

## REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

# Tourism Oxford 2023 Annual Review

**To:** Warden and Members of County Council

**From:** Chief Administrative Officer

## RECOMMENDATION

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1. That Council receive Report CAO 2024-03 entitled “Tourism Oxford 2023 Annual Review” as information.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

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- The purpose of this report is to present the Tourism Oxford 2023 Annual Review, (Attachment 1), which highlights Tourism Oxford management, product development and marketing activities in 2023. It also celebrates tourism business achievements in 2023 that support development of a strong tourism ecosystem in Oxford County.
- This annual review was developed by the Tourism Specialist and Tourism Officers. This review is shared with industry newsletter subscribers and is available online ([OxfordCounty.ca/Tourism](https://OxfordCounty.ca/Tourism)).

## Financial Impact

The recommendation contained in this report has no financial impact. Strategic actions taken were completed as part of the 2023 Business Plan and Budget.

## Communications

This annual review will be distributed through the Tourism Oxford Industry newsletter received by regional tourism partners (350 subscribers), tourism businesses and municipalities. A link to the annual review will also be posted on the Oxford County website ([OxfordCounty.ca/Tourism](https://OxfordCounty.ca/Tourism)).

## 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

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Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendations in this report supports the following strategic goals.

### Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
<b>Promoting community vitality</b>	<b>Enhancing environmental sustainability</b>	<b>Fostering progressive government</b>
		Goal 3.1 – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

## DISCUSSION

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### Background

Tourism Oxford recognizes communication is key to developing strong relationships with tourism industry partners. Providing an annual review is an opportunity to thank funding partners, highlight accomplishments from the 2023 business plan and recognize business achievements.

## Comments

Highlights from the attached report include:

- **Product development**
  - Oxford County's 2023 budget included a request for \$8,000 in one-time funding to gather new photography and video at area attractions. This resulted in 34 photography and video sessions being held across Oxford County. Photography was shared with host businesses, Ontario's Southwest and Destination Ontario. Results of this initiative include a Terra Nova Nordic Spa feature in the 2024 Destination Ontario Winter Campaign. Businesses have also been showing their appreciation thanking Tourism Oxford on social media (See Attachment 2: Social Media Posts)
  - 230 registrations for training and collaboration sessions
  - Facilitated the Oxford Tourism Innovation Grant, Oxford Tourism Awards
- **\$100,000 in partnerships**
  - Oxford County contributed \$39,000 towards partnership programs allowing it to access \$61,000 in matching funds. These partnerships extended marketing reach, brought travel writers to Oxford County, created new photo/video assets, offered business training and covered the cost of a Sustainable Tourism Destination Assessment.
- **Marketing activities**
  - Marketing reach of 6.5 million digital impressions and 320,000 print circulation.
  - 14 Travel Media stories including: **Best things to do in Tillsonburg** (Dobbernation Loves) and **Can't miss Ontario destinations for those who believe it is always a gouda time to eat cheese** (Globe and Mail).
- **Oxford County businesses invested in Tourism**
  - Opening of Wave Nordic Spa and New Galma Dairy
  - Woodstock Holiday Inn Express started construction of a sister hotel
  - Haye's Maple Syrup, Makkinks Flower Farm, Orange Door Acres and Terra Nova Nordic Spa expanded with new facilities.
- **10 tourism awards received by local attractions:**
  - Oxford Tourism Award winners: the Beachville & District Museum (1), Terra Nova Nordic Spa (1) and Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life (2)
  - Ontario's Southwest Innovation Award winner: Beachville & District Museum
  - Ontario Tourism Award winners: Indigo Lounge Wellness & Eatery (1), Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life (2)
  - Other Awards: Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life (Nuffield Canada Agricultural Scholarship) and Willow Lake Campground (Camping in Ontario Camper's Choice, Award Best Customer Service)

## Conclusions

Providing an annual review is an important tool to thank partners, build Oxford County's tourism profile and increase tourism investment in Oxford County. Tourism Oxford will use this review to develop and support its 2024 Business Plan and Budget.

## SIGNATURES

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### Report author:

Original signed by

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Meredith Maywood  
Tourism Specialist

### Approved for submission:

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Benjamin R. Addley  
Chief Administrative Officer

## ATTACHMENT

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Attachment 1: Tourism 2023 Annual Review, January 30, 2024

Attachment 2: Social Media Posts