

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County funding through Digital Main Street and Beyond to help small and medium-sized businesses go digital

In response to challenges facing area businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the County of Simcoe is providing \$60,000 in funding towards a unique program to help local businesses adapt their sales models to meet the needs of the ever-changing online consumer world. The funding will cover portions of the costs for a Digital Service Squad to provide one-on-one training to local businesses and their employees. The Digital Service Squad program will be administered by the Barrie, Simcoe County and Orillia Small Business Enterprise Centre and the South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Centre.

County Council approved the funding based on staff recommendations from the analysis of the County's Business Impact Surveys completed by local businesses in relation to urgent COVID-19 needs. Eligible businesses will receive up to 10 hours of free one-on-one coaching from Digital Service Squads and other digital supports through Digital Main Street and Beyond. A team of highly trained professionals will work with businesses to gain a basic web presence or enhance their existing web presence by activating free and easy to use tools such as Shopify, Google My Business and social media.

To sign up for Digital Service Squad assistance, businesses in the Townships of Springwater, Oro-Medonte, Ramara, Severn and Tay and the Towns of Bradford West Gwillimbury, Innisfil and Midland should contact the Barrie, Simcoe County and Orillia Small Business Enterprise Centre at 705-720-2445 or digitalsquad@barrie.ca; businesses in the Townships of Adjala-Tosorontio, Essa, New Tecumseth, Clearview, and Tiny and the Towns of Collingwood, Wasaga Beach and Penetanguishene should call the South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Centre on 705-446-3355 or email them at digitalmainst@collingwood.ca.

To qualify, the small or medium-sized business must:

- Employ 1-99 employees
- Pay commercial property tax (commercially assessed), either directly or through commercial rent
- Be registered business in Ontario and/or incorporated
- Operate within one of the County's 16 member municipalities
- Be owned by an Ontario resident at least 18 years of age with Canadian citizenship or permanent residency rights

About Digital Main Street and Beyond

Digital Main Street and Beyond is a program and service that helps businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and a Digital Service Squad, a team of highly trained professionals who help businesses grow and manage their business through the adoption of digital tools and technology. When businesses join Digital Main Street and Beyond and complete the onboarding process, they receive a free Digital Assessment and recommended to-do list that identifies technologies and tools that can help their business meet their digital goals. Along with the Digital Assessment, they also have the opportunity to work with the Digital Service Squad. The Digital Service Squad can work with businesses one-on-one to activate free and easy to use tools, while also providing recommendations for other technologies.