



November 20, 2014

Middlesex County Administration Offices
399 Ridout Street North
London, ON N6A 2P1

Attention: Budget Committee

Re: CONTINUING FOCUS ON THE FUTURE OF TOURISM IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY

The Board of Directors would like to request consideration from the County of Middlesex to provide funding to ensure the future, continued growth and development of tourism in Middlesex County. Much good work has transpired over the last year however we are continually challenged with funding our basic operations and are facing a number of important decisions in the coming month. We look forward to participating in the upcoming tourism stakeholders meeting on December 4th, and the common vision and actions that will result. We also recognize that the County's budgeting process is ongoing and our funding submission is required prior to the stakeholder meeting.

We are very pleased to report our organization has made some inroads towards sustainability with our new "Pay to Play Partnerships", 64 partners which include seven of the eight Municipalities in Middlesex County resulted in \$11,325 of contributions. Currently 19 local Artists and Artisans sell their products in the store located in the Tourism Middlesex office and front entrance of Amy's Restaurant and this new "Made in Middlesex" store has resulted in \$742.40 in net profits to our organization.

We have continued to work diligently over the last year to increase visitor traffic and visitor spending by working with and on behalf of our tourism partners. Our visitors centre saw increased numbers of inquiries and our website and other social media sites experience significant hits demonstrating the interest in our community and what it has to offer. We recently put a survey together and asked some of the visitor's these three questions:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5 how satisfied were you with your service today?
2. Did you receive the help you needed?
3. What could we have done differently to make your experience better?

Here is some of the feedback we received:

"Very sweet and extremely helpful. Wonderful service".

~ Robert Parker, Elsie MI

"Staff were very knowledgeable and helpful answering all our questions completely. Staff also offered additional information and anticipated what we may also be interested in based upon our expressed interests".

~ Jean Sevger, Minot ND

“They were very informative. I can’t say enough about how helpful they were. Thank you so much Becky & Jenna.”

~ Heidi & Klaus, Berlin GER

“The girls were so helpful with all our questions, sweet concerned Becky & Jenna!”

~ Don & Bev Seim, Gowanstown, ON

“The staff was wonderful, courteous and helpful! We were able to get maps and directions to Niagara without using expensive data and minutes.”

~ Pat & Bill Autti, Genoa City, WI

“Very excited to have found your gift shop. My family back home will love your Canadian Maple Syrup. Thanks you so much for being so helpful”.

~ Lenka Boehmovs, Czech Republic

“Very, very helpful. So very nice ladies. More help than we could have asked for, found a hotel for us”

~ Ken & Karen Spicer, Green River WY

Some other programs and initiatives Tourism Middlesex has been a part of:

- Cruise the Coast Map
- Ontario’s Southwest Culinary Guide
- Birding Map
- Waterfront Getaways Map
- Backroad Trips Guide
- War of 1812 Route Map
- Middlesex Trails Guide
- Middlesex County Museums and Heritage Guide
- Middlesex Heritage Trail
- Administrator of Ontario Trillium Fund grant for the Ontario Barn Quilt Trail project
- Administrator of Canadian Heritage grant for the Battle of Longwoods & Like A Hero Going Home, Tecumseh Projects
- Doors Open 2012, 2013, 2014
- Ontario’s Southwest Spring Conference

We were fortunate enough to receive funding for two summer students that allowed us to continue to be a presence at the numerous events that take place throughout our county, and to have the office opened seven days a week for the summer months.

In order for Tourism Middlesex to continue to grow and flourish along with the partnerships it has fostered, the need for additional revenue sources is imperative. We have learned very quickly that the ideal way for municipalities to build their tourism economies was to create a solid partnership between the municipal sector and the local tourism businesses.

OPERATIONAL COSTS

Tourism Manager	\$37,000
IT/Website	\$1,200
Bookeeping & Audit Fees	\$2,260
WSIB, Mandatory Payroll Benefits	\$3,584
Employee Travel Expenses & Prof Dev.	\$740
Rent	\$3,750
Insurance	\$1,560
Telephone & Internet	\$2,400
Bank Service Charges & Interest Exp.	\$60
Promotional Material	\$500
Office Supplies /Meeting Expenses	\$300
Total Cost	\$53,354

Tourism Middlesex has proven it has the capacity and the ability to take the lead role in developing and marketing tourism for Middlesex County. We are aware other Destination Marketing Organizations such as Oxford, Elgin, Norfolk, Chatham-Kent and London are funded in full or part by their municipalities.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Tourism Middlesex	Basic Operational Costs	\$55,000
Second Staff	Office Assistant/Social Media Coordinator	\$22,700
Office	New location	\$9,600
Funding Requirements	2015/2016 Contribution	\$87,300

Hence our request at this time for transitional funding in order that we may grow and prosper in marketing Middlesex County as a tourism destination par excellence! We would also ask that both a County and a CFDC staff join the Tourism Middlesex Board of Directors as voting members to assist in our efforts.

Kindest Regards,



Mark Williams,
 President Tourism Middlesex