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FOR RELEASE

Downtown Orillia Launches Digital Main Street Service Squad

Orillia Downtown Management Board receives \$10,000 Digital Main Street Grant to help main street businesses use digital tools more effectively.

January 9, 2020: Orillia, Ontario. The Orillia Downtown Management Board (ODMB) announced today that it has received a \$10,000 from Digital Main Street (DMS) to fund a Digital Service Squad to help main street small businesses improve their online capabilities.

The ODMB received the grant from the Ontario government as part of the Digital Main Street program to establish a Digital Service Squad (DSS) to help small businesses in downtown Orillia enhance their use of digital tools and techniques to better evolve and grow. The DSS will consist of trained specialist who will visit and assist main street small businesses at no cost to help them set up Google Business and conduct a digital-readiness assessment.

“We’re delighted to receive this grant to offer the Digital Main Street program to our BIA members,” said ODMB Chair Michael Knight. “Each member will receive a customized assessment of their current digital technology along with recommended next steps as well as hands-on training to harness the right digital technology to grow their businesses.”

A joint program funded by Government of Ontario and delivered by the Ontario BIA Association, Digital Main Street helps improve how small main street businesses use digital tools and techniques to become more successful. Today’s digital economy is vital to small businesses, and DMS 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 the City of Orillia 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.”

“Digital Service Squads will help to modernize businesses in the City of Orillia and make them more competitive,” said Jill Dunlop, MPP for Simcoe North. “The training will also provide them with the tools to take advantage of new digital opportunities that will help businesses to grow.”

Digital Main Street offers two types of grants:

1. Digital Transformation Grant: There are several 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: 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 Orillia Downtown Management Board understands that programs such as Digital Main Street will help keep their downtown core vibrant and strong,” said Kay Matthews, Executive Director of the Ontario BIA Association. “Our small main street businesses are a critical contributor to Ontario’s economic, social and cultural health, and it’s vital that we work together to ensure their success. Digital Main Street will help the main street small businesses of downtown Orillia to compete in an increasingly digital world.”

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ABOUT the Orillia Downtown Management Board

The Downtown Orillia BIA was established by City of Orillia Council in 1977. Downtown businesses are supported by The Orillia Downtown Management Board (ODMB) in a number of ways. With a mandate that includes making Downtown Orillia a primary hub for business in the region, it offers a wide range of services, support and innovative marketing programs to assist downtown business owners. For more information, visit downtownorillia.ca

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

Digital Main Street is an innovative program designed to help main street small businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, grants and Digital Service Squads teams of street-level experts that help main street small businesses manage and grow their operations through technology adoption. The program was originally created by the Toronto Association of BIAs (TABIA) and a group of strategic partners including Google, MasterCard, Rogers, Microsoft and Shopify. The Province of Ontario expansion of Digital Main Street is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and delivered by the Ontario BIA Association. The Ontario expansion is part of the government’s \$12 million Main Street Enhancement Initiative to create jobs and support communities across the province. For more information, please visit digitalmainstreet.ca

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