



FOR RELEASE

## Walkerton Launches Digital Main Street Service Squad

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

**August 6, 2019: Walkerton, Ontario.** The Walkerton BIA today announced that it has received a 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.

As part of Digital Main Street, the Walkerton BIA received a \$10,000 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 promote and sell online. The Squad will consist of a trained specialist who will visit and assist BIA-area businesses at no cost to help them set up Google My Business, conduct a digital-readiness assessment and apply for a \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grant. The Squad will start visiting businesses on August 19<sup>th</sup>.

*"As a business owner myself I know how important it is to utilize digital marketing strategies. So I can certainly see the impact such a valuable resource will have on our business community. With the support of the Digital Service Squad we look forward to seeing the continued success of our businesses as they evolve and grow to their full potential."* Randy Saunders, Walkerton BIA Chair

A program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and delivered by the Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA), 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 Digital Main Street 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 Walkerton 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."*

*"This is a wonderful opportunity for local businesses,"* said Lisa Thompson, MPP for Huron-Bruce *"We're providing the tools that will help small businesses get started and become digital-ready. In turn, businesses will use digital technologies to help expand their market and manage their cost more efficiently."*

**Walkerton Business Improvement Area**

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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 Walkerton BIA is among the forward-looking BIAs using the power of Digital Main Street to help keep their main streets vibrant and strong,” said Kay Matthews, Executive Director of the Ontario BIA Association. “Our main street small businesses are a critical contributor to Ontario’s economic, social and cultural well-being, and it’s vital that we work together to ensure their success. Digital Main Street will help the main street small businesses of Walkerton compete in an increasingly digital world.”*

#### **ABOUT the Walkerton BIA**

The Walkerton Business Improvement Area works to promote the area as a business, shopping and service destination. We also strive to improve, beautify and maintain the area within the BIA, beyond what is provided by the Municipality of Brockton. Together we are 300+ voices strong, represented by an elected Board of Directors and supported by Brockton Council. If you’re looking to start a new business or relocate your existing business, you’re going to get hooked on Walkerton!

#### **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](http://www.digitalmainstreet.ca)

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# WALKERTON

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

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