

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Digital Main Street launches in Caledon

The Town of Caledon and the Downtown Bolton Business Improvement Area (BIA) today announced that they have received a total \$25,000 grant from Digital Main Street (DMS) to fund a Digital Service Squad to help downtown small businesses within the BIA and other communities in Caledon improve their online capabilities.

The Town of Caledon and the Downtown Bolton BIA received the Digital Main Street grant from the Ontario government to establish a Digital Service Squad to help main street small businesses enhance their use of digital tools and techniques to better evolve and grow. The Squad will consist of a trained specialist who will visit small businesses in Bolton and the communities of Caledon East, Caledon Village, Palgrave, Inglewood, Mono Mills, Cheltenham, Alton, Belfountain and Terra Cotta at no cost to help them set up a Google Business Profile, conduct a digital-readiness assessment and apply for a \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant.

"A vibrant small business sector is key to the strength of our community," said Allan Thompson, Mayor of Caledon. "We are excited to form this partnership with the Ontario BIA Association to assist main street businesses adopt revenue-generating and cost-saving technologies."

"This is an exciting opportunity for all the businesses in our area to acquire and upgrade their social media capabilities in order to better promote and operate their businesses," added Jean Carberry, Chair of the Downtown Bolton BIA. "We are delighted to introduce Loucas Loucaides, who will be our digital squad member and will work with businesses. Loucas has all the skills necessary to assist the business owners who participate."

A joint program funded by Government of Ontario and delivered by the Ontario BIA Association, Digital Main Street helps improve how small businesses use digital tools and techniques to become more successful. Today's digital economy is vital to small businesses, and DMS will help them adopt new digital technologies from e-commerce and social media to back-office systems such as payroll and inventory.

"Our government is committed to helping small businesses improve their competitiveness, create jobs and attract investment," said the Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "That's why I'm so pleased that businesses in Bolton and the Town of Caledon will benefit from the expertise of a Digital Service Squad to help small businesses



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embrace digital technology. Our investment in the Digital Main Street program will help to ensure that Ontario is open for business and open for jobs.”

“The training provided by the Digital Service Squad will help many businesses in the Bolton and the Town of Caledon to use new technologies and provide tools and training to take advantage of new digital opportunities,” said Sylvia Jones, Dufferin-Caledon MPP. “This initiative by the BIA and the Town of Caledon is a new resource for businesses to help them stay competitive and build their business prospects.”

Digital Main Street offers two types of grants:

1. Digital Transformation Grant: There are 2,000 grants of \$2,500 each available to qualifying small “main street” businesses across Ontario to help them adopt new digital technologies.
2. Digital Service Squad Grant: There are 300 grants of \$10,000 each available to qualifying municipal or business groups across Ontario to develop and implement local squads of digital vendors and experts to directly help small businesses.

“The Downtown Bolton BIA and the Town of Caledon are together leading the way for others across Ontario in taking advantage of Digital Main Street to help keep their downtown core vibrant and strong,” said Kay Matthews, Executive Director of the Ontario BIA Association. “Our small main street businesses are a critical contributor to Ontario’s economic, social and cultural health, and it’s vital that we work together to ensure their success. Digital Main Street will help the main street small businesses of the Caledon and Bolton to compete in an increasingly digital world.”

Businesses will be introduced to the Digital Service Squad over the coming weeks. For further information see contacts below

About the Downtown Bolton BIA

The Downtown Bolton BIA is a local board of the Town of Caledon established by provincial statute and by law of Council. Its purpose is to oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned land, buildings and structures beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality and to promote the area as a business or shopping area. The BIA is run by a Board elected from among the members and serves for the same term as Caledon Council. Funding is from a special levy on the taxes charged to commercial property owners and tenants in the area.

About the Ontario BIA Association

OBIAA is the network that represents unique and vibrant BIAs across Ontario. The Association supports and advocates on behalf of its members through the building and nurturing of strong relationships and partnerships. OBIAA is a leader in the development and sharing of information, tools, resources and best practices, and is the ONE voice on common issues.

About Digital Main Street

Digital Main Street is an innovative program designed to help main street small businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, grants and Digital Service Squads teams of street-level experts that help main street small businesses manage and grow their operations through technology



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adoption. The program was originally created by the Toronto Association of BIAs (TABIA) and a group of strategic partners including Google, MasterCard, Rogers, Microsoft and Shopify. The Province of Ontario expansion of Digital Main Street is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and delivered by the Ontario BIA Association. The Ontario expansion is part of the government's \$12 million Main Street Enhancement Initiative to create jobs and support communities across the province. For more information, please visit digitalmainstreet.ca.

About the Town of Caledon

A blend of urban and rural communities, Caledon combines business success with an unmatched quality of life. A vibrant community of over 70,000 residents, Caledon benefits from its strategic location within the Greater Toronto Area. Caledon is an award-winning green community, with unmatched natural landscapes, pristine parks, and protected conservation areas.

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Contacts

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