



Economic Development

Town of Collingwood Economic Development Office

Community Profile

A Brief History of the Town of Collingwood

Past & Present Influences

Collingwood was incorporated as a town in 1858, nine years before Confederation. Collingwood was named after Admiral Collingwood, Lord Nelson's second in command at the battle of Trafalgar. By the time of its incorporation Collingwood had schools, churches, sidewalks and regular steamship traffic to Chicago and all points of the upper great lakes.

During the mid to late 1800's, Collingwood was the railhead of Ontario and its harbour was the shipment point for goods destined to Western Canada. Shipping produced a need for ship repairs, so it was not long before an organized ship building business was created. On May 24th, 1883, the Collingwood Shipyards, formerly known as Collingwood Dry Dock, Shipbuilding and Foundry Company Limited, opened for business. The Shipyards became one of the principal industries in the town, employing as much as 10% of the total labour force.

Today, Collingwood is considered the business hub for the larger catchment area, and maintains a strong employment base with representation in manufacturing, knowledge based, medical, high tech, creative cultural, advanced manufacturing, commercial and tourism sectors.

Employment diversification, from an economic development perspective, means having key target employment sectors, in different industry areas, in order to lessen challenges in the event of a downturn in a particular market or industry.

Collingwood possesses more employment opportunities than available labour force and must import 37% of its labour force from the larger regional area. Labour mobility is strong in this area which serves a permanent population base in excess of 133,000 residents within a 30 minute drive.

Collingwood's location on the southern shores of Georgian Bay and at the base of the beautiful Niagara Escarpment has played an important role in the growth of area tourism. Collingwood has focused on establishing itself as a four-season tourist destination area offering a superior quality of life and tourism amenities.

Collingwood continues to be a stable, progressive community with strong municipal leadership which has led to extensive upgrades to the water filtration plant, and the sewage treatment plant, acquisition of the CN lands and the development of a water line to new Tecumseh. The Barrie-Collingwood Railway (BCRY) is a short-line railway

operation involving a partnership between the City of Barrie, Town of Collingwood, current shippers, CP Rail and the railway operator Cando Contracting Ltd. The BCRY mandate is to provide rail service to all industries in an around Barrie and Collingwood. Our industries and service sectors are further served by the Collingwood Airport which provides “just-in-time” service for equipment along with jet service for executives and personal flight service.

The Greater Collingwood Small Business Enterprise Centre, is administered by Collingwood Economic Development and sponsored by the Province of Ontario, Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services. This regional economic development initiative is supported by the Town of Wasaga Beach, The Blue Mountains, Township of Clearview and the Town of Collingwood. The Centre is located in Collingwood and offers small business information and counseling to new and existing businesses with 10 or under employees. Additionally, the Centre provides seminars, workshops and youth opportunities for residents located within the four communities.

The Collingwood Economic Development Department, Georgian College, Downtown Collingwood Business Improvement Association and the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association, all work tirelessly to promote the community. Collingwood Economic Development ensures that business people have access to support services, seminars, and counseling programs that address specific needs. Members of the local workforce have opportunities to retrain and upgrade their skills, to experience on-the-job training and take part in work placement programs.

Collingwood is well prepared to attend to the needs of its citizens within the community and tourists, whether your interest lies in starting a business in the community or participating in the dynamic recreational culture Collingwood is “The Best Life has to Offer”.

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