

Lanark County embarks on new Tourism Strategy

The County of Lanark is pleased to announce it will be embarking on a two-year project to develop one of the key actions identified in the recently completed Economic Development Strategic Plan, a new Tourism Strategy.

Once completed, the tourism strategy will become a strategic document used to communicate and share information on the many tourism initiatives and partnership opportunities taking place in the County, and ensure a coordinated approach to maintaining the County's tourism position in the marketplace.

The Tourism Strategy will provide guidance for tourism in Lanark County between 2020 to 2025. Development of the project will run from May 2018 to January 2020, and will include consultations with municipal partners, and communication with local and regional tourism organizations and businesses. Stakeholder surveys, feedback and previous plans for tourism in Lanark County will be taken into account.

"Every year, 1.4 million visitors are attracted to Lanark County because of our current tourism assets, but we have found that our visitors are spending 50 per cent less per person than the provincial average," explained Marie White, Lanark County tourism manager. "Through the strategic planning process, we will gain further insight into what is needed for tourism growth. We are looking forward to working collaboratively with our local businesses, tourism organizations, partners, municipalities and communities."

The development of the Tourism Strategy will be a two-phase process; Phase One officially launches in May 2018, and involves an input gathering period to continue until May 2019. Report findings will be released in June 2019.

Phase Two will launch in July 2019, with a focus on developing the actions and priorities needed to implement the Tourism Strategy. In September 2019, a draft annual tourism budget will be produced, and the final Tourism Strategy will be published in January 2020.

The strategy will provide a three- to five-year outlook and will include a framework for tourism success based on leading research and best practices in the industry. Key tourism stakeholders in Lanark County will help identify the resources required and guide the actions needed to achieve growth. Lanark County Council will be asked to support the directions set out in the plan and set priorities for participation by the Tourism Department.

The project will unfold in partnership with the Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization, the Lanark County Tourism Association and businesses, municipalities and tourism stakeholders. In-depth consultation with all invested parties will be a key part of the strategic planning process.

Tourism in Lanark County includes everything that attracts visitors to the region, and celebrates the people, places and experiences that are distinctive to the region. Tourism fosters community pride and encourages increased visitation as a revenue generator. Lanark County is committed to fostering

and promoting sustainable tourism for the economic prosperity of its communities. Tourism efforts are aimed at increasing both visitation and length of stay within Lanark County.

As the development of the Tourism Strategy moves forward, the Tourism Department in Lanark County will continue to fulfill its role as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Lanark County through: the development of a destination strategy and annual marketing plan for Lanark County; creation of destination-focused marketing; support of the development of local tourism products and destination development activities; and the development of goals for tourism infrastructure investment.

– 30 –

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