



AGENDA

Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee (METC)

Wednesday April 30th, 2025, 10:00am

[Join the meeting now](#)

[Ahmic Harbour Community Centre](#)

OPENING BUSINESS

- 1.1 Call to Order
- 1.2 Adoption of the Agenda
- 1.3 Adoption of Previous Minutes
- 1.4 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 2.1 Welcome and Introduction of New METC Members
- 2.2 Focus Group Wall - Paper Exercise Results - Priority Results
- 2.3 Next Steps - Work Plan
 - Priority Investigation - Member Research
 - Community Engagement "Road Show"
 - Future Presentation to Council
- 2.4 Explorer's Edge Business Confidence Index - Wave 4 Survey
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VTK6FHN>

FOR INFORMATION

- 3.1 AHCC April News Letter
- 3.2 Explorer's Edge April 2025 Update
- 3.3 Almaguin Highlands Chamber Commerce Magazine - Magnetawan Article Submission
- 3.4 Explorer's Edge Historical Learning Events?
- 3.5 Magnetawan Farmers Market - Rental Fee Wavied

ADJOURNMENT

- 4.1 Confirm the Proceedings of Committee and Adjourn



Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee (METC)

Meeting Minutes

March 26th, 2025

The meeting of the METC was held on Wednesday, March 26th, 2025, 8:00am electronically with the following present:

Rachel Sullivan (Chair)
Angela Ramsay (Vice Chair)
Joan Lewis
Rob Ross
Erica Kellogg (Secretary)

OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to Order Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 8:00 am.

1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

RESOLUTION 2025-14 Ross - Ramsay

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee adopts the agenda as presented.

Carried

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2.1 March 22nd Focus Groups – Post Event Debrief

The Committee discussed the March 22nd Community Engagement Focus Group event. All Members felt the event was a success and was well received by participants. There was just shy of 30 participants that ranged from brick-and-mortar businesses, online businesses and members of community organizations, clubs or committees. With a range of participant experience, the event provided a wealth of feedback when the brainstorming exercise was conducted which brought forward ideas on events and activities while also highlighting “parking lot” items that are beyond the scope of the MET Committee. Additionally, Members were approached by participants who expressed interest in volunteering at future events or submitting a letter of interest to join the MET Committee.

2.2 Focus Group Presentation Update

RESOLUTION 2025-15 Lewis - Ramsay

749767

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee, after adding priorities established during the Community Engagement event, receives and approves the presentation made during the Community Engagement and requests the Secretary circulate the presentation to all attendees.

Carried.

2.3 Ontario Tourism Education Corporation – Tourism & Hospitality Workforce Survey - 2025

Chair Sullivan and the Secretary participated in a webinar put on by Explorer's Edge who hosted Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC). OTEC presenters discussed Workforce Training Solutions while bringing forward a Tourism and Hospitality Survey they have created where they seek to gain information on workforce challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry. Chair Sullivan requested that the MET Committee could provide the survey directly to Magnetawan businesses to ensure challenges and priorities in the Municipality of Magnetawan are identified and shared with OTEC.

RESOLUTION 2025-16 Lewis - Ross

WHEREAS the Members of the Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee participated in the March 25, 2025 Explore's Edge webinar with Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC);

AND WHEREAS Ontario Tourism Education Corporation provides a Tourism & Hospitality Workforce Survey to gain valuable insight to better understand key workforce challenges and priorities facing local tourism and hospitality businesses;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee seeks to further support the Magnetawan Tourism and Hospitality Sector by requesting the Secretary provide the survey link to the Magnetawan Tourism and Hospitality Sector businesses to better inform OTEC on Magnetawan's workforce challenges and priorities.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

3.1 Adjournment

RESOLUTION 2025-17 Ramsay - Lewis

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee adjourns this meeting at 8:53am to meet again April 30th, 2025 at 10:00am.

Carried.

Approved by:

Chair Rachel Sullivan

Secretary Erica Kellogg

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 112

APRIL 16, 2025

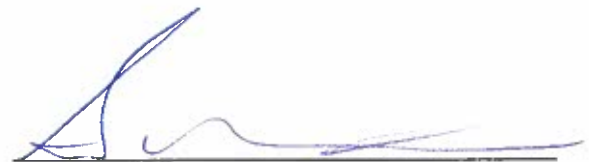
Moved by: Bishop

Seconded by: Brad Kneller

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Municipality thanks all of those who have sent in their letter of interest and appoints the following members to be part of the Magnetawan Economic Tourism Committee:

Francine Volkawskie, Brenda Fraser,
Dave Antle and Ken Mihaan.

Carried ☒ Defeated ☐ Deferred ☐



Sam Dunnett, Mayor

Recorded Vote Called by: _____

Recorded Vote

Member of Council	Yea	Nay	Absent
Bishop, Bill			
Hetherington, John			
Hind, Jon			
Kneller, Brad			
Mayor: Dunnett, Sam			



*Knowing our heritage
we will build our future*

METC Focus Group
March 22, 2025
Summary Notes for Different Categories

Events and Activities	
With 164 responses to the Magnetawan Tourism Attraction Survey, many new and existing events were suggested for Magnetawan.	
<i>Can you suggest new events not identified on this list that might further Magnetawan as a year-round place to visit?</i>	
Votes	Ideas
	Activities for kids (rainy day)
	Promoting and supporting existing events
1	Experiential focus (e.g. maple syrup, tours with experts, unique to Magnetawan)
2 (+4)	Self-guided map and / or audio app (e.g. Art Trail / Studio Tour, including link to Group of Seven; Historic / Heritage sites) <i>NOTE: Same example listed under Arts and Culture received additional votes</i>
	Contests (e.g. photo, video, talent); maybe host on youtube
	Partnership Packages
	Karaoke in the Park
	Shoulder Seasons – focus on developing activities during this timeframe
	Theme events (e.g. Camo Days, Plaid Days)
1	Fishing Derby
6 (+1)	Food Truck Festival <i>NOTE: Links with Food Festival which received additional votes</i>
1	Mini golf
2	Bike riding group for seniors
2	Woodcarving group
3	ATV rides
	Weekday events (e.g. Tuesday, Wednesday for weekly renters vs just weekends when renters are packing up or checking in)
	Kayak, canoe, etc. races on Mag lakes
2	Pride Event – fly flags that were given out to businesses and municipalities (Mag, Burks Falls and Dunchurch)
	Summer Cooking classes – kids and adults
3	Chili cookoffs - teams
	Volunteers needed
3	Walleye Tournament (check out NOWT)
1	Big Buck Contest weekend
5	Skating path – similar to Arrowhead

	Turkey Shoot
	Fishing Tournament (Port Carmen activity)
	Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) & Kids Fishing Day (Port Carmen activity)
	Safety Day (Port Carmen activity)
	Fall Fair (Agricultural Society activity)
	Santa Claus Parade
	Winter Carnival
	Snowmobile Club hosts a 'trail lunch BBQ' yearly at Community Centre
	Learn to Swim
1	Snowmobile Tour events – stops / pop-ups along the trails in certain areas
1 (+6)	Smoker / Food Festivals / Rib Fest, etc. (what is the Mag known for?) <i>NOTE: Links with Food Truck Festival which received additional votes</i>
	Summer Kickoff
Training / Industry Support	
<p>Knowledge is power and the tourism industry is constantly evolving. Equipping our stakeholders with the right skills, resources and support is essential for sustainable growth.</p> <p><i>Can you suggest training courses, information sharing sessions, partnerships that would support Magnetawan staying competitive and sustainable?</i></p>	
Votes	Ideas
1	Food Handlers Course
1	<p>Different Topics with Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using social media; developing websites Accessing grants, funding and programs (e.g. employment, student workers, marketing) Estate and succession planning <p><i>NOTE: all of these ideas could be blended into this category about hosting information sessions on different topics</i></p>
1	Developing experiential business
	Training of summer staff to promote the community
	Peer to Peer Forums
1	Host Funders Forum (and other government supports)
	Showcase Success Stories
	First Aid
	WHIMIS
	Job site for all employment opportunities in Mag and surrounding area
	Teaching canoeing and small craft boating safety
Arts and Culture	
<p>Arts, culture and tourism create powerful opportunities for growth in economic development.</p>	

Can you suggest ways that Magnetawan can support and enhance the arts and culture community through events, marketing or other means?

Votes	Ideas
	Art Walk
	Photo Show and sale
3	Art Trail / Studio Tours – include links to Group of Seven
1	Historic / Heritage sites – develop map to locations
	Art by the water – a participatory activity
	Yoga by the water
	Cultural Days (outside groups e.g. indigenous partners)
6	Dinner Theater annual summer event
4	Art in the park – provide shelter for numerous artists on a weekly basis
	Art installations around town
6	Local artisans offering training / courses (art) e.g. painting, ceramics, candles, glassblowing, soapmaking, photography)
2	Need to promote 'Church on the Rock'
10	Launch and run a music festival that helps put Magnetawan on the map, such as Jazz festival that draws people from a wider area
3	Quilt Tours – how to demoring; different products of quilting; supplies

Tourism Infrastructure

Often times, hosting tourism events can be challenging when hard infrastructure (physical infrastructure) and soft infrastructure (services/systems) are not available.

Can you identify infrastructure gaps that could help support more visitors to the area?

Votes	Ideas
	Identify missing community assets – common needs for area service clubs / groups?
1	Party tent – outdoor covered area
	'4 Corners'
	Maximize 'empty' spaces
2	Library hours - expand
	Crown land – can we capitalize on it? (fyi some signs say private land)
	Additional public washrooms
	Space for 'cooperative retail'
1	Pop-up stores
	RV Parking – opportunity for 'Walmart' stays?
	Snowshoe trails
3	Hiking trails
	Watercraft rentals
	Brochure racks
	Internet – fibre – Ahmic Lake Road, Nipissing Road

1	Expand Farmers' Market venue so not just sales but promo booths for other businesses (e.g. kayak rentals)
	Open up community kitchens for business use
4	Parking at Old Man Falls
9	Longer hours for locks being open – into Fall
	Outdoor space for music / movies, etc.
	Parking for visiting sledders and their trailers
	More gas options for sledders – on or very near to trails
2	More food / restaurant options – a sledder destination spot
Market/Municipal Awareness/Communication	
Knowing what draws a visitor to a community is just as important as knowing where that visitor finds information about that community.	
<i>Can you suggest how the tourism industry can optimize publication platforms while also creating engaging content?</i>	
Votes	Ideas
13	Signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information Centre • Directional Signage NOTE: During session moved into broader call for Visitor Information Centre with dedicated staff, brochures, etc.
	Banners on lightposts – more options
4	Social Media
	Website – increased web presence (target page on municipal site)
2	Destination Maps / brochures of events
	Capitalize on existing promotional vehicles (e.g. Great Canadian Wilderness, booth at summer Farmers' Market)
1	Post cards with local images
4	Welcome packages – coupons, info, maps, local businesses, event notices (for visitors and new residents). Provide to STRs and accommodations
1	Swag – distributed at places like the locks
	Capitalize on Magnetawan shirt – share photos from around the world
	Local version of 'Wrap Up Almaguin'
	Common template – same look and feel for different things (e.g. where to stay, where to play)
1	Business discount card for local area businesses to sell / offer clients
2	Welcome Americans type of banner
13	Promote Mag as the new place to be e.g. out with Muskoka and in with the Mag; be more options (e.g. ATVs allowed on roads, crown land). Develop a tagline – contest for tagline

Parking Lot (issues identified during Focus Group that fall outside of METC mandate)

- Policy reviews – review different policies that may have unintended consequences
- Attraction of new businesses
- Signage rules (what are they)
- Capitalize on Crown land – monitor and map
- Internet – fiber
- Red tape for businesses
- Trail postings around usage

2025 Focus Group Input on Future Direction

MARCH 22, 2025



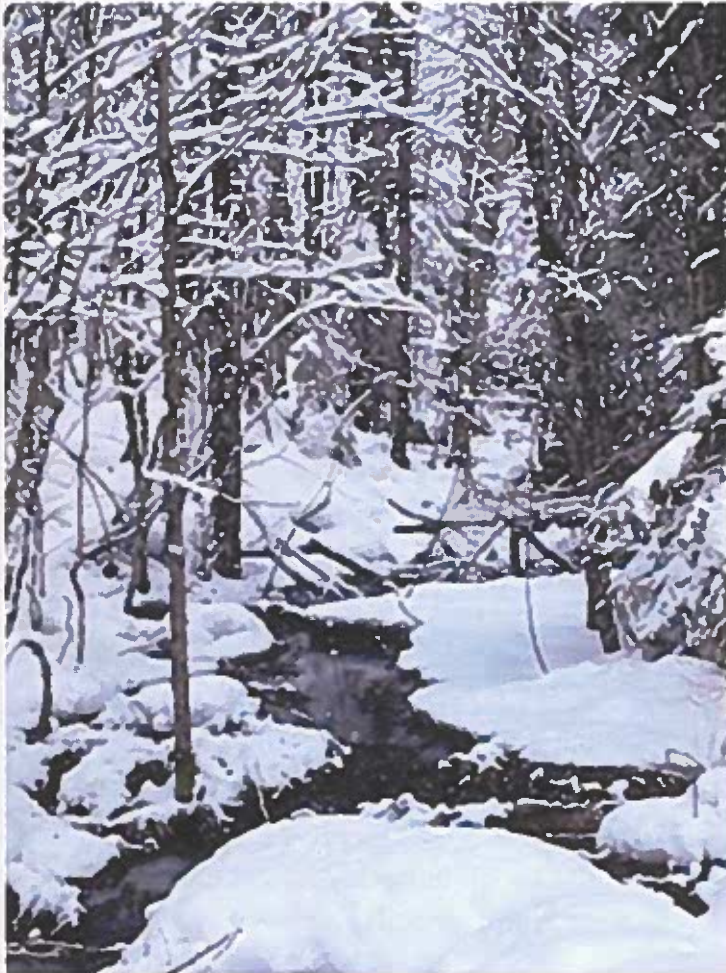
**Municipality of
Magnetawan**





AGENDA

- Icebreaker and Introductions
- METC Mission and Mandate
- Background and input received to date
- Work to date & key learnings
- Feedback on Project Ideas & Prioritizing
- Next Steps



MISSION STATEMENT:

To market and promote the Municipality of Magnetawan as a tourism destination for long-term, year-round sustainable growth within the municipality's visitor economy. By working collaboratively with and with support from accommodation providers, local businesses, tourism operators, community service organizations, retail establishments, food and beverage providers, the committee will actively research, develop and implement destination and promotional programming that will support and grow Magnetawan's tourism industry.

MANDATE:

To promote tourism in Magnetawan (which includes the development of tourism products)

METC BACKGROUND & INPUT RECEIVED TO DATE



- 2024 survey respondents indicating an interest in participating in a committee were invited to submit application for METC
- High level survey results
 - 163 surveys completed
 - 39.5% primary residents; 58% seasonal residents; 2.4% other (work in Magnetawan / transient tourists)
 - 74% between the ages of 55-64+
 - 73% would like to see tourism sector grow; although cautionary approach noted (e.g. Calls to maintain “quiet small-town atmosphere” and “without ruining the natural environment and small-town charm”
 - Local tourism information sources: Facebook (66%); word of mouth (59%); municipal website (58%)
 - Many felt summer months reasonably busy; focus on shoulder season
 - Project ideas noted: refrigeration unit for ice surface; increasing hiking trails and add snowshoeing on trails; kayak rentals; sidewalk chalk art; rubber duck races over the locks; fishing derby; ‘rainy day’ activities for children; expansion / support for current businesses; development of downtown core (‘four corners’) and the ‘island’

METC WORK TO DATE

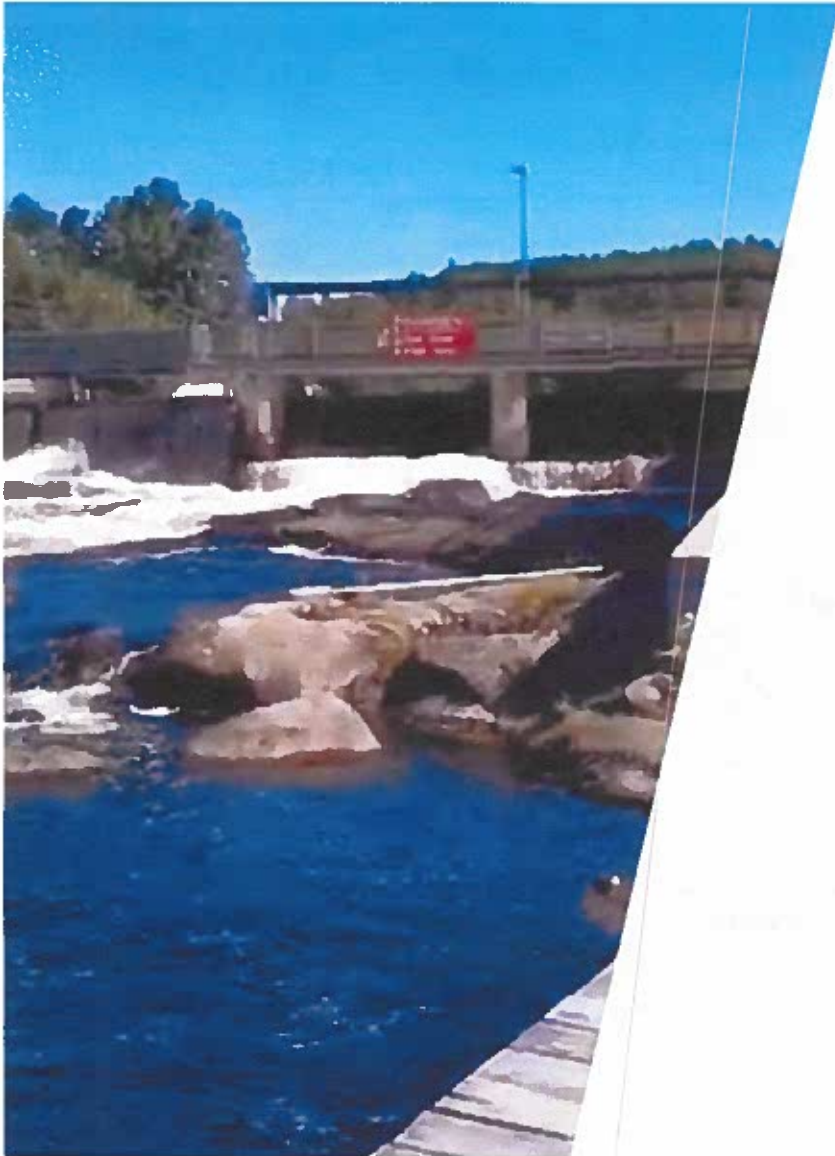
- Initiated tourism asset inventory (evergreen document)
- Wrap up Almaguin
- Networking (e.g. Tourism summit; Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce; Explorers' Edge; FedNor; etc.)
- Review of previous studies
- Budget 2025 submission
 - Signage
 - Event Participation
 - Publication Advertisements
 - Focus Groups





KEY LEARNINGS

- We are just beginning – change will take time
- Realization of how much this community has to offer
- Focus on “high yield” visitors
- Limited commercial services for travelling public – focus on serving cottagers
- “Regenerative Tourism” (Explorer’s Edge- constantly create and nurture the conditions for people, planet and economies)
- “Experiential Tourism” – meaningful and authentic experiences
- This is a team sport – can’t do it alone, we need partners, local and beyond



FEEDBACK ON PROJECT IDEAS & PRIORITIZING

- Factors to consider:
 - Projects vary in size and scope
 - Some projects are longer term in nature
 - Limited resources/restraints
 - Looking for early wins to help build momentum
- 1) What are we missing?
- 2) What do we prioritize first?

Prioritization results

Top 5

- Food Truck / Food Festival
- Music festival
- Locks open longer (hours and into Fall)
- Visitor Information Centre – signage, dedicated staff, brochure racks, etc.
- Develop tagline to promote Magnetawan

NEXT STEPS

- Collaborative Team approach needed
 - METC is volunteer committee
 - Cannot do it alone
 - Opportunity for sub-committees with external participation
- Recruiting new members
 - Municipality has put call out seeking additional volunteers





THANK YOU

METC Committee

Planning@magnetawan.com

705-387-3947



Advertise With Us!

**We're gearing up for the next issue of the
Almaguin Community Guide Magazine!**



Time is ticking don't miss out!

**Media Kit & Pricing for Advertising in the
Community Guide Publication-
available **NOW!****

Guide Magazine Advertising, contact us at:

almaguinhighlandschamber@gmail.com



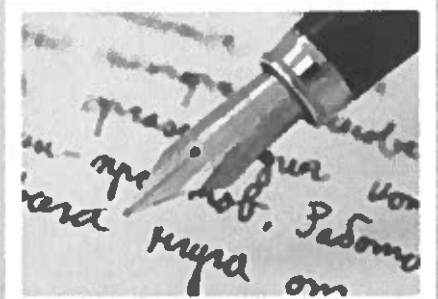
Submit your articles!

Still taking submissions, this year's theme is Almaguin Historic.

Other articles off theme will be considered if they truly embody the essence of The Almaguin Highlands Area.

2025 Community Guide Article Guidelines:

- Articles must be between 500-750 words
- The editor may make exceptions based on editorial considerations
- Articles selected for publication may be edited for spelling, punctuation, style, content / length
- The writer will receive a final proof for approval prior to publication
- If providing photos, please ensure they are high-quality, high-resolution images.
- Articles must be submitted by April 15th, 2025
- Not all submissions are guaranteed to be published.
- To discuss an idea for an article, or to submit an article, please contact:
ahccguideads@gmail.com



**Note-not all articles submitted will be published.*



Almaguin
Highlands
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

AHCC New Members Feature!

**April 2025
Newsletter**

Welcome to Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce!

EDGEWATER PARK LODGE INC.



45 Edgewater Park Road
Kearney, Ontario



(705) 636-5683

info@edgewaterparklodge.com

- *Cabin rentals available- as well as motel rooms at main lodge
- *Many outdoor activities / indoor recreation room for rainy days
- *Located on beach of Sand Lake- 6 miles north of Kearney
- *Right next door to Beautiful Algonquin Park

- *Restaurant- "RED Canoe" on-site
- *Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner Menu available
- *Various monthly dine-in events such as:
- *Trivia, Live Music, Murder Mystery and more!

Complexly Simple
Business Solutions

**We offer an umbrella of services
to cover all your business needs.**

We also partner with business, marketing and creative
services that complement our service offers so you can
get all the help you need in one place.

We have you Covered

Say goodbye to overwhelm
and hello to productivity!



20 Adam Rd. Sundridge, phone: #647-864-3369 email: marcela@complexlysimple.ca



AHCC New Members Feature!

Welcome to Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce!



Flat Rate Disposal Bins

Servicing Almaguin & North Muskoka
Located in Burk's Fall's

Phone: 705-382-2000
Text: 705-388-2677
Email: info@binboss.ca



April Events



Ontario Gun Shows

Sat. 26 April 2025 08:00am-03:00pm
The Sundridge Gun Show
Held at the Sundridge Arena,
14 Albert St. North, Sundridge Ontario
Admission General \$10
Door Prize with admission
Children under 13 free with an adult

The Burk's Falls, Armour & Ryerson
Union Public Library

**NATIONAL CANADIAN
FILM DAY**

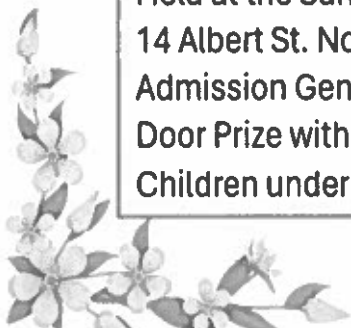
Free Movie!

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 16 | 7PM**
DOORS OPEN AT 6:30PM
FEATURING LIVE MUSIC
BY TRACY DELFIND &
SEAN COTTON

**BURK'S FALLS
TOWNE THEATRE**

THE GRIZZLIES

Burk's Falls, Armour & Ryerson Union Public Library
705-382-5577 | www.burksfallslibrary.com | CM



April Events

Face Painting **ARMOUR REC** Rain OR Shine
EASTER EGG HUNT




\$5 Kids - Breakfast & Hunt
\$10 Adult - Breakfast
First Hunt: 10AM
Second Hunt: 11AM
Pancake Breakfast 9AM - 12PM

APRIL 19, 2025

Katrine Community Centre
6 Browns Drive

AN EASTER EVENT FROM SANDHILL NURSERY


Bunny HOP



SATURDAY **APRIL 12 2025** FRIDAY **APRIL 18 2025** SATURDAY **APRIL 19 2025** SUNDAY **APRIL 20 2025**

SANDHILL NURSERY

BOOK TODAY AT [SANDHILLNURSERY.CA/PRODUCTS/BOOK-NOW](https://sandhillnursery.ca/products/book-now)



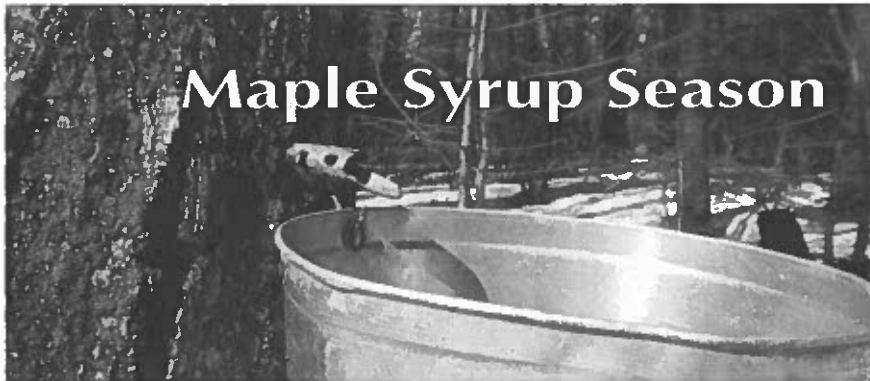
LASER TAG

Tues. & Thurs. in April
4:30-6pm ~ kids ages 7 and up \$25
Sign up recreation@powassan.net
250 Clark St. Powassan

The Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' Association annual ~

Ontario Maple Weekend is April 5 & 6, 2025

There will be many maple events taking place throughout the province that weekend and throughout the month of April.



Maple Syrup Season



As we anxiously await spring and all it encompasses, such as warmer weather and longer brighter days, a majority of us also look forward to the Ontario Maple Syrup Season.

From the harvesting of sap to the final product of sweet, delicious maple syrup, it's become somewhat of a spring tradition for family-fun and celebration in rural communities.

Join in the festivities this spring with a tour of a sugar bush, boiling demonstrations, maple taffy or syrup sampling, as a few examples.

A few of our local Almaguin Area- Maple Syrup Producers :

- Hubbert's – Sundridge
- Longs Maple Syrup – Laurier
- Matthews – Nipissing
- Sugarstone Farm – Trout Creek
- Bella Hill – Nipissing
- Golden Treasure – Trout Creek

**Some specific Almaguin Maple Event details
on pages to follow;**





Almaguin
Highlands
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

April 2025
Newsletter



Almaguin Maple Syrup Festival April 5th, 2025

199 Maple Valley Rd, Sundridge. Come celebrate with us!

The 2nd annual Almaguin Maple Syrup Festival hosted by Hubberts Maple.

WOW!
GREAT PRIZES
TO BE WON!



SINCE 1861
HUBBERT'S
MAPLE

- *Pancake Breaky for purchase 9am to 12noon
- *Face painting artist from 10am until 2pm
- *Kettle boiling demonstration
- *Kids games and colouring table

- *BBQ lunch for purchase, 11:30am-2pm
- *Tours of the sugarhouse every half hour
- *Taffy on ice
- *Local Vendors

Sug[🍁]rstone F[🍁]rm



SUGARSTONE FARM
Est. 2011
Andy & Shelly Stranghen
150 Lindsay's Hill Road
Trout Creek, ON P0B 2L0
Call: 705-475-0008 / mobile: 705-475-0009
sugarstonefarm@gmail.com
Facebook: Sugarstone Farm Maple Syrup
Producers of Sweet Ontario Pure Maple Syrup!



Maple
weekend

April 5th to 6th 2025 ~ 2 Day Event!
Sugarstone Farm Maple Syrup
At 150 Lindsay's Hill Road, Trout Creek

Free Tours and sweet Ontario samples while you learn how we make maple syrup here on our small, family run farm! Relax or take a hike with family as you take in the view of the rolling maple hills. Visit our farm animals. Email: sugarstone.maplesyrup@gmail.com





Almaguin
Highlands
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

April 2025
Newsletter



April Events

April 26, 2025

The 2025 Powassan Maple Syrup Festival

Taking place downtown Powassan

Food, Vendors, Music ~ fun for the whole Family!



Butter Tart Competition



FRIDAY APRIL 25

DROP OFF 6 BUTTER TARTS 9-12NOON
ALL BUTTER TARTS MUST CONTAIN MAPLE SYRUP
JUDGING AT 4PM ALL WELCOME
250 Clark Street Powassan



Erica Kellogg

From: Explorers' Edge <info@explorersedge.ca>
Sent: April 4, 2025 2:11 PM
To: Erica Kellogg
Subject: Explorers' Edge Update April 2025

April 2025



3 Taylor Road, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1S6
1-800-835-7303
Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka,
Parry Sound & South Algonquin
www.explorersedge.ca



Business Confidence Index - Wave 4 Survey

Help Shape the Future of Tourism in Our Region

Your Voice. Your Industry. Your Impact.

As part of an ongoing effort to provide **timely, relevant intelligence** on the state of the regional tourism industry, **Explorers' Edge** is launching **Wave 4 of the Business Confidence Index Survey**—a key component of the **Regional Tourism Data Dashboard** being developed to support long-term sustainability and resilience for tourism in the region.

This multifaceted data collection effort is conducted **semi-annually**, and this survey plays a crucial role in building a **Tourism Business Confidence Index**—a measure of how our industry is doing, what challenges are emerging, and where opportunities lie. It's an initiative designed to inform smarter decisions, stronger advocacy, and better support for you—our tourism operators.

[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY](#)

Why Your Input Matters: What We've Learned So Far

The **first three waves** of this survey have painted a compelling picture of a sector navigating change with resilience and cautious optimism:

- In **Wave 1 (April 2022)**, 79% of businesses expressed mid-to-high confidence, and 54% anticipated stronger sales. However, staffing was a significant concern, with an estimated **1,300 full-time** and **4,600 part-time** positions unfilled.
- **Wave 2 (December 2022)** showed confidence holding steady at 72%, but optimism about future sales dropped to 32%. Inflation became the dominant concern, cited by 74% of respondents, while housing and labour costs remained persistent challenges.
- By **Wave 3 (April 2024)**, overall confidence was consistent, but **only 39% felt highly optimistic** about meeting their business goals—the lowest across all waves. That said, 43% expected stronger sales, and hiring conditions began to ease. For the first time, **low visitor volume** rose to the top tier of concerns alongside inflation and staffing.

Throughout all waves, there's been a **steady decline in confidence** in the industry's ability to attract and retain workers, and the proportion of operators who feel it's a good time to invest has dropped significantly—from 58% in Wave 1 to just 39% in Wave 3.

Why Now?

Tourism operators in Ontario are navigating a complex economic landscape. Rising operational costs, increased interest rates, **cross-border tariffs**, and **changing visitor spending patterns** are all impacting the bottom line. While demand for travel is rebounding, so too are the pressures of inflation, labour shortages, and access to affordable housing for workers.

Your input in this survey will help **identify trends, flag risks, and shape the strategies** that will support tourism operators through these conditions—and position the region for a stronger future.

Your Participation Counts

- **The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.**
- **All responses are strictly confidential.**
- Complete the survey and you'll be **entered to win one of three writing graphic tablets.**
- You'll also get **early access to results and insights** via an exclusive Zoom presentation with **Explorers' Edge senior staff.**

[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY](#)

Loring-Restoule Experiential Product Development Session

Explorers' Edge invites tourism stakeholders and community members to join us for the second product development session examining opportunities for growth in Loring-Restoule. At this session, we will be examining current experiential products available to go to market or to potentially be enhanced with support from the Explorers' Edge Partnership Program. It is not necessary to have attended the previous session to participate. Lunch will be provided for this interactive session. Please register to attend so we have catering numbers.



**Port Loring & Restoule
Product Development/Town Hall
Tuesday, April 29
Argyle Community Centre**

11am to 2pm (lunch will be provided)

[REGISTER HERE](#)

UPDATED – Product Development Session – West Parry Sound District

The product development session that was cancelled due to inclement weather has been re-scheduled for April 23.

Tourism stakeholders and community members in West Parry Sound District are invited to join Explorers' Edge staff for lunch and conversation about developing experiential tourism product in the region. An initiative of our Tourism Co-creation Lab, participants will be updated on the Explorers' Edge product pillar and take part in discussions about current and potential product assets. Participants will also learn about the Partnership Program, and the potential to work with Explorers' Edge on mutually beneficial projects.



West Parry Sound District

Product Development/Town Hall

Wednesday April 23, 2025

West Parry Sound District Museum

10am to 1pm (lunch will be provided)

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Questions or concerns? Please contact James Murphy, CEO at Explorers' Edge.

The Heart of the Community: How Farmers' Markets Enrich Our Towns – A Look at Magnetawan Farmers' Market - A Tradition Worth Celebrating

Farmers' Markets have long been staples in northern rural communities. From the humble roots where fresh produce, local preserves and handmade goods are offered, Farmers' Markets have grown into vibrant gathering places where neighbours connect with neighbours. One shining and inciting example of just such a gathering place is the Magnetawan Farmers' Market. Located in the heart of the Magnetawan community, the Magnetawan Farmers' Market gathers 35+ vendors under the community's outdoor pavilion every Saturday from the May long weekend until Thanksgiving weekend. Just a short drive north from Huntsville, east from Parry Sound or south from North Bay, Magnetawan is centrally located and accessible to all.

Patti Paul, the last of the original vendors of the Magnetawan Farmers' Market from its inception in 1990 says the Market began as a grass roots venture with just eight local vendors. A stroll through the Market today provides visitors the opportunity to purchase local preserves, baked goods, deli meats, cheese, hand made soaps and candles, original artwork from oils on canvas to personalized cards and even handcrafted stonework's to name just a few. Offering a mix of local crafts, art, produce and preserves, the Magnetawan Farmers' Market offers visitors a curation of unique treasures for the eye and the palate.

The Market has become a Saturday morning tradition where people come to meet new people, socialize, catch up with friends all while enjoying regular live entertainment, which enhances the energetic atmosphere. With the Market steps away from the Magnetawan Locks systems, many cottagers make the trip to the Market by boat, walking right through an active Art in Park event, also hosted on Saturday mornings. The Magnetawan Agricultural Society adds to the enticement and fun of the Farmers' Market by hosting a Saturday morning yard sale during market hours. The Society's weekly sale is a collection of treasures from used furniture to books and décor. The true meaning of *one man's trash is another man's treasure*.

With 35 years of operation and 35+ vendors and growing, the Magnetawan Farmers' Market is a testament to the enduring value of community-driven spirit. Whether you're a local looking for fresh ingredients, a traveler seeking a unique Market experience, or someone who simply enjoys the warm atmosphere of a friendly community, Magnetawan's Farmers' Market is the place to be on a Saturday.

So next time you find yourself in the Almaguin Highlands, make a point to visit this vibrant marketplace—where tradition, commerce, and community spirit come together in the heart of Magnetawan.

Erica Kellogg

**Explorers Edge
Information Sessions and Workshops
Winter 2025**

Tourism Product Development Session – Workshop 1

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

METC Attendees: Joan Lewis

**Presentation available*

Notes:

Regenerative Tourism & Experiential Product Development – Webinar

Thursday, February 20, 2025

METC Attendees: Erica Kellogg, Joan Lewis, Rachel Sullivan

**Presentation requested*

Notes:

Explorers Edge:

- focusing on regenerative tourism ('constantly create and nurture the conditions for people, planet and economies (profit)')
- Integral to regenerative tourism strategy is trying to get 'high yield visitors'
- They now have a TICO (license so they can sell 'packages' through their Regenerative Travel Agency, which is a social enterprise so profits can be reinvested in other priorities).
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) helps open up new markets as it can help with language translation

Presenter – Trevor Norris, Senior Manager, Destination Development for the Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board

- Original exposure was at learning event in Rocky Harbour, NL, where they used non-traditional hosts to show visitors how they live, etc. He also went to South River to learn about experiential tourism.
- They chose not to go after coach (big group) and discount economy (cheap hotels)
- His definition of regenerative tourism – when people travel 'they leave the place they visit better off than when they arrived'
- Started by looking within their own community and realized they took for granted what was in their own backyard.
- Invest in stories – tell it authentically. Doesn't have to be polished.
- They have access to MAT so more funding than we would have access to
- Created Bay of Quinte Experience Crafting Program – coach the coaches so people can pass it along – increase overall capacity.
- Ex. Reconnecting one seed at a time – Mohawks teach about growing crop for seed

- Ex. Bee Our Guest – Just Bee Cuz Honey Farm – Francis just wanted to teach about honey bees and pollination
- Ex. Sarah is an apple farmer – “Field to Vase” Wynn Farms Flower Fields
- They accept verbal applications when they recognized a lot of their indigenous partners were not applying

Explorers Edge Tourism Town Hall

Tuesday, February 25, 202

METC Attendees: Rachel Sullivan

**Presentation requested*

Notes:

- Explorers Edge has been vocal about supporting more rural areas outside of Muskoka as they feel Muskoka is well funded
- They have about \$166k for partnership projects
- Focus on Regenerative Tourism – no longer focus on just making money and increasing number of visitors. Want mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationships. This focus on sustainability of industry locally helps community be sustainable and therefore more able to weather future storms. Ex of how Taylor Swift effect is NOT regenerative tourism – ex. Hotel workers mad they had extra work but not extra pay even though hotels raised prices; Mayor upset with extra policing costs not covered by tourism dollars (e.g. MAT tax).
- Look at differentiation vs duplication
- Northlander – need to work on dispersion of people off the train
- Tourism Co-Creation Lab
- AI is going to be a game changer
- Niche is nice
- Working on workforce development
- Women in Tourism – host subregional groups and one big meeting at the annual regional summit
- Annual Summit focuses on needs of rural communities and operators. Aiming for 1st week of November
- AGM in June – looking for new board members

Potential opportunities:

- Working on a big fishing tour – mentioned the fish hatchery we have in Magnetawan so they may see if it can be incorporated. Kate mentioned at another meeting there could be funding for the hatchery and was going to follow up.

Social Media & Marketing in a Crazy World - Webinar

Thursday, February 27, 2025

METC Attendees: Erica Kellogg, Joan Lewis, Rachel Sullivan

**Presentation available*

Notes:

Presenter Peter Coish (rhymes with Gosh) provided insights into AI and social media.

- Within 3 years AI expected to dramatically change things. AI tools expected to be main source used to put itineraries together for trips.
- 67% of Canadians consult social media for travel trips, although presenter thinks this is low
- 65% admit they pick destinations because they are 'Instagram worthy'
- Less reliance on TV ads which is good for small businesses because it can be expensive
- Statistics provided on various platforms – depending on message and audience, different platforms may be more useful than others. Good thing about the different platforms is that it can be relatively cheap to test ads without big investment to determine what may be best one to use.
- 78% of Canadians say influencers affected decision making but beware of self-declared influencer. Gone are days that they control things – get contract outlining expectations.
- 22% of online adults listen to podcasts weekly – Explorers Edge planning to launch one.
- Agentic Era: AI enables services / support to be available 24 hours. Travellers will empower their own virtual agents to find and book trips. Small operators need to find ways to become the preferred choice of these AI agents. Tourism industry will be one of the 1st industries that will be heavily affected by AI. True 1:1 marketing – travel packages will be pulled together for exactly the specifications of the traveller. Move away from SEO (search engine optimization) to AEO (answer engine optimization). More authoritative sources like TripAdvisor will be more relied on because chatbots will rely more on the sites that seem to provide more reliable information.
- You need to know what AI is saying about you and stay on top of it – malicious people can change stuff and you need to update (example below from March 27, 2025)

Google

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✦ AI Overview

In Magnetawan, you can explore the Magnetawan Locks and Dam Trail, visit the Magnetawan Historical Museum, enjoy outdoor activities on the Magnetawan River, or explore nearby attractions like Clear Lake Farm and Ahmic Lake Golf Club.

Here's a more detailed look at what Magnetawan and the surrounding area offer:

Outdoor Activities & Nature:

- **Magnetawan River:** The river is a great place for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, swimming, and boating.
- **Magnetawan Locks and Dam Trail:** Walk or bike along the trail that follows the Magnetawan River and features historic locks and dams.
- **Ahmic Lake:** A popular destination for recreational activities such as swimming, boating, and fishing.
- **Magnetawan Lion's Centennial Park:** Enjoy a sandy beach, playground, picnic tables, and charcoal BBQs.
- **Knoepfli Falls:** A picturesque attraction viewable from Hwy. 124.
- **Horseback Riding:** Explore the area on horseback with tours available.
- **Whitewater Rafting:** Experience the ESPRIT White Water Rafting on the Magnetawan River.
- **Ice Skating:** Enjoy ice skating at the Magnetawan Pavilion during the winter months.

Attractions & Points of Interest:

- **Magnetawan Historical Museum:** Explore the history of the area.
- **Clear Lake Farm:** Visit a local farm.

- Spotify – has a self-serve platform where you can spend money to do geographically targeted ads (e.g. Parry Sound dentist ad on Spotify listeners feed)
- Don't need to be on all platforms – focus on doing a few well
- Starting point is a mobile friendly website

Product Development and Asset Mapping – Workshop 2

Monday, March 3, 2025

METC Attendees: Erica Kellogg, Joan Lewis, Rachel Sullivan

- Other Magnetawan representatives included Aileen Ireland, Lisa Firby from Port Camen Marina and local artist, Nomi Drory

**Presentation requested*

Notes:

Kate Monk from Explorers Edge provided a presentation on various initiatives and spoke about their focus on regenerative tourism. Regenerative tourism is a community centric approach meant to develop entrepreneurial communities, not just entrepreneurs. All expected to dramatically affect sector – will need to stand out with high authenticity. Planning to bring in an astrotourism group from New Brunswick for an event at Screaming Heads and Tom Thompson Park in August. Everyone was put into groups to brainstorm potential assets in the area. All input was collected and a report back is anticipated.

- Participant from an area Agricultural Society noted they have ‘placemat maps’ showing the locations of the different fairs. District 11 has 16 different societies.
- Some foreigners call swimming here ‘wild swimming’
- 85% of North Americans haven’t seen the stars

Potential opportunities:

- Potential partner for outdoor / forest activities – Lynx & Hare Rewilding Centre (Huntsville Forest School) <https://www.facebook.com/LHRewilding/> . Kristin noted she was looking for additional locations to operate.
- Follow up on asset mapping exercise

OTEC Workforce Training Solutions – Webinar

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

METC Attendees: Erica Kellogg, Rachel Sullivan

**Presentation requested*

Notes:

Sue Christensen and Keiran Wells from the Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) provided an overview of programs they offer. While programs are focused on the hospitality, training extends to other sectors (e.g. health care). Some self-paced, elearning programs address topics of interest mentioned at the METC Focus group including SmartServe, WHIMIS and Safe Food Handling. Also offer webinars, essential guiding skills (including storytelling skills), Train-the-Trainer programs.

Potential opportunities:

- Service Excellence program – may be opportunity to help with group training for front line workers as well as volunteers from various service clubs who are also involved in the tourism sector.
- Regional Working Groups – we noted that Parry Sound District currently not included in one of their Regional Working Groups. Explorers Edge has been advocating for this to change so they appreciated industry representation on the call making this point. Another regional participant offered to participate as a regional representative. May be a future group to tap into.
- Explorers Edge can use their partnership funding to help support this type of training.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 –

96

APRIL 16, 2025

Moved by:

Bishop

Seconded by:

Jon Spier

WHEREAS the Council of the Municipality of Magnetawan receives the correspondence from Patti Paul Farmers Market Rent Reduction Request;

AND WHEREAS the Magnetawan Farmers Market draws visitors to Magnetawan;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Municipality of Magnetawan approves the rental of the Magnetawan Lions' Pavilion for the Farmers Market at a reduced rate of \$ 0 from the regular rate of \$110 per weekend for 2025 and subsequent years with the following conditions:

- The Magnetawan Lions' Pavilion be left clean and tidy after the close of market each Saturday and it is the responsibility of the renter to ensure its cleanliness
- That liability insurance in the amount of \$5 million dollars is purchased by the renter

Carried

Defeated

Deferred

Sam Dunnett
Sam Dunnett, Mayor

Recorded Vote Called by: _____

Recorded Vote

Member of Council	Yea	Nay	Absent
Bishop, Bill			
Hetherington, John			
Hind, Jon			
Kneller, Brad			
Mayor: Dunnett, Sam			



*Knowing our heritage
we will build our future*