



Leamington Launches Digital Main Street Service Squad

BIA receives \$10,000 Digital Main Street Grant to help main street businesses improve online presence.

July 5th, 2019: Leamington, Ontario. The Leamington Uptown BIA today announced that it has received a \$10,000 grant from Digital Main Street (DMS), an Ontario government program, to fund a Digital Service Squad to help main street small businesses improve their online capabilities.

The Digital Service Squad will help small businesses in downtown Leamington enhance their use of digital tools and techniques to better evolve and grow. The Squad will consist of a trained specialist who will visit and assist businesses at no cost to help them set up Google Business, conduct a digital-readiness assessment and apply for a \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant. The Uptown Leamington BIA has selected The Branding Loft as their Digital Service Squad. The Squad will start visiting businesses on July 26th, 2019.

"We are thrilled to be able to bring the opportunity of increasing our members digital knowledge base and capabilities through this grant that the BIA successfully achieved for them," said Lisa Bradt, Chair of the Uptown Leamington BIA. "Any initiatives that can help our members improve their efficiencies while also helping to promote their businesses and represent Leamington, are ones that we feel are worth focusing on."

A joint program funded by Government of Ontario and delivered by the Ontario BIA Association, Digital Main Street helps improve how small main street 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 Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "That's why I'm so pleased that businesses in the Municipality of Leamington will benefit from the expertise of a Digital Service Squad to help small businesses 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."

"Creating an online presence provides business owners and consumers with so many benefits," said Rick Nicholls, MPP for Chatham-Kent-Leamington. "For example, once your business is online, you can improve client service through greater flexibility and ensure the faster delivery of products and services."

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 Uptown Leamington BIA is leading the way in using the power 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 Leamington’s main street small businesses compete in an increasingly digital world.”

Businesses within the BIA area will be introduced to the Digital Service Squad over the coming weeks. For further information contact dss@leamingtonbia.com.

- 30 -

ABOUT the Uptown Leamington BIA

The Uptown Leamington Business Improvement Area (BIA) represents over 200 businesses in the Uptown area. Operated by a volunteer board of passionate business owners, our role is to develop the uptown core through beautification, general improvements and upgrades, promotion, events and marketing.

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

Vibrant main streets help attract visitors, create jobs, and increase the competitiveness of small businesses, which are the backbone of small rural communities. The world is changing. Small main street businesses across Ontario must think about how to promote online, use e-commerce, and streamline their processes with digital tools to stay competitive and win. To help Ontario’s main street small businesses enhance their digital capabilities and online presence, the Ontario BIA Association and Ontario’s Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs have partnered on this \$12 million initiative over three years. www.digitalmainstreet.ca

Media and Program Contact:

Kelly Baillargeon

Kelly@leamingtonbia.com