and a dream. He now owns five (5) tattoo studios (Sarnia, Strathroy, London, Hamilton & Fort Erie) that employ more than 30 artists between them and generate sales in excess of \$1.7 million. Prior to the establishment of Bleeding Edge Tattoo Supply Inc., he was spending in excess of \$150,000 per year on tattoo supplies.</p> <p>Bleeding Edge Tattoo Supply was born out of his frustration in trying to reliably source and secure products for his businesses that were of the highest quality and safety standards. Bleeding Edge is a wholesale distributor of top-quality tattoo supplies and products that addresses an underserved industry niche and which has been built on a simple principle ... to provide professional tattoo artists the supplies and tools they require at a fair price. Their goal is to source the very best products being produced today and get them to their artists as quickly as possible. As professional tattoo artists themselves, they have decades of experience in the trade and in their own studios and know what it takes to keep a shop running smoothly. If they do not personally use a product, they will not sell it through their supply business. Will currently holds the distributorship for Ontario for several of the products he sells.</p>
<p>Buildings Foundation Project</p> <p><i>Community Economic Development</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Community Futures Middlesex</p>	<p>The Building Foundations Project (BFP) taking place in Middlesex County is a unique initiative and partnership between the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital Foundation (SMGHF), the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, the Home Build Program (HBP) at Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School (HCCSS) and the team at Community Futures Middlesex – The Business Help Centre (CF Middlesex).</p> <p>The HBP is a great opportunity for the students to learn and develop skills on the job in a real-life situation. It allows students to focus on a career path in the skilled trades that matches their skills and interests while meeting the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Students receive a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) on their diploma when they graduate.</p> <p>HCCSS students work with a general contractor, and various trades to construct semi-detached homes. All students enrolled in the project will also have the option of registering in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) allowing them to acquire apprenticeship hours and competencies toward the total hours required for a particular apprenticeship, thus reducing post-secondary</p>

		<p>qualification time. Students will also be registered with the College of Trades. For students transitioning into a skilled trade from high school, there are many benefits of OYAP. Homes built under HBP are meant to provide a comfortable place for families to live and serve as a symbol of the community's commitment to improving their local healthcare.</p> <p>All funds raised through the Building Foundations Project will be directed to purchasing new cutting-edge patient imaging equipment for Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital (SMGH). New modern patient imaging equipment will help reduce wait times at the SMGH and result in more timely diagnoses and treatments for patients. The new equipment will also provide patient care closer to their homes and therefore reduce the travel burden that is placed on patients and their caregivers who need to travel outside the area for these services.</p>
<p>Dawn Farms</p> <p><i>Outstanding Youth Entrepreneur</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Elgin Business Resource Centre</p>	<p>Abbey Taylor is the owner of Dawn Farms, and she raises cattle and sells beef direct sale. Abbey started the business in 2021 but she is no stranger to farming as she grew up on her family's grain farm near Belmont and has worked there her entire life. She began to test out entrepreneurship at the age of 9 years old when she got her first flock of chickens. She built up the flock and began to sell eggs to friends and neighbours and this helped with her post secondary education and provided her an early foundation in the responsibility of running a business.</p> <p>Throughout high school, Abbey was a university-bound highly academic student. She surprised family and teachers to pursue college instead of university as she felt that hands on education was for her. She chose Ridgetown College to study agriculture. Being a female in the agricultural program was a challenge but one she welcomed. During that time she received her DZ license so she could drive dump trucks with air brakes and learned to do cattle processing and showing, while working in a big barn.</p> <p>Always looking for ways to become better at what she does and understand the big picture when it comes to farming, she has spent a summer working for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs as a poultry summer student. Following that covid started and she took it as an opportunity to further expand her farming knowledge by working all over Canada at different farms, getting experience with many different farming businesses. She worked 14 hour days and made it her mission to learn all she could about running a farm business.</p> <p>When returning to Ontario, she started Dawn Farms. There were a couple cattle and orders and that has expanded to selling thousands of pounds of grass-finished beef to local customers. All of the research that Abbey did over a 5 month period at farms across Canada, have set her up for success in her business.</p>
<p>Dogs on 3</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Elgin Business Resource Centre</p>	<p>Dogs on 3 is a brand new, next generation luxury dog boarding and dog daycare facility - where every guest is a VIP. The state-of-the-art floor plan offers 4800 square feet filled with private pet suites, a day care center and professional training room. The facility can be found on Talbot Line (also known as Hwy #3-hence the business name), positioned in rural Southwold Township in Elgin County. The Elgin Business Resource Centre was first introduced to owner and creator, Tanya Buttinger, in the Fall of 2022 when the Dogs on 3 business plan was submitted as an entry for The Pitch (Dragon's Den-Style Business Plan Competition).</p>

		<p>Tanya's well-developed plan was clear, professional, realistic, achievable, and came with sufficient evidence to support that the industry was growing and in demand. Her commitment was strong, evidenced by the fact that she was leaving a secure professional career to pursue her passion and verbally noted that she would be proceeding with her plan regardless of whether she won the contest or not, although winning would certainly help!</p> <p>Tanya/Dogs on 3 proceeded to the grand finale in January 2023 where she proceeded to take the grand prize package win of \$30,000 in combined cash and in-kind prizes to support her venture. But the real success of the story lies in the whirlwind of achievements and growth that transpired in the months after The Pitch Finale win.</p>
<p>Lake of the Woods Brewing Company</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corporation</p>	<p>Taras and Rob have been working very hard over the past 15 years to bring their vision to life. They started with an idea that then led to the creation of their first Taproom, located in Kenora. The brewery started small, as a micro-brewery and restaurant. Over the years the LOWBrewCo. production and variety of beer increased significantly and they were able to sell in the LCBO's. Two additional taprooms were opened (Winnipeg MB and Warroad MN) and the team is now working on bringing a production facility to Kenora, helping to keep jobs local and use local resources, while reducing their carbon footprint. Part of this expansion also includes an outdoor market space for other local vendors.</p> <p>This business is very involved with the local community. They are the first to offer event space or provide sponsorship for events. They are constantly coming up with new ideas and products, showing that there is much more to this business than beer. They have worked with local businesses to create beer infused products, such as Maple Syrup, Coffee and a Heartbeat Hot Sauce. Rob and Taras have not slowed down since they started this business; they are expanding significantly and have really put Kenora and Lake of the Woods on the map!</p>
<p>North 49 Powersports</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>North Claybelt Community Futures Development Corporation</p>	<p>North 49 Powersports is an authorized Kawasaki, Arctic Cat, Bob Cat and Echo dealer (to name a few) which offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powersports vehicle sales • Accessory and apparel sales • Wide variety of utility and cargo trailers • Vehicle maintenance and tune-up • All automotive and small engine repairs • Winterization and summarization • Accessory installation <p>They also have a 3-Bay garage offering automotive mechanic services.</p> <p>Roch Sigouin is a licensed automotive mechanic and co-owner of a very successful watercraft rental business. He and his partner own 4 watercrafts which are rented on a daily basis during the summer months.</p>

		<p>Alain Gendron has been shop foreman for 20 years, is a licensed automotive mechanic and is co-owner of a 4-unit apartment building. He is also co-owner of a heated storage facility that has 21 units, and 2 commercial units which are both secured with a lease.</p> <p>North 49 Powersports won the Customer Service Award in 2022 at the annual Business Awards Gala put on by the Northern Corridor Chamber of Commerce in Kapuskasing. They are a participant in the Claude's Annual "Mingle & Jingle" store hopping Christmas event, the "move for movember" challenge, sponsor drivers in the demolishing car derby, support other activities such as the Smile Cookie campaign, "Find Rudolph" shop local campaign. Their customer service is top notch and the owners have pride in their business.</p> <p>In the first 5 months of operations, the proponents recorded over \$1m in revenues.</p> <p>In 2020, the company partnered with grade 9 & 10 students in an entrepreneurship class at the French Public High School and produced t-shirts that North 49 sold in their store.</p>
<p>Penokean Hills Farms</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation</p>	<p>Michael Tulloch is President of Penokean Hills Farms Inc (PHF). This business produces beef and pork products through its new abattoir (opened 2023) in Bruce Mines Ontario and markets the meat products to restaurants, butcher shops and retail locations throughout Ontario. The company has also recently started, through its website, an online service for overnight delivery of selected meat products to the purchasers' home, anywhere in Ontario. PHF truly delivers high-quality, Northern Ontario raised beef and pork into the consumer's home and onto their table.</p> <p>Penokean Hills Farms is not only an Abattoir. Rather, it represents the creation of an entire Value Chain. This supply chain includes: 1). The selection of superior animal genetics (beef and pork) for meat that is tender, flavorful, youthful and highly marbled; 2). Cow-calf Farmer Cooperators raise and sell beef cattle into the program; 3). Backgrounding farmers grow the cattle from 500 pounds to 1000 pounds ready for finishing; 4). Penokean's own 1000 head finishing feedlot (Penokean Hills Cooperative) finishes the animals on a unique diet of field peas and barley (for a distinctive meat flavour); 5). The state-of-the-art abattoir harvests beef and pork weekly (lamb to follow); 6). A distribution network of meat products is being delivered throughout Ontario. This is unique in the Province.</p> <p>The Value Chain removes the ebbs and flows of cost cycles and sets the stage for consistent pricing (non-cyclical) for each component of the Value Chain. PHF is ramping up to harvesting 50 beef cattle per week (2500 head per year) and 20 market weight hogs per week (1000 head per year). This represents a Regional Economic Initiative, which has created significant agribusiness growth in the Algoma and Manitoulin Districts.</p>
<p>Rody's Retail</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p>	<p>North Claybelt Community Futures Development Corporation</p>	<p>Chris purchased the Sears store in Kapuskasing in the spring of March 2017. By the fall, Sears filled for bankruptcy. This client could have easily walked away and go back to the mining sector (where he worked away from home and his daughter, two weeks at a time), but instead decided that this was not an option. He rebranded his store, using his last name "Rody's Retail". He started seeking for supplies of furniture and appliance to replace the well know Sears Brands such as Kenmore, Diehard. He connected with Mattress World and brought in his own signature mattress brand, worked with many</p>

<p>Click here for more!</p>		<p>Canadian-made furniture companies such as Ashley Furniture. He has expanded to include: Cub Cadet, Hisun, TGB Demon Powersports, Great Lakes Hot Tubs, Telus dealer, Amana appliances, Broil King, landscaping pavers, slabs and accessories and much more.</p> <p>This entrepreneur has had to re invent himself with the news of Sears filling for bankruptcy. He has surmounted a lot to prove to everyone that he could succeed and he has done this. In 2019, he was awarded the "New Business of the Year" by his peers at the annual Business Awards Gala put on by the Northern Corridor Chamber of Commerce. Chris continues to seek opportunities and diversify his current business.</p>
<p>RV Line Construction</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>The Venture Centre</p>	<p>Based in The City of Timmins, RV Line Construction Inc. specializes in pole line construction, communication line installations, and tree removal services. Equipped with a fleet of boom and bucket trucks, they provide prompt and professional solutions, including 24-hour emergency services, to clients in Timmins and surrounding areas. Their expertise extends from privately owned electrical distribution systems to vital infrastructures like mines, mills, railways, and provincial parks. They offer tailored solutions for clearing trees from power lines, addressing storm damage, installing streetlights, erecting poles, restoring power, and facilitating new construction projects, ensuring reliability and client satisfaction.</p> <p>RV Line Construction Inc. stands out for its exemplary performance across various domains, showcasing a steadfast commitment to fostering economic development and community prosperity.</p> <p>Local Economic Impact: Since its inception, RV Line Construction Inc. has prioritized decisions that positively influence the local community and surrounding areas. By emphasizing local hiring practices, the company has significantly contributed to job creation and economic growth within the region. With over \$5 million in revenue generated and reinvested in the community since 2019, RV Line Construction Inc. has become a key driver of local economic prosperity.</p> <p>Fair Pricing and Customer Service: The company upholds a strong commitment to fair market pricing and superior customer service. This dedication to integrity and quality ensures trust and loyalty among clients, enhancing the company's reputation and fostering long-term relationships.</p> <p>Strategic Growth and Sustainability: Through strategic planning and diligent management, RV Line Construction Inc. has achieved remarkable growth milestones. From modest beginnings funded by the owner and support from organizations like the Venture Centre, the company has expanded its operations significantly. This growth is evidenced by consistent employment, mentorship programs for co-op students, and the acquisition of an extensive fleet of service vehicles. Moreover, ongoing collaborations with local businesses underscore the company's commitment to fostering mutually beneficial relationships within the community</p> <p>In summary, RV Line Construction Inc.'s unwavering dedication to local economic development, fair business practices, and strategic growth initiatives position it as a deserving candidate for the</p>

		<p>Community Futures Ontario Business of the Year Award. Through its continued pursuit of excellence, the company exemplifies entrepreneurial success and meaningful community impact.</p>
<p>Sault Ste Marie Downtown Revitalization</p> <p><i>Community Economic Development</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>CDC of Sault Ste Marie and Area</p>	<p>Through this program the Economic Development Corporation and the Community Development Corporation agreed to provide matching dollars to entrepreneurs locating or expanding in the Downtown area. Our organizations set aside \$1 million for this project over a two-year period (\$500,000 per year).</p> <p>The loans were quite unique in that the CDC portion followed Community Futures Terms and Conditions, but the EDC portion allowed for zero P&I for one year and if performance targets were met, 50% of the loan would be forgiven. This portion was a strong incentive to invest in the downtown area.</p> <p>Our thinking at the time was that the area needed targeted financial support. We were aware of the investments being made by the City to create new space for people to visit the downtown and we were also aware of the activities of the Downtown Association to promote the downtown core through their activities. We felt our program could be a bit of a force multiplier when combined with the aforementioned group efforts.</p> <p>We had sound economic basis for our investment in the downtown core and we have inserted some reading which largely formed the basis of our thinking (How locally owned Businesses help your Community https://amiba.net/local-multiplier/ and Small Businesses can save your Community https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/7/30/small-businesses-can-save-your-community).</p>
<p>Select Manufacturing/Outwater Sheet Metal</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Frontenac Business Services</p>	<p>Paul Outwater, together with his wife and co-owner Kristen, is a seasoned professional deeply experienced in sheet metal installation and mechanical contracting. His business, Outwater Sheet Metal, specializes in HVAC equipment installation and ducting services for various sectors. Under his guidance, the company has evolved from a small venture operating out of a renovated barn to a significant player in the industry. Paul's decision to establish Select Manufacturing as a separate entity to supplement Outwater Sheet Metal was strategic and innovative. This move not only addressed supply chain challenges but also expanded the business's reach across Eastern Ontario. Select Manufacturing distinguishes itself with its commitment to same-day shipping, emergency custom fittings, and exceptional quality, creating a loyal customer base and driving continuous growth. This growth trajectory is further supported by the company's ability to now supply its initial suppliers, displaying a remarkable turnaround and market influence.</p> <p>Paul Outwater is not only a sheet metal specialist with over 25 years of experience in the Eastern Ontario market, but also a community-oriented entrepreneur. His commitment to community development is evident in his multiple initiatives. Paul has partnered with Limestone District School Board to offer high school students the opportunity to obtain their forklift license, sponsors a skilled trades competition at St. Lawrence College, and actively participates in food drives. He extends his support to local organizations like the Lions Clubs. Furthermore, Paul nurtures the next generation of professionals by accepting placement students at both the college and high school level in trades and business administration. He provides Sheet Metal Apprenticeship training and has had numerous apprentices start with them, and then move onto careers in the industry after receiving exceptional</p>

		training and guidance from Paul. This involvement in community and educational initiatives complement his professional achievements, adding depth to his entrepreneurial profile
<p>The Pitch</p> <p><i>Community Economic Development</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Elgin Business Resource Centre</p>	<p>The Pitch is an annual Dragons' Den-Style business plan competition and exciting finale event in which 5 local St. Thomas and Elgin County businesses or aspiring entrepreneurs compete for a chance to win a grand prize package of cash and in-kind prizes to support their venture</p> <p>Annually, the last event was held January 24, 2024. The 10th anniversary of The Pitch is being planned, January 2025.</p> <p>The first year (2015) had 6 finalists, every year thereafter had 5 finalists. Plus all the business plan entries which differ from year to year. We work with clients on developing their business plan for submission (by request).</p> <p>While the finalists get more exposure, all business plan entries (applicants) also benefit from the experience of participating. The last finale winner received \$40,000 in combined cash and in-kind prizes all generously donated by local sponsors. The in-kind prizes are all geared toward the specific needs of a new or growing business (marketing, HR support, website design, Chamber memberships etc). The project aids to also bring the business community together, supporting business to business mentorship. It inspires youth and would-be entrepreneurs and promotes the valuable work of our CFDC's to the community. Many audience members come for the sheer entertainment factor, only to find out about CFDC's programs and services and learn about new businesses they have never heard of before. The Pitch truly promotes economic development in the community.</p>
<p>Top Shelf Canada</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Sarnia Lambton Business Development Centre</p>	<p>Top Shelf Canada has its roots in a humble bartender's dream and unshakeable faith in a business concept that would see Canada with its own national brand of hot sauce that could proudly take its place next to the imported titans that fill the shelves of Canada's grocery store condiment aisles.</p> <p>That dream has been realized through the creation of a trio of Canadian hot sauce products that now comfortably dominate the shelves of Sobeys, Fortinos, Whole Foods, Metro, Canadian Tire, the Real Canadian Superstore, Foodland and Longos stores across Canada, with sights set on export scenarios that would see Canada's hottest hot sauces exported to the United States and across the globe as uniquely Canadian premium condiments.</p> <p>On little more than hustle, determination and an award-winning taste profile, in a short period of time, Joshua Lines and Adina Melanson have positioned their brands: Front Street Heat, Fire and Inferno, to become staples in Canadian fridges for years to come.</p> <p>These premium hot sauces are GMO-free, contain no artificial preservatives, boast all-natural ingredients, are gluten-free, and KETO-friendly and are suitable for vegans. Best of all, they are made in Canada!</p> <p>Beyond their focus on becoming 'Canada's Hot Sauce', Top Shelf Canada has also vowed to support Canadians in need, the same way Top Shelf Canada's products are supported by our country. Early</p>

		<p>campaigns with United Way Centrade, United Way Sarnia Lambton, and The Children's Health Foundation in London ON, highlight this budding company's desire and commitment to giving back to Canadians, both locally and nationally.</p> <p>Bartender to hot sauce slinger! It's been quite a ride and an adventure as we continue to share our love for the bold and spicy with fellow flavor-seekers worldwide!</p>
<p>Tribal Lands Safety</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Sarnia Lambton Business Development Centre</p>	<p>Tribal Lands Safety & Rescue is headquartered in Sarnia, Ontario but has now extended its operations to serve industrial contracts in Alberta as well. The company is certified to deliver Health & Safety Training and Rescue services to companies and corporations across Canada. Beyond the provision of this training, its mission is also to provide training in this field to, and create equal professional employment opportunities for, members of Indigenous Communities. Tribal Lands offers training in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid/CPR • Transportation of Dangerous Goods • WHMIS-GPS • Respiratory Protection • Infection Prevention & Control (IPAC) • Confined Space Entry • Confined Space Awareness • Behavior Based Safety for Supervisors • Fire Extinguisher Training • Lock Out / Tag Out • HS2 Alive <p>They have been able to obtain Master Service Agreements with some of the country's leading companies including: Ovintiv (formerly Encana), Whitecap Resources, Cardinal Resources and Arc Resources - to name a few - and are actively pursuing provincial and federal government contracts. As a 100% Indigenous and Veteran-owned business, they are removing barriers for members of their Community and are demonstrating their ability to compete in the Canadian marketplace with larger companies who provide similar services.</p> <p>Of their eleven (11) Indigenous staff members, Tribal Lands has six (6) all-Indigenous rope rescue and confined space rescue instructors. All obtained their certification through Tribal Lands. One (Jonas) has moved into an Instructor role for CPT, First Aid, Rope Rescue and Confined Space. Another (David) has achieved his dream of becoming a Manager and a leader within the company. Tribal Lands is meeting and exceeding its mission to provide both training and employment opportunities for people within Indigenous Community. Their growing list of corporate contracts is assisting in providing avenues through which they can facilitate employment for those they train. As Tribal Lands continues to grow, they will continue to actively seek opportunities to work closely with remote Indigenous communities to provide training and employment opportunities that would not otherwise be accessible.</p>

		<p>Beyond their training of Indigenous Community members and the provision of employment for Indigenous workers, Tribal Lands employs Canadian veterans who are also equipped with the skills and experience to run their training cohorts thus creating job opportunities at many levels of their operations. Canadian veterans also experience barriers to employment upon leaving the military but have invaluable skills to offer the Canadian workplace. Utilizing the talents of those in Indigenous Communities as well as Canadian veterans (some, who are both), Tribal lands believes that they can contribute to prosperous Indigenous Communities as well as to the broader Canadian workplace.</p>
<p>Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life</p> <p><i>Entrepreneur of the Year</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Community Futures Oxford</p>	<p>Cheryl Haskett, co-founder of Udderly Ridiculous and Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life, is a seasoned executive with a legacy rooted in innovative leadership, strategic business expansion, and societal upliftment. Her distinguished 18-year career in training and development served as a launchpad for her entrepreneurial journey, equipping her with the skills needed to navigate the dynamic business landscape and achieve remarkable success in the dairy industry and agri-tourism.</p> <p>Cheryl's business acumen and strategic vision created innovation in the goat dairy industry with the launch of her award-winning Goat Milk Ice Cream which gained traction onto over 300 retail shelves across Canada, amplifying brand visibility and fueling growth. In the midst of the pandemic Cheryl made a pivot to protect the brand and provide a way to generate learning and dialogue with the public about agriculture and our food systems. Her commitment to advancing responsible and experiential tourism led to the establishment of the 9 time award-winning agri-tourism facility which has also earned the 2023 Trip Advisors Travellers Choice Award designation in the top 10% of attractions Worldwide. Her efforts propelled Udderly Ridiculous to be a destination.</p> <p>Beyond her business pursuits, Cheryl's impact is felt in her dedication to mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs and philanthropic initiatives like 'Wreck the Dress', which supports women overcoming domestic abuse. Her partnerships with organizations like World Vision showcase her commitment to creating lasting change.</p> <p>Cheryl is improving knowledge of agriculture best practices through agri-tourism while prioritizing the safety and well being of her animals. Her partnerships have provided a market for other goat milk producers after a major contract ended within the market. Providing education, training and experiences on the farm bring tourists to Oxford County providing enriching experiences that create long-term benefits for those who visit as well as rural Oxford.</p>
<p>Ukrainian Refugee Support</p> <p><i>Community Economic Development</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	<p>Atikokan Economic Development Corporation</p>	<p>The AEDC worked with Resolute Forest Products to provide support in bringing Ukrainian refugees to Atikokan to work in the mill and live in our community.</p> <p>Jan. 2022 to date.</p> <p>Approximately 40 refugees have been provided accommodation and foodservice and secured employment.</p> <p>Population has grown by 5%.</p>

		Exceptional collaboration to bring together industry, service providers and volunteers to support a cohort of people displaced by war.
<p>White Tuque <i>Innovation</i></p> <p>Click here for more!</p>	Nottawasaga Futures	<p>The Canada Digital Adoption Program (CDAP) was launched in 2022 by Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) Canada to help Canadian small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) bridge the digitization gap between their businesses and their global counterparts. For eligible businesses, CDAP will cover 90% of the costs of a Digital Assessment and Plan, up to a total of \$15,000. White Tuque has been a CDAP-approved Digital Advisor since the program launched and is one of the few cybersecurity DAs in the program.</p> <p>Nottawasaga Futures and White Tuque proposed that the County of Simcoe’s In-Market Support Fund be leveraged to cover the remaining 10% of the CDAP assessment costs. This means that eligible, rural-based businesses in Simcoe County could access top-tier cybersecurity expertise, advice, guidance, and planning for the affordable price of \$0.</p> <p>The benefits to local businesses was immediately apparent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each \$1,500 dedicated would result in a protected business and an economic impact of ~\$125,000 per business signed up. • The \$22,500 provided to cover 15 businesses will have a local impact in Simcoe County of approximately \$1.8 million, providing a significant return in addition to businesses protecting themselves. • Following the CDAP assessment, businesses are eligible for up to \$100,000 in interest-free loans from Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) to implement the assessment recommendations. Using these funds will not only improve their ability to do business but also drive the local economy