

# Main Streets in Bloom



2026 BIA CONFERENCE

Holiday Inn & Suites Conference Centre  
St. Catharines, ON April 19-22, 2026

**OBIAA**<sup>™</sup>

**DOWN**  
**TOWN**  
ST. CATHARINES

 **tabia**



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

### Message from the Prime Minister of Canada

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 2026 Ontario Business Improvement Area Association Conference.

Business Improvement Areas across Ontario play a vital role in building vibrant, inclusive, and resilient communities. By supporting local businesses, enhancing public spaces, and fostering a strong sense of place, BIAs help shape the neighbourhoods where Canadians live, work, and connect.



This conference is an important opportunity to come together to share ideas, strengthen collaboration, and explore new approaches to supporting economic growth and community development. Your dedication to revitalizing main streets and empowering local entrepreneurs contributes meaningfully to Canada's prosperity.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to strengthening communities across Ontario. Your efforts help ensure that our neighbourhoods remain dynamic centres of culture, commerce, and community life.

Please accept my best wishes for a productive and inspiring conference.

Ottawa  
2026



Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario

April 19, 2026

### A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DOUG FORD

Main street businesses are the economic foundation of communities across Ontario. They fuel growth, create jobs and help build strong local economies. The 2026 BIA Conference is part of the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association's (OBIAA) commitment to fostering thriving main streets across the province.

This year's theme, *Main Streets in Bloom: BIAs Rooted in Purpose*, celebrates the resilience and community spirit that defines these economic and social hubs. It's an opportunity for delegates to network, innovate and share inspiration.

I want to thank the OBIAA for hosting this conference and for its continued dedication to supporting BIAs. Through collaboration and advocacy you're helping build vibrant communities that support economic development, improve our quality of life and make Ontario the best place to live, work and do business.

My best wishes for a productive and successful conference.

**Doug Ford**  
Premier





**Mayor Mat Siscoe**  
City of St. Catharines

[stcatharines.ca](http://stcatharines.ca)

## Welcome to St. Catharines!

On behalf of the City of St. Catharines, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 OBIAA Conference.

We are honoured to host over 300 dedicated BIA staff, board members, Councillors, and municipal professionals from across Ontario and Canada. Your commitment to building vibrant, resilient communities is the foundation of our downtowns and main streets, and your presence here today reflects the strength of collaboration and innovation that drives our cities forward.

St. Catharines is proud to be part of this important dialogue. As the largest city in Niagara, we understand the value of strong BIAs and the role they play in economic development, cultural vitality, and civic pride.

While you are here, I encourage you to explore all that St. Catharines has to offer. From our thriving local businesses and award-winning culinary scene to our rich arts and culture, scenic trails, and waterfront charm - there's something here for everyone.

Thank you for the work you do every day to make our communities better places to live, work, and thrive.

Welcome to St. Catharines... we're glad you're here!

Warm regards,

Mayor Mat Siscoe



@MatSiscoe   /MayorMatSiscoe  
 @MatSiscoe   mayor@stcatharines.ca

Strong forms can still revel in comfort. Blox's bold geometric forms make way for warm, wide-plank Douglas Fir with a gentle concave shape that makes it feel natural to sit, stay, and smile.  
[maglin.com](http://maglin.com)



# Blox



The softer side  
of bench seating.

# Welcome to the 2026 Ontario BIA Conference.

No conference simply blooms on its own, and this year's gathering in St. Catharines (the Garden City, proudly celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary) is no exception. Behind every inspiring session, meaningful conversation, and new partnership is the thoughtful work of our Conference Committee and host community. We extend our sincere thanks to all who helped cultivate this year's experience.

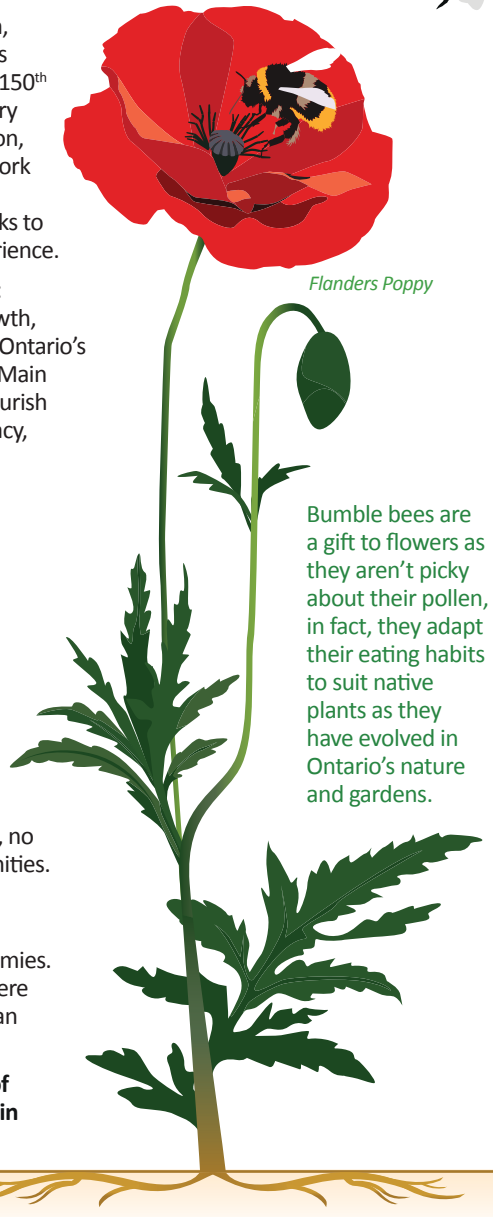
Our 2026 theme, Main Streets in Bloom: BIAs Rooted in Purpose, reflects the growth, resilience, and collaboration that define Ontario's Main Streets and commercial corridors. Main Streets do not thrive by chance. They flourish when nurtured - with leadership, advocacy, investment, creativity, and connection.

## In many ways, BIAs are like bees in a thriving garden.

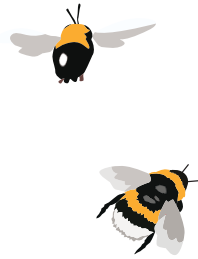
Steadfast and determined, they work tirelessly - often behind the scenes - carrying ideas, resources, and support from one business to another, from one partnership to the next. Bees pollinate ecosystems; BIAs pollinate Main Streets. Without that essential, collective effort, there would be no blossoms, no harvest, no vibrant gathering places for our communities.

As social and collaborative networks, BIAs strengthen the connections that sustain small businesses and local economies. Together, we cultivate environments where entrepreneurs can grow, communities can gather, and innovation can take root.

**There is so much to learn in the world of BIAs, and OBIAA strives to aid your BIA in learning to 'bee' the best you can be.**



Bumble bees are a gift to flowers as they aren't picky about their pollen, in fact, they adapt their eating habits to suit native plants as they have evolved in Ontario's nature and gardens.



We invite you to learn, share, connect, and be inspired over the next three and a half days. We hope you leave this Conference invigorated, proud of the work you do, and energized to continue supporting Ontario's Main Streets.

## About the Area

Welcome to St. Catharines – the Garden City – proudly celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026. Located in the heart of Niagara Region, nestled between Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment, the city is known for its 99 kilometers of trails, vibrant arts and culture scene, thriving culinary landscape, beautiful beaches, and the Welland Canal that runs through our community. St. Catharines is also the final Canadian terminus of the Underground Railroad, with a rich Black history and deep Indigenous roots that continue to shape our identity.

Niagara is home to 18 BIAs across 12 municipalities, more than 100 wineries, Canada's Flower Capital and one of Canada's most iconic natural attractions, Niagara Falls. Yet what makes this region truly special are its Main Streets – filled with unique local experiences, diverse dining, independent shops, and rich cultural significance. Downtown St. Catharines revitalization in public spaces, residential growth, and Main Street businesses, reflect the spirit of this year's theme. While Conference programming takes place in central St. Catharines, we encourage you to explore the broader Niagara region to experience the energy and character that make our Main Streets thrive.

## Katherine Dodge

St. Catharines Downtown Association  
Executive Director, Conference Host

## About the Program

We have retained our four pillars of Main Street Revitalization, while adding additional focus areas to support IDA (International Downtown Association) accreditation. These are reflected in the four streams of the Conference:



Our Trade Show is a key part of our Conference, and we thank all of our Trade Show partners, who bring you their creative ideas and offerings that can be brought back to your area.

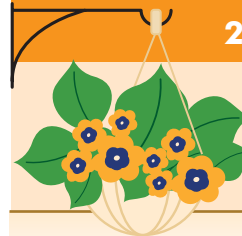
## About the Experience

We encourage you to complete the survey and share your feedback to help shape future BIA Conferences. We will once again be evaluating each session so we can learn what trends and learnings you would like to see at future BIA Conferences.

## Stephanie Hicks

Town of Lincoln; Economic Development  
OBIAA Board of Directors President

## 2026 SESSION EVALUATIONS



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK!**





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# 2026 Land Acknowledgement

The City of St. Catharines and Niagara region is the traditional home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. The land is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today.

This land acknowledgement is important. It reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people in our community – and indeed across the nations.



City of St. Catharines [Photograph] [www.stcatharines.ca](http://www.stcatharines.ca)



Ontario Wild Strawberry

# 2026 Awards Gala Dinner

Merlot, Royal Henley, Chardonnay,  
Concord (MRCC) Ballroom

**DATE:** Monday, April 20 **TIME:** 6:30 to 9:00pm

The **Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA)** recognizes the impactful work driving Main Street revitalization and management across Ontario.

Together, BIAs and municipalities have worked hard, achieved meaningful successes, and made measurable differences in their communities—now it's time to celebrate those efforts.

The ten (10) awards categories align with our Conference pillars and reflect the shared priorities of Main Streets. **With an historic 66 submissions, OBIAA is proud to highlight the most innovative and successful initiatives strengthening Main Streets across the province.**

- 1 **Advocacy & Governance**
- 2 **Operations**
- 3 **Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion**
- 4 **Economic Resilience & Community Building**
- 5 **Special Events**
- 6 **Marketing**
- 7 **Communications**
- 8 **Streetscaping & Public Improvements**
- 9 **Jan Hawley Memorial Pinnacle Award**
- 10 **Alex Ling Lifetime Achievement Award**

## 2026 Conference Committees

### Conference Committee

- Amber Pajtasz** | Town of Caledon | 2025 Conference Committee Chair | OBIAA Board Member
- Katherine Dodge** | St. Catharines Downtown Association | 2026 Conference Host
- Donna Szpakowski** | Hyde Park BIA | OBIAA Board Member
- Julia Rocchi** | The Glebe BIA
- Julianne Kloss** | Volunteer
- Viveca Gravel** | River District BIA
- Stacey Zubczyk** | Downtown Barrie BIA
- Nick Crozier** | Uptown Saint John BIA
- Salvatore Marchese** | City of Sault Ste. Marie | OBIAA Board Member
- Sara Porter** | Southampton BIA | OBIAA Board Member
- Kelly Ralston** | Port Credit BIA
- Doug Sams** | Kerr Village BIA (Oakville) | OBIAA Past President

### Awards Committee

- Vicki Smith** | Downtown London BIA | Chair | OBIAA Board Member
- Liz Behrens** | Volunteer
- Stephen Lokash** | Mount Pleasant Village BIA
- Salvatore Marchese** | City of Sault Ste. Marie | OBIAA Board Member
- Nicole Moore** | Volunteer
- ... and all judges!



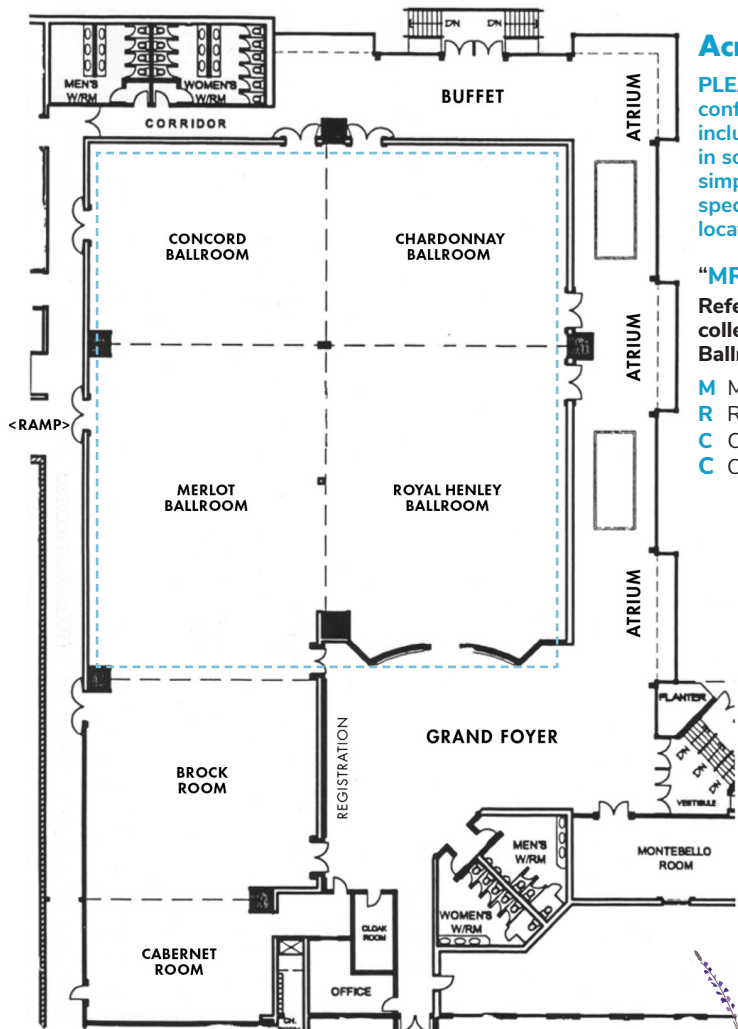
### Local Host Committee

- Katherine Dodge** | St. Catharines Downtown Association | 2026 Conference Host
- Stephanie Hicks** | Town of Lincoln | OBIAA Board President
- Jeannie McGlynn** | Heart of Niagara Hotels
- Samir Husika** | City of St. Catharines
- Amy Schanbacher** | Thorold Business Improvement Area
- Amanda MacDonald** | Downtown Grimsby BIA
- Katie MacCabe** | St. Catharines Downtown Association
- Jennifer Blackledge** | Downtown Bench Beamsville BIA

### From the OBIAA Office

- Rachel Braithwaite** | Executive Director
- Erin Douglas** | Administrative and Membership Manager
- Kennishia Duffus** | Events and Sponsorship Manager
- Nadine Bongers** | Brock Intern – Awards
- Hajirah Omar** | Brock Intern – Marketing
- Nina Seaman** | University of Toronto Intern – Speakers & Logistics

# 2026 Conference Location



## Acronym Use:

PLEASE NOTE: The conference program includes acronyms in some cases to simplify content, specifically, the location of events.

### "MRCC Ballroom"

Refers to the collective of Ballrooms:

- M Merlot
- R Royal Henley
- C Chardonnay
- C Concord

April 19-22, 2026

Holiday Inn & Suites  
Conference Centre

327 Ontario Street Building 1,  
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 5L3 Canada



# 2026 Sponsors

## Major



## Contributing



For more information about this conference and future OBIAA events please contact:

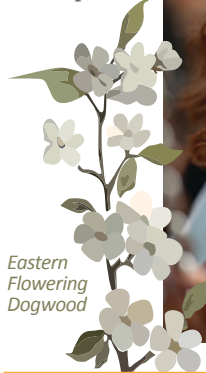
4996 Beam St, PO Box 1146, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

647-521-5341 | [events@obiaa.com](mailto:events@obiaa.com)  
[www.obiaa.com/conference](http://www.obiaa.com/conference)

# 2026 OPENING

## Day 2 Keynote Speaker

Monday, April 20



Eastern Flowering Dogwood



### Jay Pitter

Jay Pitter  
Placemaking



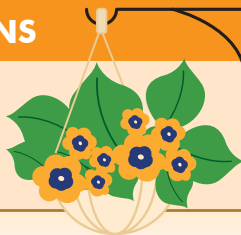
Jay Pitter is a sought-after keynote speaker, lecturer, and public thinker who transforms how people understand public spaces and cities more broadly. Drawing on decades of precedent-setting practice, she delivers signature participatory keynotes that move beyond monologues — sharing her expertise while inviting every attendee to contribute their own. She has been engaged by client collaborators such as UN Women, municipal governments, cultural institutions, and leading universities. Whether addressing an auditorium of transportation planners, a room of policymakers, or a public audience in a park beneath an open sky, her participatory keynotes invite people to move beyond simply solving problems to embracing the possibility and poetry of place.



### 2026 SESSION EVALUATIONS



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK!**

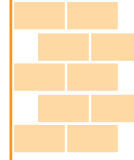


# 2026 CLOSING

## Day 4 Keynote Speakers

Wednesday, April 22

Wrap up the conference on a high note with a motivational panel featuring BIA-connected leaders. Explore how communities can stand out as vibrant Main Street destinations. This uplifting session will leave you feeling inspired, recharged, and ready to help your Main Street continue to bloom!



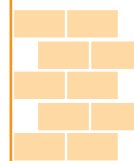
### Craig Stevens

Downtown Barrie BIA



### Nour Mazloum

Peterborough Downtown BIA



### Deron Johnston

Downtown Orillia BIA

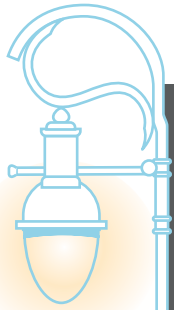


### Sara Porter

Southampton BIA



# 2026 Program



## Day 1 - Sunday, April 19, 2026

**12:00 pm - 6:00 pm** - 12:00 pm-6:00 pm **Registration > Grand Foyer**

Spring  
Crocus



**1:00 pm - 12:00 am**

### SUNDAY SOCIAL EVENTS

**1:00 pm - 4:15 pm**

**Collaborative Ecosystems in Action: A Behind-the-Scenes Tour at Safari Niagara > Holiday Inn & Suites Conference Centre – Main Lobby**

Go behind the scenes to see Safari Niagara’s animals up close and learn how partnerships shape meaningful visitor experiences. Then explore Downtown Stevensville, where long-time merchants share insights on small-community business life and how new development is inspiring growth within a connected regional tourism ecosystem. Transportation & refreshments included.

**Price:** \$50.00 per person (plus taxes & fees)

**4:30 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Welcome to St. Catharines and 2026 Trade Show Reception > Merlot, Royal Henley, Chardonnay, Concord (MRCC) Ballroom and Atrium**

The official launch of the 2026 BIA Conference, hosted by the St. Catharines Downtown Association, begins with our Trade Show reception. Join us for the Welcome to St. Catharines and make sure to visit each and every one of this year’s Trade Show Exhibitors while you enjoy the following:

- Welcome to St. Catharines
- Complimentary Hors D’oeuvres
- Complimentary drink tickets provided by the Exhibitors when visiting their booths (first-come, first-serve)
- Connect with and hear from exhibitors.

**Sponsored by: The Trade Show Exhibitors**

**6:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

**Niagara Benchlands: A Taste of Local Luxury > Niagara Benchlands** \*Buses leave at 6:10 pm from hotel lobby.

Experience the flavour and flair of Niagara Benchlands on this exclusive OBIAA 2026 excursion. Sip award-winning wines and craft brews while indulging in gourmet pairings like beef Yorkshire pudding with Cabernet Franc, tater tots with artisanal sauces, local cheese and charcuterie, and BBQ pork nachos with lime crema. Set against the backdrop of rolling vineyards and rustic elegance, this tour blends culinary creativity with Niagara charm, a perfect toast to connection, community, and craft. Transportation included.

**Price:** \$80.00 per person (plus taxes & fees) **Sponsored by:**



**9:00 pm - 12:00 am**

**Hospitality Suite > Hodgie’s Social House - Bowling and VIP Lounge**

Join us at the on-site Hospitality Suite at Hodgie’s Social House for a relaxed and social start to the conference. Enjoy an elevated experience with access to VIP bowling lanes, light snacks, and a comfortable space to connect with fellow delegates. A wristband is required for entry and bowling participation.

**Price:** \$20.00-\$45.00 (plus taxes & fees)

# 2026 Program

WALK  
SHOP  
MEET  
JOIN  
PLAY  
DINE  
LOVE



Day 2



Million  
Bells  
Petunias



Monday, April 20, 2026

7:30 am  
4:30 pm

- 7:30 am-4:30 pm **Registration** > Grand Foyer
- 8:30 am-4:30 pm **Trade Show Hours** > Merlot, Royal Henley, Chardonnay, Concord (MRCC) Ballroom & Atrium
- 8:00 am-9:00 am **Breakfast** > MRCC Ballroom

8:30 am -  
9:15 am

## Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, Greetings and Introductions > MRCC Ballroom

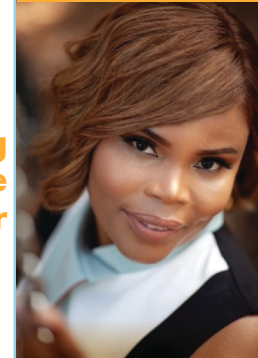
The City of St. Catharines and Niagara Region is the traditional home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. The land is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This land acknowledgement is important: it reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people in our community – and indeed across the nations.



9:15 am -  
10:30 am

## Jay Pitter

Jay Pitter Placemaking



### Designing Main Streets for Public Joy™ > MRCC Ballroom

This keynote invites BIAs to reimagine downtowns through the Public Joy™ framework, focused on belonging, prosperity, and vibrancy. Participants will reflect, envision shared outcomes, and learn how joy can serve as an evidence-based, asset-driven approach connected to policy, planning, culture, and stewardship to nurture thriving, inclusive Main Streets.



Opening  
Keynote  
Speaker

10:30 am -  
10:45 am

## Introducing the Elect Respect Pledge > MRCC Ballroom Mayor Marianne Meed Ward | City of Burlington

A brief overview of the Elect Respect pledge. Learn about the pledge to rebuild a culture where everyone can participate in democracy free from fear or intimidation.

# 2026 Program

## Day 2 - Monday, April 20, 2026 *Continued*

### 10:45 am - 12:30 pm MORNING CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**MA1 - BIA STAFF Session > Brock**  
**Doug Sams | Kerr Village BIA, Susan Nicholson | Collingwood Downtown BIA**

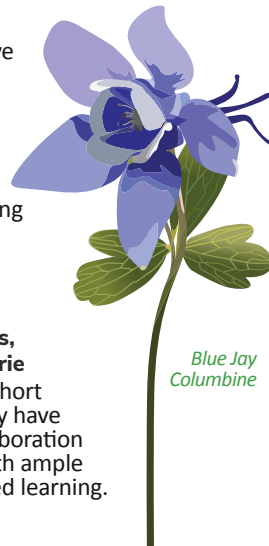
This Professional Development session is being held exclusively for BIA Staff – Executive Directors, Managers, and Coordinators. A great opportunity to speak at peer level!

**MA2 - BIA BOARD Session > Cabernet**  
**Sara Porter | Southampton BIA**

This Professional Development session is being held exclusively for BIA Board Members. A great opportunity to speak at peer level!

**MA3 - Municipal Session > Montebello**  
**Councillor Andrew Marks | City of Timmins, Salvatore Marchese | City of Sault Ste. Marie**

This municipal-focused session will provide short reflections from municipal hosts on how they have navigated challenges and strengthened collaboration with their BIAs. The session will conclude with ample time for open dialogue, questions, and shared learning.



Blue Jay Columbine

**12:30 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch > MRCC Ballroom**

**12:45 pm - 1:30 pm Rooted in Resilience: A Mayoral Panel on Supporting Main Streets > MRCC Ballroom**

**Mayor Jim Diodati | City of Niagara Falls, Mayor Mat Siscoe | City of St. Catharines, Mayor Sandra Easton | Town of Lincoln**

This Mayoral Panel explores how municipalities are responding to tariffs and global economic pressures affecting downtowns and small businesses. Featuring urban, rural, and border-community perspectives, leaders will share practical strategies, lessons learned, and collaborative approaches that support resilience, tourism, and local economic growth in partnership with BIAs.

**1:30 pm - 2:30 pm Connect with our Trade Show Partners > MRCC Ballroom**

Connect with our Trade Show participants, research products and programs that will benefit your area and learn of new items available for your community!

**1:30 pm - 4:30 pm Minister Round Tables > By invite only**  
 With the Associate Minister for Small Business and the Parliamentary Assistant.

**2:00 pm - 2:30 pm Refreshment Break**  
 > MRCC Ballroom **Sponsored by:**



### 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**MP1 - Cultivating Influence: Advocacy Tools for BIAs > Montebello**



**Councillor Caleb Ratzlaff | City of St. Catharines**

Hear insights from a City Councillor with experience working in a provincial MPP's office. Learn practical strategies for championing Main Street priorities, engaging elected officials, and working collaboratively with your community to build support, influence decisions, and drive meaningful change.

**MP2 - Rooted in Insight: Consumer Spending Trends for Data-Driven BIAs > MRCC Ballroom**

**Sean McCormick | Moneris**

Discover how evolving consumer behaviour and spending patterns can inform data-driven Main Street strategies. Learn national and provincial trends, tourism insights, and how other BIAs use spending data to support business growth, refine marketing, and measure economic impact, including spending lift from community events.

**MP3 - Doing More With Less: Prioritizing for Maximum Impact > Brock**

**Suzy Godefroy | Downtowns Today, Brian Dean | Burlington Downtown Business Association**

Explore how BIAs can grow impact by prioritizing with purpose and focusing limited resources where they create the greatest value. Through an interactive prioritization exercise, participants will gain clarity, strengthen staff and board alignment, and free up capacity for what matters most. Includes a practical toolkit with worksheet, examples, and a how-to guide.

**MP4 - Cultivating Impact: Events, Digital Strategy & AI for Sustainable Growth > Cabernet**

**Krista Jennings | Krista Jennings Marketing, Matthew Anthony Guarasci | Invittco**

Events spark energy, but lasting success requires measurable engagement and economic outcomes. Learn how BIAs can integrate events, social media, and AI tools to extend impact, track results, and strengthen community connections. Leave with a 90-day growth roadmap, practical tools, and confidence to demonstrate sustainable Main Street outcomes.

## Day 2 - Monday, April 20, 2026 *Continued*

5:30 pm - **Awards Cocktail Hour** > Grand Foyer & Atrium  
6:30 pm

6:30 pm - **2026 BIA Conference Awards Dinner** > MRCC Ballroom  
9:00 pm

This special gala event is held annually to honour the achievements of Main Street practitioners across the province, celebrating the people, partnerships, and projects that bring downtowns to life and create vibrant, welcoming, and resilient communities. Special greetings from Minister Nina Tangri.

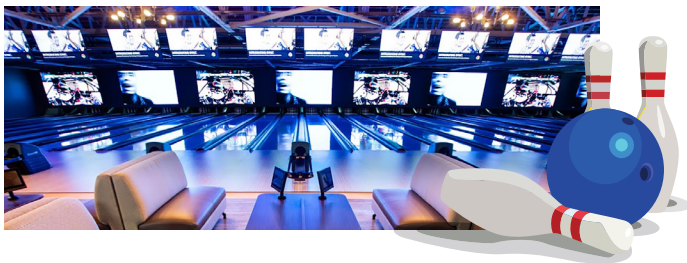


9:00 pm - **Hospitality Suite**  
12:00 am

> **Hodgie's Social House - Bowling and VIP Lounge**

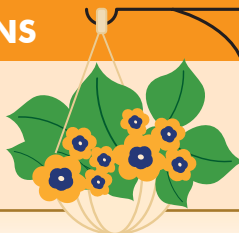
Join us at the on-site Hospitality Suite at Hodgie's Social House for a relaxed and social evening. Enjoy an elevated experience with access to VIP bowling lanes, light snacks, and a comfortable space to connect with fellow delegates. A wristband is required for entry and bowling participation.

**Price:** \$20.00-\$45.00 (plus taxes & fees)



**2026 SESSION EVALUATIONS**

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
PROVIDE FEEDBACK!**



# 2026 Program



## Day 3 - Tuesday, April 21, 2026

7:30 am -  
4:30 pm

7:30 am-4:30 pm **Registration** > Grand Foyer

8:30 am-3:45 pm **Trade Show Hours** > MRCC Ballroom & Atrium

8:00 am-9:00 am **Breakfast** > MRCC Ballroom

9:00 am -  
11:30 am

**MOBILE** > Thorold BIA

Experience the historic charm of Downtown Thorold, a community recognized with the Prince of Wales Prize for heritage conservation. This mobile tour includes a welcome from local leaders, a brief history of the BIA, visits to parks and small businesses, and time to shop while discovering the charm of this canal-side downtown.

# 2026 Program

## Day 3 - Tuesday, April 21, 2026 *Continued*

### 9:00 am - 10:30 am MORNING CONCURRENT SESSIONS

- TA1** - **Rooted in Strategy: An Economic Approach to BIA Planning** > Montebello  
**Pauline Larsen | Downtown Yonge BIA**  
Strategic planning is essential for BIAs to assess current reality, future direction, and neighbourhood needs. This session shows how applying an economic lens can transform planning from a marketing exercise into an actionable tool. Learn how to use push-pull factors to create focused, measurable, staff-driven strategies.
- TA2** - **Supporting Property Owners: Unlocking Second-Floor Residential & Main Street Investment** > Brock  
**Natasha MacDonald | City of St. Catharines, Jeff Bolichowski | Armstrong Strategy Group, Tam Wagner | IESO**  
Property owners are key to revitalizing Ontario's Main Streets. This panel explores second-floor residential opportunities, Community Improvement Plans, and energy-efficiency incentives. Learn how municipalities, BIAs, and programs like Save on Energy can help unlock underused space, reduce costs, and drive sustainable investment in Main Street properties.
- TA3** - **Leveraging Content and Creators for your BIA** > Cabernet  
**Milan Curcic | When in Niagara**  
Learn how to create impactful in-house content and collaborate with creators to expand your reach. Gain practical steps in filming, ideation, and equipment use while exploring how to identify the right creators, structure partnerships, and drive organic growth through authentic storytelling and community-focused engagement.

10:30 am - 11:30 am **Trade Show Hours** > Merlot, Royal Henley, Chardonnay, Concord (MRCC) Ballroom

11:30 am - 12:15 pm **What Matters Cafe** > MRCC Ballroom & Atrium  
Join us live for a peer-led, conversation-driven lunch inspired by OBIAA's What Matters Calls. Attendees choose themed tables focused on member engagement, construction mitigation, BIA growth, and multicultural districts to share challenges, exchange ideas, and learn from fellow BIAs through practical, Main Street-rooted dialogue.

12:15 pm - **2027 BIA Conference Announcement**  
> MRCC Ballroom

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm **Lunch**  
> MRCC Ballroom

1:30 pm - 2:00 pm **Trade Show Hour – Last Chance** > MRCC Ballroom & Atrium  
Our Trade Show participants are important partners in the work that we do to support our BIAs. Time is ticking - the 2026 Main Street Trade Show closes at 3:45pm.

2:00 pm - 4:30 pm **MOBILE > St. Catharines Downtown Association**  
St. Catharines was established as a city 150 years ago and is known for its distinctive curved Main Street—once part of one of North America's oldest Indigenous trails. This walking tour traces the city's evolution, showcasing the arts, culture, and community landmarks that continue to keep its Main Street rooted in purpose and pride.

### 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm EARLY AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS

- TP1** - **Economic Health Through Main Street Placemaking** > Montebello  
**Daniel Romanko | Better Neighbourhoods**  
Discover how walkability, land use, public spaces, and economic tools drive vibrant Main Streets. Gain practical placemaking insights, planning fundamentals, and a checklist for responding to development applications, while exploring incentive programs and economic strategies that foster investment and long-term downtown health.
- TP2** - **Leveraging Partnerships to Host Successful Events** > Cabernet  
**Nour Mazloum | Peterborough Downtown BIA**  
Discover how to build collaborations that make events thrive. This hands-on workshop explores partnership mapping, value propositions, and creative sponsorship models. Participants will leave with practical tools, templates, and strategies to attract partners, share resources, and create sustainable, high-impact events that strengthen community connections.
- TP3** - **Rooted in Relationships: Building Sustainable Partnerships for Community Impact** > Brock  
**Trevor Powell | CAA Niagara, Elisabeth Graham | Heartland Forest**  
Discover how CAA Niagara and Heartland Forest built a values-driven partnership that prioritizes community impact. Learn practical strategies for BIAs to foster sustainable collaborations, engage stakeholders, and create initiatives rooted in purpose - helping Main Streets bloom through authentic relationships and shared goals.

# Day 3

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 *Continued*

3:30 pm - **Refreshment Break** > Your Last Chance to connect with our Trade Show Exhibitors! > **MRCC Ballroom & Atrium**

## 3:45 pm - 5:15 pm LATE AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**TP4** - **From Frustration to Function: Pragmatic Approaches to Complex Community Challenges** > **Brock**

Colleen McIlquham, Andrew Peck | **Downtown Rideau BIA**

Learn how Downtown Rideau BIA tackles interconnected issues like homelessness, mental health, and addiction using research, engagement, advocacy, and storytelling. Gain practical tools to adapt strategies locally, leverage data for decision-making, and build partnerships that shift public perception and help Main Street leaders move from frustration to functional, community-strengthening action.

**TP5** - **Maximizing Member Engagement: Tools & Strategies that Stick** > **Cabernet**

Susie Barbosa-Pizzirusso, Annissa Buchanan | **Downtown Yonge BIA**

Learn the challenges, successes, and foundations of building an effective member engagement strategy from the ground up. Work through a practical framework in real time, explore scalable tools for BIAs of all sizes, and collaborate with peers. Attendees will take home a worksheet with ideas, strategies, and next-step actions.

**TP6** - **Growing Excellence: Insights From OBIAA BIA Award Winners** > **Montebello**

This session highlights award-winning initiatives from BIAs and Municipalities across Ontario and explores what made their submissions stand out. Hear how challenges were overcome, what strategies led to success, and gain practical insights you can apply in your own community. Leave inspired and equipped to grow award-worthy projects on your Main Street.

6:00 pm - **Tastes of Niagara Food Tour**  
9:00 pm - > **Downtown St. Catharines** \*Buses leave at 5:45 pm from hotel lobby.

Experience why Downtown St. Catharines is Niagara's culinary capital on this guided four-stop tour with Milan Curcic. Explore historic streets, meet the makers behind standout eateries, and enjoy generous tastings - from tacos to tapas and gastropub favourites. Come hungry and savour the flavours that define our vibrant downtown.

**Price:** \$80.00 per person (plus taxes & fees)

**Sponsored by:** **DOWN TOWN**  
ST. CATHARINES

# 2026 Program

Wednesday, April 22, 2026



# Day 4

8:00 am - 1:00 pm

8:00 am-1:00 pm **Registration** > **Grand Foyer**

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

**MOBILE** > **Downtown Bench** **Beamsville BIA & Grimsby Downtown BIA**

8:30 am-9:30 am **Breakfast** > **MRCC Ballroom**



This mobile explores Main Street revitalization through placemaking, business experience, and community activation. It begins in Downtown Beamsville with a walkable tour highlighting public realm initiatives and a wellness component, then continues to Downtown Grimsby for peer discussion on business resilience, collaboration, and operating businesses across multiple BIAs.



*Cannova Gold Leopard Canna Lily*

# 2026 Program

Day 4 - Wednesday, April 22, 2026 *Continued*

9:00 am -  
10:30 am

## MORNING CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**WA1 - Tourism Partnerships in Full Bloom > Brock**  
**Craig Stevens | Downtown Barrie BIA, Kathleen Trainor | Tourism Barrie, Danielle Hanoman | Downtown Belleville BIA, Andrew Siegwart | TIAO**  
 Main Streets thrive when culture, community, and commerce connect. This panel explores how BIAs and tourism organizations partner to help Main Streets bloom. Featuring Downtown Barrie BIA, Tourism Barrie and moderated by TIAO, speakers will share how collaboration, shared data, and coordinated investment turn districts into vibrant, year-round destinations for businesses.

**WA2 - Under Construction: Building Resilience in the Core > Cabernet**  
**Stephen Morris | OMRA, John Kiru | TABIA, Kara Pratt | The Waterfront District BIA, Sara Porter | Southampton BIA, Erica Grimes | County of Brant**  
 How can economic development teams support businesses when the road ahead is physically torn up? This panel explores how proactive development, BIA engagement, and citywide collaboration can turn major construction into community success, sharing practical strategies, lessons, and creative communications that help businesses stay visible, informed, and resilient during disruption.

11:00 am-11:30 am **Check Out Break**

11:30 am - 12:15 pm **Closing Keynote Panel: Motivating BIAs Through Advocacy, Leadership, and Experience > MRCC Ballroom**  
**Craig Stevens | Downtown Barrie BIA, Nour Mazloum | Peterborough Downtown BIA, Deron Johnston | Downtown Orillia BIA, Sara Porter | Southampton BIA**  
 Wrap up the conference on a high note with a motivational panel featuring BIA-connected leaders. Explore how communities can stand out as vibrant Main Street destinations. This uplifting session will leave you feeling inspired, recharged, and ready to help your Main Street continue to bloom.

12:15 pm - 1:15 pm **12:15 pm-1:15 pm Closing Lunch > MRCC Ballroom**  
 Closing of the BIA 2026 conference.

**Thank you for joining us!**

# 2026 Trade Show

BOOTH #

<b>PAL Insurance Brokers Canada</b>	PAL Insurance is celebrating its 37 <sup>th</sup> year in business as a 100% Canadian family-owned and operated MGA. PAL is Canada's Award-Winning provider of Special Event Insurance, Cannabis Event Liability, Prize Indemnity, Exhibitor Liability, and many more specialty insurance products, along with a new line of Commercial products. <b>800-265-8098   www.palcanada.com</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Succession Ontario</b>	Succession Ontario is a new initiative funded by the Government of Ontario and delivered by Kingston Economic Development, with the goal of providing educational resources and tools on small business succession planning. <b>www.successionontario.ca   www.investkingston.ca</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Touch Softworks</b>	Touch Softworks delivers purpose-built web services for Business Improvement Areas, including secure hosting, modern websites, and digital marketing tailored to BIAs. Built-in tools help automate event listings, maintain business directories, share member resources, and post announcements. Visit touchsoftworks.com to learn more or book a demo. <b>647-571-3880   www.touchsoftworks.com</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Tactical Guard Force Security</b>	Tactical Guard Force Security provides professional, reliable security solutions, leveraging skilled personnel, advanced technology, and customized strategies to maintain safety. The company is rapidly growing in the security industry and proudly works with Port Credit BIA. <b>647-621-5855   www.tacticalguardforce.ca</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MPAC</b>	MPAC (mpac.ca, aboutmyproperty.ca, propertyline.ca) is a not-for-profit corporation funded by all Ontario municipalities. MPAC is responsible for administering a uniform, province-wide property assessment system based on current values. MPAC assesses nearly five million properties with a total value of \$2.2 trillion. <b>289-315-3146   www.mpac.ca</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>City of St. Catharines</b>	From authentic wine and culinary experiences to unique festivals and cultural events including live music, theatre and sporting events, St. Catharines is at the heart of it all. The City of St. Catharines is the largest City in the Niagara Region and is the urban centre of Niagara. St. Catharines provides close proximity to Niagara Falls, Toronto and Buffalo <b>www.stcatharines.ca   www.investinstc.ca</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>LocalXP</b>	LocalXP rewards people for showing up. Communities, businesses, and events use our platform to drive verified visits that earn rewards.  <b>905-330-4568</b>   <a href="http://www.localxp.ca">www.localxp.ca</a>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pop-Up Street Patios Inc</b>	We manufacture and distribute community parklets, mobile outdoor patios, pedestrian bypasses, garden patios and sidewalk rail systems. Transforming downtowns, dining districts and public spaces with alfresco experiences. We're helping to bring the vision of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) downtown development offices and neighbourhoods to life.  <a href="http://www.streetpatios.ca">www.streetpatios.ca</a>	<b>8</b>
<b>POP Marquee</b>	Pop Marquee designs, manufactures, and rents large, illuminated marquee word signs across Ontario, creating eye-catching installations for events, festivals, and public spaces.  <b>647-218-6306</b>   <a href="http://www.popmarquee.com">www.popmarquee.com</a>	<b>9</b>
<b>Goodbye Graffiti</b>	Goodbye Graffiti is a Canadian-owned company with 29 years industry experience specializing in professional graffiti removal. Using environmentally friendly products made in Canada, we ensure safe and effective removal from any surface. Trust us for top-quality service and sustainable solutions.  <b>647-457-6672</b>   <a href="http://www.goodbyegraffiti.com">www.goodbyegraffiti.com</a>	<b>10</b>
<b>Driftscape</b>	Driftscape helps BIAs and BIDs turn everyday streets into shop-local experiences. From scavenger hunts and walking tours to coupons and rewards, Driftscape encourages visitors to explore longer, discover more businesses, and spend locally. Trusted by over 100 tourism and downtown organizations for nearly a decade.  <b>866-996-2174</b>   <a href="http://www.driftscape.com">www.driftscape.com</a>	<b>11</b>
<b>3L Productions Inc</b>	Supplier of Audio / Visuals, staging, mobile staging for live, and Hybrid events.  <b>905-238-8949</b>   <a href="http://www.3Lsound.com">www.3Lsound.com</a>	<b>12</b>

<b>Maglin Site Furniture</b>	Maglin creates durable, beautiful outdoor site furniture that connects people to places. Collaborating with designers and contractors, they offer thoughtful, lasting solutions shaped by their team's energy and client inspiration. Committed to transparency and sustainability, Maglin delivers quality products with responsive service and strong relationships built to last decades.  <b>519-503-5405</b>   <a href="http://www.maglin.com">www.maglin.com</a>	<b>13</b>
<b>Tymat Solutions</b>	Tymat Solutions Inc. is a streetlighting and city amenities representative based out of Burlington, Ontario for a variety of manufacturers in North America. If you need new LED streetlighting in your city, benches for your parks, bike racks for your office building, or replacement parts for the amenities we offer then we can quote you!  <b>416-272-2039</b>   <a href="http://www.tymat.com">www.tymat.com</a>	<b>14</b>
<b>Downtown Gift Cards by Miconex</b>	Downtown Gift Cards provide guaranteed local spend in your participating member businesses. Improves feet on the street and money in the tills. Also measurable success for your stakeholders.  <b>519-859-2632</b>   <a href="http://www.micnx.com">www.micnx.com</a>	<b>15</b>
<b>Busch Systems International Inc.</b>	We're an innovative, passion-driven group of people who design, recommend and customize recycling and waste solutions for different collection programs across various industries. We've been delivering recycling and waste solutions for 40 years and are the #1 rated brand in the industry according to Trustpilot.  <b>1-800-565-9931</b>   <a href="http://www.buschsystems.com">www.buschsystems.com</a>	<b>16</b>
<b>TD Insurance</b>	OBIAA and TD Insurance are teaming up to support your business protection needs. With customizable coverage designed for small businesses, you can feel confident you're protected from unexpected events. Get a quick, convenient quote and only pay for the coverage you need, with discounts available to help protect what you've built.  <a href="https://www.tdinsurance.com/affinity/obiaa?src=AFFINITYAPDG">https://www.tdinsurance.com/affinity/obiaa?src=AFFINITYAPDG</a>	<b>17</b>

# 2026 Trade Show

BOOTH #

<b>Classic Displays</b>	Ontario's leading supplier of Site Furniture, Holiday Displays, and Flags & Banners	<b>18 &amp; 19</b>
	905-282-8888   <a href="http://www.classicdisplays.com">www.classicdisplays.com</a>	
<b>Costco Business Centre</b>	Offers savings no matter what your business.	<b>20</b>
	<a href="http://www.costcobusinesscentre.ca">www.costcobusinesscentre.ca</a>	
<b>StreetPlants Urban Furniture Inc</b>	From concept to installation, StreetPlants delivers customizable, durable street furniture that supports placemaking, active living, and sustainable design.	<b>21</b>
	416-414-4019   <a href="http://www.streetplants.ca">www.streetplants.ca</a>	
<b>Leblanc Illuminations-Canada Inc.</b>	Since 2008, Leblanc Illuminations-Canada, based in Joliette, has brought European-inspired festive lighting to communities across North America. Known for refined designs and innovative concepts, the company transforms commercial streets and city centres with magical seasonal displays that create memorable holiday experiences for residents, visitors, and local businesses.	<b>22</b>
	450-755-6902   <a href="http://www.leblanc-illuminations.ca">www.leblanc-illuminations.ca</a>	
<b>Superior Events Group Inc</b>	Superior Events Group provides full-service event rentals and entertainment across Ontario and Canada. With 20+ years of experience, we deliver turnkey solutions featuring inflatables, rides, arcade games, tents, and more—ensuring quality, safety, and seamless event execution from start to finish.	<b>23</b>
	416-249-4000   <a href="http://www.superiorevents.com">www.superiorevents.com</a>	
<b>Workplace Safety &amp; Prevention Services™ (WSPS)</b>	Workplace Safety & Prevention Services™ (WSPS) is a not-for-profit health and safety organization in Ontario, serving more than 171,000 member firms and 4.2 million workers across the agricultural, manufacturing and service sectors.	<b>24</b>
	905-614-1400   <a href="http://www.wsps.ca">www.wsps.ca</a>	

## Trade Show Continued

BOOTH #

<b>Park Street Solutions Inc</b>	We work with top tier manufacturers to bring together the very best in environmentally responsible, high-quality, design-focused solutions for the Canadian Landscape Architecture, Interior Design and architecture communities. Park Street is proud to be the exclusive representative of Victor Stanley, Green Theory Design, Old Town Fiberglass, and IRONSMITH.	<b>25</b>
	519-589-5157   <a href="http://www.parkst.ca">www.parkst.ca</a>	
<b>Hauser Site Furniture</b>	Established in 1949, Hauser Site Furniture is the leading manufacturer of commercial furniture and amenities for exterior applications. From park to streetscape, Hauser's solutions are engineered and manufactured to exceed the requirements for extended use in a wide range of public environments.	<b>26</b>
	519-747-1138   <a href="http://www.hausersite.com">www.hausersite.com</a>	
<b>Save on Energy</b>	Delivered by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), Save on Energy is Ontario's trusted source for energy-efficiency programs, education, and support. Since 2011, it has helped homes and businesses reduce electricity costs and demand on the grid. The IESO manages Ontario's power system and plans for the province's evolving energy future.	<b>27</b>
	<a href="http://www.saveonenergy.ca">www.saveonenergy.ca</a>	
<b>Canadian Urban Institute</b>	The Canadian Urban Institute is a national charity driving place-based solutions to make communities better places to live for everyone.	<b>28</b>
	416-365-0816   <a href="http://www.canurb.org">www.canurb.org</a>	
<b>GoBIA</b>	GoBIA brings together two experienced professionals who support Business Improvement Areas from strategy to brand. Patty Hayes of All Things BIA provides governance, planning, and operational expertise, while branding specialist Chris develops compelling identities and marketing tools—helping BIAs clarify their purpose, strengthen their voice, and deliver results for their downtowns.	<b>29</b>
	905-320-4415   <a href="http://www.allthingsbia.ca">www.allthingsbia.ca</a>	

# 2026 Trade Show

		BOOTH #
<b>Ostana Loyalty</b>	Ostana helps small businesses increase customer retention through collaborative loyalty programs. By building connected ecosystems of local businesses, Ostana drives repeat sales, strengthens partnerships, and fosters thriving community networks. Our platform empowers businesses to grow together — turning customers into loyal advocates within a shared, community-driven marketplace.	30
	647-533-7939   <a href="http://www.ostana.io">www.ostana.io</a>	
<b>Civiconnect</b>	Civiconnect prepares the next generation of professionals through its flagship Youth Skills Studio program, combining technical and soft skills training with hands-on work-integrated learning. By partnering with employers, educators, unions, and job seekers, Civiconnect strengthens youth pathways and supports small and medium-sized businesses across skilled trades, manufacturing, and technology sectors.	31
	<a href="http://www.civiconnect.ca">www.civiconnect.ca</a>	
<b>Gladiator Lights</b>	Known for lighting townships with Christmas and other lighting. Specialists in exterior cleaning and lighting.	32
	226-821-0404   <a href="http://www.gladiatorlights.ca">www.gladiatorlights.ca</a>	
<b>Grand River Party Rentals</b>	Grand River Party Rentals help run your event in bringing the FUN to your guests. We provide event and party rentals.	33
	905-746-4940   <a href="http://www.grandriverinflatables.com">www.grandriverinflatables.com</a>	
<b>Top Shot Hockey Inc.</b>	Top Shot Hockey Inc. provider of interactive games and services	34
	519-546-5749   <a href="http://www.topshotinteractive.com">www.topshotinteractive.com</a>	
<b>Big Star Lights</b>	Premier supplier of high-quality commercial-grade Christmas, holiday & permanent LED lights.	35
	888-444-4801   <a href="http://www.bigstarlights.com">www.bigstarlights.com</a>	

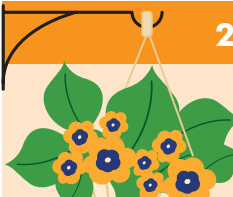
## We truly appreciate your contribution to this event.

		BOOTH #
<b>NORAT Inc.</b>	NORAT provides IT project management and support with a strong focus on smarter AI solutions. Our experienced technicians deliver innovative, cost-effective ICT strategies tailored to each client's goals and budget. Serving small to medium-sized businesses, we simplify technology challenges through proactive, AI-driven, and customized IT solutions that optimize performance and outcomes.	36
	416-245-1941   <a href="http://www.norat.com">www.norat.com</a>	
<b>Molok NA</b>	The Molok Deep Collection™ system is a line of semi-underground waste containers that saves money, saves space, beautifies outdoor spaces, and increases diversion rates.	37
	<a href="http://www.molokna.com">www.molokna.com</a>	
<b>AnyCard</b>	AnyCard is a gift card processor for BIAs offering a simple and easy gift card program solution.	38
	1-888-367-8448   <a href="http://www.anycard.ca">www.anycard.ca</a>	




### About the Experience

Please complete the survey and share your feedback to help shape future BIA Conferences.



### 2026 SESSION EVALUATIONS

SCAN THE QR CODE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK!



# Welcome to Oakville!

Visit Oakville and the Kerr Village BIA look forward to welcoming OBIAA conference attendees in 2027!



Scan the QR code to download our Visitor Guide and start exploring all this lakeside town has to offer.

 [visitoakville.com](http://visitoakville.com) | [kerr-village.ca](http://kerr-village.ca)

