

Chamber Offers Essential E-Commerce Program

Submitted by Sherry Martell

Supporting business to reach online markets is the focus of a program being offered by The Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce.

Taking businesses from bricks and mortar to establishing an on-line presence is key to maintaining sales and reaching new customers said Chamber Executive Director Sherry Martell.

"We know businesses are struggling right now under a provincial lockdown due to a resurgence of COVID-19 cases, which reinforces the importance of having online shops or web presence so customers can source what they need locally," said Martell. "We know 85 per cent of Canadians are now shopping online. Consumer habits have shifted and the Chamber is working hard to support businesses to be prepared to serve customers in new ways that will increase profitability, raise consumer confidence and help them rebound."

According to a recent study completed by BDC, during the first four months of the pandemic, e-commerce sales exceeded those of the 2019 holiday season. Selling online should no longer be considered optional, but rather, it has now become even more essential for businesses of all types and sizes

to create new opportunities for business growth and boosting resilience.

Funding for this project is provided by the Atlantic Canadian Opportunities Agency through its Regional Relief Recovery Fund to assist business in extraordinary circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chamber first launched the program in June of 2020 and assisted nearly 20 businesses in establishing online marketing or improving E-Commerce capabilities by the end of March 2021. The business organization recently received an extension from ACOA to continue to offer the low to no-cost program to business in central Nova Scotia.

"Our goal is to support as many small businesses as possible in using E-commerce to their advantage in a way that fits their business model, as well as support businesses currently engaging in e-commerce to enhance their services or streamline processes," said the Executive Director. "We will also be offering educational workshops on a number of e-commerce related topics and promoting the benefits of supporting local business through their online shops."

The program application is available on the Chamber's website, www.trurocolchesterchamber.com. Businesses eligible to

apply must have been in operation more than 12 months, are registered with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks or a comparable federal body, and have not already received direct financial support from the Chamber's e-commerce project from June 2020-March 2021.

The program can provide a reimbursement of up to 100 per cent of the eligible costs (pre HST) up to a maximum amount per business. This amount is based on the results of the applicant's needs assessment completed by a marketing professional assigned by the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce project manager.

"We are very proud to offer this vital program at low to no cost to our business community as one of our many COVID-19 relief efforts," said Martell. "We are dedicated to providing support to business during these challenging times and welcome any business needing support to reach out to us for assistance."

Eligible Expenses in the program include: Training and coaching related to the operation of the selected online platform, professional services to assist with the setup of an online platform to allow for sales to customers, and enhancements of existing websites.

For more information visit the chamber website, email ec@tcchamber.ca or call 902-895-6328.

The Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based organization that represents more than 450 businesses and organizations in the region. It has been the recognized voice of business in this region for 131 years on economic, political and social matters impacting business. Sherry Martell is Executive Director, Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce and can be reached at 902-895-6328 or ed@tcchamber.ca

Border Restrictions Still in Effect

It is not know how long border restrictions will remain in place to fight the CoVid pandemic. It was announced on May 10th only permanent residents of Nova Scotia and people travelling for essential reasons can enter the province. The province has been in a lockdown since May 10th.

People can apply for an exception if they have: a purchase or sale agreement for a property purchase in 2021 showing that an offer has been accepted on or be-

fore April 21 and closing date is on or before May 20; a minimum one-year lease signed on or before April 21 and beginning on or before May 20 and a letter of acceptance for new employment in Nova Scotia that cannot be done virtually or deferred; the letter must be dated on or before May 7.

People who move to Nova Scotia must still complete their 14-day quarantine and are encouraged to get tested at the beginning and end of their isolation.

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2021 Volunteer Recognition

Crystal Blair

Crystal Blair, Glenholme was selected as Colchester's Provincial Nominee for keeping her Petro-Pass Restaurant open to provide free meals, to truckers, who were facing a lack of places to eat, while travelling the roads.



Glenn MacKinnon

Selected as Provincial Nominee by Town of Truro for his many years of service in the local sporting community for coaching basketball, hockey, soccer, archery, volleyball, badminton, floor hockey, and golf.

Stacey Culgin, Belmont

She has published two local history books; 23 years volunteering at the Colchester Historeum; serving with Colchester Historical Society archives committee; celebrations committee for the 250th year of the Planters and previously treasurer, West Colchester Minor Hockey Association.



Doug MacInnes, Onslow.



Doug MacInnes is a pillar in the community. Currently, President of the Lower Onslow Community Centre; active member of the Scotia Pool Board of Directors and the Colchester Community Workshop Board of Directors. Doug is a Big Brother with the Big Brother/Big Sister Colchester.

Anita MacLellan, Economy

Anita MacLellan has spent most of her life working tirelessly for the betterment of West Colchester. In the mid-60's we was a founding member of WCCDA; For many years volunteered as a reporter for CBC's Information Morning. She also served as a member and director of CNTA; she is committee chair, Economy Recreation Centre and working to keep the Cobequid Interpretive Centre (CIC) – the home of Canada's only remaining original World War II Observation Tower open as a "welcome" centre. Today the site has been renamed, "Cliffs of Fundy GeoPark Welcome Centre".



Diane's Restaurant- Five Islands

(Corporate/Small Business award) *Photo Unavailable.* Diane's provides a valued service to a loyal local customer base. The staff at Diane's is also dedicated to supporting community groups in the local area, they are always ready to help in any way that they can.

Five Islands Volunteer Fire Brigade



(Community Group Award) The Five Islands Fire Brigade is one of the smallest fire departments in Colchester County with just twenty members. The fire hall and its members are a vital part of the community hosting weddings, anniversaries, and many other community events. The volunteers are instrumental in organizing the Remembrance Day Services, Christmas Tree Lighting, and the Annual Santa Comes to the Fire Hall event.

Mike Forbes

2021 Royal Pettigrew Recreation Leadership Award went to Mike Forbes, a dedicated father of two young children, is the Vice President of the Tatamagouche Minor Hockey Association as well as the coach for the Under 11 team.



Individual Awards were presented to: Nigel Leggett, John Corlett, (posthumous), Jessica Frenette, Amanda Weatherby, Leanne Roberts and Betty Byers.

Other Community Groups Awards were presented to The Willow Lodge Bingo Volunteers and The Ladies Auxiliary of the North River Fire Brigade.

Youth Volunteer Awards were presented to Mataya Veno and Delani Underwood.

Family Volunteer Awards were presented to Jol & Maura Hunter, Wayne & Linda Mingo, Allen & Laurie Treen and James & Kristelle & Family.

Other Corporate/Small Business Awards were presented to: Fulton's Pharmacy-Tatamagouche (Chris & Wendy MacLean) and Dexter's Butcher Block- Dexter Rundle-Woolcock

Sherry Alexander and Harold "Butch" Borden were also given awards by the Town of Truro.

Help your community. Become a volunteer.