



FOR RELEASE

Gananoque Launches Digital Main Street Service Squad

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

June 24, 2019: Gananoque, Ontario. The Town of Gananoque today announced that it has received a \$10,000 grant from the Ontario government to fund a Digital Service Squad to help main street small businesses improve their online capabilities.

As part of Digital Main Street, the Digital Service Squad grant from the Ontario government will be used to establish a Digital Service Squad to help small businesses in the downtown areas 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 downtown 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 Squad will be administered by Gananoque's Economic Development Office and will start visiting businesses on July 2nd, 2019.

"I am excited for Gananoque to continue to move forward with their technological efforts. Digital Main Street will allow us to help our downtown businesses grow their online presence, which will in turn help the growth of the community and encourage businesses to come to our area." said the Mayor of Gananoque, Ted Lojko. "We hope to work with a variety of downtown businesses and meet their individualized needs. Whether our small main street businesses are looking to apply for a grant, need new resources or want a one-on-one session with our Digital Service Squad member, we want to help them move towards their goals. We look forward to sharing our progress in the next few months."

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 Town of Gananoque 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."

“The Digital Service Squad in the Town of Gananoque will help local businesses to gain the expertise necessary to compete in the new digital environment,” said Steve Clark, MPP for Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. “The training they’ll receive will help them to expand their business and compete both locally and in a global marketplace.”

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.

“Gananoque is showing leadership in Eastern Ontario 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 Gananoque’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.

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ABOUT Gananoque

Gananoque has cultivated a rich entrepreneurial spirit and invite you to see what we have to offer. In the heart of the 1000 Islands, Gananoque is internationally recognized as one of Eastern Ontario's most stunning waterfront communities. It has truly developed into a world-class destination for visitors, businesses and residents.

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