



YEAR IN REVIEW 2021



Contents

Remembering Kevin Finney 3

Economic Recovery Task Force 4

Sanderson Centre. 5

Business Resource Centre (BRC) 6

Tourism. 7

Economic Development 8

Film & Television 8

Remembering Kevin Finney

In completing the Year in Review, the Economic Development and Tourism Department suffered the sudden and staggering loss of its Director, Kevin Finney. His passing leaves an immense hole in the Department and in the lives he touched. He will ever be remembered as a great leader, mentor, friend and civil-servant.

Kevin spent nearly 20 years at the City, having joined the Economic Development team in 2004 after graduating with a Masters of Spatial Analysis. From his first day at the City, Kevin diligently worked to bring economic opportunity to Brantford. His keen intellect, photographic memory, sound judgement and genuine amiability set him upon a path to success at the City. Kevin was a natural fit in the industry. He earned the deep respect of colleagues, community partners and industry leaders. In 2017, Kevin ascended to the role of Director and reshaped the Department to improve its efficiency in supporting the local economy.

As a natural leader, Kevin equated the well-being of his team with his success. Putting his staff first, he inspired them to continually achieve more while always supporting them in their goals and growth. He led by example, stepping into the foray to cover without worrying about the cost or the optics.

Kevin guided countless projects, none more formidable and important than the Economic Recovery Task Force following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. He managed this most critical endeavor from start to finish during one of the most challenging chapters in the community's recent history.

Through it all, Kevin knew his greatest contribution and commitment would be to his family and friends. Striking the right balance, he strove to make time for others through his unique, down-to-earth approachability. Kevin's incredible impact in the community and on people's lives can never be calculated. He will forever be missed.



Economic Recovery Task Force

In response to the unprecedented economic situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, City Council unanimously approved the formation of a collaborative Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) in May 2020. Serving as a governance entity that explored and implemented various solutions to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, the resulting Economic Recovery Action Plan (“Action Plan”) was intended to address the short-to-mid-term needs of business owners and operators as reopening occurred and recovery efforts followed.

The Action Plan outlined eight key areas of focus, 28 specific programs and/or initiatives and 51 action items. Staff worked diligently to leverage funding opportunities, develop Brantford specific programs and initiatives tailored to supporting recovery efforts and advocate for areas of concern. Some of these successes are highlighted below.



\$30K

secured by BRC in small business recovery grants



\$153K

in operating grants distributed to 14 cultural organizations through the Community Cultural Investment Program



\$6,460

raised for Soup for the Soul through the first Brantford Eats Local initiative



Industrial Directory

moved to online database as part of BR&E program



Student Attraction Package

developed and shared with post-secondary institutions and the community



Sign Wars

initiated by Tourism Brantford to increase morale, friendly competition and teamwork across the business community



\$22K

of Digital Main Street initiatives secured by the Business Resource Centre

Sanderson Centre

The Sanderson Centre remained closed to audiences for the first half of 2021. During that time, non-public events took place including recording music videos, performances for the Canada Day streaming performance, distanced corporate training courses and as a support location for film productions.

In August, performances with reduced capacity and distanced audiences were able to be held. A small fall season resumed in September with capacity limits and safety rules continuing to be adapted to the provincial regulations.

Additional funding from Canadian Heritage was received during the year as part of their support for the performing arts industry and the long-term impact Covid-19 has caused.



\$35K

Canada Arts Presentation Fund (Annual)

\$96K

Recovery Funding for Professional Arts Presentation Organizations

\$7K

Supplementary Funding from the Canada Arts Presentation Fund

Business Resource Centre (BRC)

The BRC continued to adapt to the changing economic environment, providing the small business community with enhanced coaching and support. The team also implemented key local programs with federal and provincial funding to help businesses start, adapt and grow in the ever changing economic climate.



107

new business starts



1,500

participants hosted at **78**
events and seminars



10.3K feet²

new leased space



5,190

client initiated inquiries
across all channels



96

businesses connected with
Digital Main Street



Summer Company

10 grants disbursed



177

jobs created



65

Digital Transformation grants
distributed to small brick and
mortar businesses



Starter Company Plus

11 grants disbursed

Tourism

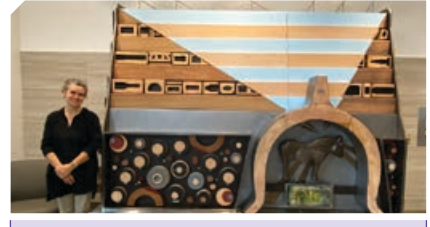
The Tourism Division worked through great change in 2021, due to the impact of COVID-19 as well as the closure of the Brantford Visitor & Tourism Centre at 399 Wayne Gretzky Parkway. Throughout these significant changes that continue to impact the tourism industry and internal strategies, Tourism Brantford saw a significant increase in interest and engagement from both residents and visitors, and industry recognition for leadership with new partnerships and product development.



369%
increase of visitors using the redeveloped Discover Brantford website



\$150K
secured from Council Priorities to support the Cultural Hub at One Market Square with Wilfrid Laurier University



Public Art
pieces unveiled including *Guardians and Guides* by artist Jane Bowen at City Hall and the Walter Gretzky portrait at Walter Gretzky Municipal Golf Course



300K
views generated by TikTok campaign featuring Solmaz Khosrowshahian who visited Grand Wellness' Beer Spa on a media fam tour, generating over **37K** likes as well



Finalist
for Tourism Industry Association of Ontario's Safe Travels Stamp Award for the Hamilton Halton Brant region

Relocated
Tourism Information (visitor services) and reopened new location at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre in December 2021



Top Downloaded
passport and itineraries from the Great Taste of Ontario program



Story Maps
developed for Public Art and Film to virtual represent Public Art installations and past filming locations in Brantford

Economic Development

Despite the challenges of the last year, local economic indicators finished favourably with unemployment figures trending downward, new business startups/jobs created remaining steady and year end building values reaching all-time highs.

Building Space



1.14M ft²
industrial space built



178K
available vacant industrial
building space

Local Growth

4
new industrial firms

162
new industrial jobs created

1,024
residential units built

Permit Values



\$472.3M
total building permit values

\$120.8M
in industrial building permits

Labour Data

6.9%
Brantford CMA 2021 annual
unemployment rate

House Values

\$712,300
December 2021 average
Brantford CMA house value

Film & Television



12
film projects

1,500
estimated hotel room nights

\$1.1M
estimated Brantford specific
budgets

\$200K
estimated City billed costs
and revenues

1,080
estimated cast and crew
working in Brantford

Major Investments



1

Wacker Neuson Limited (Canada) / 131B Savannah Oaks Dr. / 66K s.f. / 10 jobs



2

Hershey Canada Inc / 1 Bowery Rd. / 518K sf / 100 jobs / \$69M*



3

Wendy's Restaurant / 265 King George Rd. / \$850K*



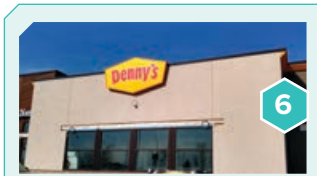
4

Global Citrus Group / 111 Easton Rd / 33K s.f. / \$3M*



5

Elastochem Specialty Chemical Inc / 37 Easton Rd. / 49K s.f. / \$2.1M*



6

Denny's / 195 Henry St. / \$593K*



7

Burger King / 221 Henry St. / \$800K*



8

Dollar Tree / 221 Henry St. / \$1.4M*



9

Tenaxx Logistics / 10 Abbott Ct., Bldg. C, Unit 302 / 50K s.f. / 40 jobs



10

Fort Henry Self Storage Limited / 294 Henry St / \$2.9M*



11

MEA Health / 75 Plant Farm Blvd. / 20K s.f. / 10 jobs



12

7 Erie Ave. / \$19.5M* / 96 units

*Note: dollar figures represent Building Permit Values



**City of Brantford Economic
Development and Tourism Department**
58 Dalhousie Street, Brantford
519.759.4150

Business Resource Centre
businessresourcecentre.ca

Sanderson Centre
sandersoncentre.ca

Tourism
discoverbrantford.ca

Economic Development
advantagebrantford.ca