

WHAT'S NEW IN **ELGIN**

**Elgin County
Economic
Development &
Tourism**



www.progressivebynature.com

January 2023



Welcome to a brand new year! The first quarter is often thought of as a time of quiet reflection, of cozier times spent in the house in anticipation of warmer weather. We are here to remind you that Elgin is Open All Year Round and our businesses continue to deliver world-class service over the winter months! From classes and experiences to retail, dining, and accommodations, there's no need to hibernate and your favourite 2023 memories await right here in our own backyard. With a whole year before us, full of possibility, we are so excited to experience Elgin with you over the coming months. Be sure to keep a close eye on our social media feeds for suggestions on fun ways to spend your winter weekends!

From all of us at Elgin County Economic Development and Tourism, we wish you a happy and prosperous New Year and look forward to working with you in 2023.

WELCOMES AND SHOUTOUTS



A big shoutout to Wayside Dining & Bar in Talbotville and owner Bob Patel (pictured left) for the incredible work they do to serve the community. In support of the Feed The Hungry program, which Bob and his team at the Wayside manage, they are raffling off a handcrafted deer. To enter, Bob and Ankit ask that you stop into the Wayside Dining & Bar (10680 Sunset Dr, in Talbotville) and donate \$25, or some goods for the cold (socks, blankets etc) and autograph the deer. Once their goal of \$25,000 has been raised they will choose one lucky winner who will win this handcrafted deer.

The Feed the Hungry Program operates around St. Thomas and area and supplies hot meals for people in need. This season, Bob says, they have supplied over 450 Turkey dinners for those in need.

Pictured here with the deer are Bob and Ankit with representatives from both Elgin County Economic Development and Tourism and Community and Cultural Services.

NEW BUSINESS FEATURE



There is so much new and exciting happening in the town of Rodney! Our department is thrilled to join the Municipality of West Elgin in extending a warm welcome to some incredible new small businesses, 2 of which are featured below. Thanks to support from the My Main Street Program through the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation, these local entrepreneurs have hit the ground running on providing high-quality products and service, and they all make for a great trip out to the community. They look forward to meeting you soon!

Vertere Living

Hello!! 🖐️

Visit my shop and see what's good!



Vertere Living is a lovely new shop and studio that's really painting the town! This is a recent venture (opened November 2022) by owner Tobi, who lives in West Lorne with her husband, kids, and pets and works full-time in healthcare. What started as a furniture restoration hobby born from childhood memories of looking for old bottles with her dad has quickly become a growing business. She had previously worked on flipping thrifted and found furniture pieces in a relative's garage space, and when that was no longer available she was able to find a new facility that has opened the door to more of a public-facing opportunity.

Tobi's business name is centered on the Latin word 'vertere,' which means 'to turn,' a term that she feels symbolizes the process of taking an old, discarded piece of furniture and making it into something new and beautiful. She sees that process as being tied to a larger 'turning' that she hopes to facilitate through her work, of shifting consumer values towards embracing pre-loved items and making more environmentally-conscious purchasing choices. Tobi grounds this in the idea that we are all connected to the earth. She hopes that her work will demonstrate to consumers that alternative options exist to the lower-quality, higher-priced, increasingly difficult to obtain new furniture currently offered by big-box stores.

This is truly a passion project for Tobi, who loves the organic process of getting inspired by individual pieces and imagining their potential. She learns to do by doing and is always interested in developing new techniques and enhancing her skills. Both hobby and business provide a no-pressure creative outlet where she is able to test the waters and grow at her own pace, balanced with her family and work priorities.

In addition to Tobi's incredible refinished furniture pieces, the shop also features vintage items, art, crafts, and gifts sourced from mainly women-owned small businesses and operators who share her values. She hopes to introduce both in-person and virtual workshops where people can learn the basics of furniture refinishing. She would also like to develop an educational component to the business through encouraging people to reimagine what they have instead of buying new.

Be sure to check out the shop's Instagram below, and keep an eye out for more beautiful creations to come from the shop in 2023! All best wishes to Tobi for this exciting new business putting Rodney on the map!

Vertere Living
102 Furnival Road, Rodney N0L 2C0

[Contact](#)

[Website](#)

[Instagram](#)



FETCH Dog Grooming



There's a new groomer in town, and she's already got the tails wagging! We are thrilled to welcome Alex and FETCH Dog Grooming to Rodney at 226 Furnival, which has been home to a variety of downtown businesses over the years. This venture is a true homecoming for Alex, who grew up in the village but moved to London when she was in high school.

While studying at Beal she was introduced to a summer job program and matched with a London dog groomer. This fateful arrangement was the perfect fit for kick-starting her career, but it also brought Alex full circle to a treasured childhood memory that in hindsight was the event that got the ball rolling for her. She remembers that as a small child, her family had a dog that they took to the local groomer in West Lorne. One day, she was allowed to stay for the appointment and help groom her dog, and the experience stuck with her.

After getting her industry start in London, Alex eventually became an active member of the Ontario Dog Grooming Association and is certified at multiple levels through the Canadian Professional Pet Stylists. She decided to move back to the West Elgin area to open her own business, and she is already building a dedicated clientele. Alex says that she was required to vow to treat every pet that comes through her business like her own upon graduation from grooming academy. This is something she takes very seriously, and as a dog lover each day is living the dream.

Alex has already established herself as an industry trendsetter unique from other groomers and she works hard to continually upgrade her skills to meet industry standards. She also competes in shows! On the home front, she observes that rural residents view their dogs as working members of the family, and people put a great deal of time into ensuring that their beloved companions are in top form. Alex takes great care to treat the local pooch population as such when they come in for service.

Down the road, Alex hopes to continue building her clientele and pursuing further skill development. Given her experiences as a young person growing up in a rural area, she prioritizes the facilitation of youth opportunities and would like to hire an assistant who could be trained just as she was. What an incredible example of youth entrepreneurship, and of a rural young person using their skills to benefit their home community.

Congratulations, Alex, we are so proud of you!

FETCH Dog Grooming
226 Furnival Rd., Rodney
519) 868-4751
Email: fetchdoggrooming226@gmail.com
Website



RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES



Southwestern Ontario Development Fund

The newest SWODF application intake will be open **from January 12, 2023** to February 23, 2023. You can find more information about eligibility and the intake process [HERE](#)

For advice on developing and strengthening your application, you are encouraged to contact your regional advisor or Business Advisory Services at:

Business Advisory Services - Western Region Main Office
westernregionbas@ontario.ca
Toll-free: 1-800-267-6592

Skills Development Fund

The Skills Development Fund offers funding to organizations for innovative projects that address challenges to hiring, training or retaining workers, including apprentices, to drive Ontario's economic growth. [Applications are open until January 31, 2023.](#) [Details](#)

Canada Summer Jobs

Canada Summer Jobs provides wage subsidies to employers with 50 or fewer full-time employees to create quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15-30 years. [Applications are open until January 12, 2023](#) and more details are available [HERE](#)

Business Scale-up and Productivity- FedDev Ontario

Thinking of taking things to the next level? Funding under this stream helps to accelerate the growth of firms and assist with the adoption of new, innovative technologies that support scale-up, productivity, and the development of and entry into new markets to help companies become globally competitive. More details [HERE](#)

Community Economic Development and Diversification- FedDev Ontario

Funding is available to businesses and not-for-profit organizations in small communities who are working to develop, diversify, and transform their local economies. [DETAILS](#)

Free Virtual Session- Challenges and Opportunities in the Accommodation and Food Service Industry

Hosted by the Elgin-Middlesex-Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, January 19 at 11:00am. Details and registration [HERE](#)

Are you an immigrant or a racialized person who has experienced discrimination in St. Thomas or Elgin County in the last three years?

Survey participants wanted.



ST. THOMAS • ELGIN
Local Immigration Partnership
Building Welcoming, Caring, and Inclusive Communities



Western Social Science
Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST)
Western Social Science Research and Policy



Funded by:
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Financé par :
Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

Are you an Immigrant or Racialized Person who has Experienced Discrimination in St. Thomas or Elgin County in the Last Three Years?

If you are, and you have experienced discrimination in a Workplace Setting, in a Public Place, or By the Police, please consider participating in a [virtual interview](#) with researchers

at Western University.

By sharing your stories and feedback, you will help communities across the region become more inclusive and welcoming. If you are interested in participating, please fill out a short survey and the researchers will contact you.



FALL 2022 TOURISM BUSINESS SURVEY



We want to hear from you! If you operate a tourism-related business in Elgin County, the department would greatly appreciate your taking the time to complete our quick survey summarizing the summer 2022 tourism season [HERE](#). Thanks so much for your consideration!

Have an opportunity you'd like us to share? Please send details to economicdevelopment@elgin.ca

BUSINESS PLANNING

Boot Camp

A FOUR-PART SERIES



Sarah Noble

Marketing &
Communications



Elle Crevits

Business
Advisor

JAN. 23 & 24

2.00 pm - 4.00 pm

JAN. 30 & 31

09.00 am - 3.00 pm

SBECINNOVATION.CA

Is 2023 the year you start working toward a new business or a new business growth goal?

When was the last time you brushed up your business plan, or are you on the journey without your map?

This FREE four-part Business Planning Boot Camp is designed to support entrepreneurs to refresh their plan or start from scratch with the support needed to polish it up too.

Because if you are looking for funds, you are going to need a plan.

If you are looking to grow, you are going to need a plan.

If you are looking to start, this is the starting line.

Join Sarah and Elle from the St. Thomas-Elgin Small Business Enterprise Centre in



Your Workforce. Our Future.

Launching TODAY!

Help us build the solution to workplace issues
by providing us with on-the-ground facts.

www.employerone.ca

Canada

EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO

Ontario

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Please consider quickly completing the Elgin-Middlesex-Oxford Workforce Development Board's new Employer One Survey by clicking [HERE](#). The insights of businesses of all sizes and in all sectors are greatly appreciated and we hope to see a strong showing for Elgin-specific data.



Attention all makers and crafters! Epiphany in Aylmer, a lovely artisan market, is looking for vendors to add to their local lineup. Check them out and get connected [HERE](#)

Provincial Government Updates

Ontario Helping Small and Medium-Sized Businesses Lower Electricity Costs

The Ontario government is launching a new pilot program to explore dynamic electricity pricing and its ability to lower electricity bills for small and medium-sized businesses including retail stores, commercial offices and farms. The pilots will test alternate pricing structures that encourage participants to shift electricity consumption to hours where electricity demand is low, helping to reduce costs for businesses. The pilots will help inform the government on the potential for alternate pricing options to provide electricity system benefits and in turn, lower electricity bills for all customers.

Small and medium-sized businesses, farms and community centres that are included in the Class B electricity rate class and don't have access to time-of-use or tiered rates may be eligible to participate in the new pilot program. The OEB plans to open applications in early 2023, check in with your MPP office for updates.

Ontario Providing Free Naloxone Kits in Workplaces by June 2023

The Ontario government is launching a first-of-its-kind program to make free naloxone kits (and free training) available at workplaces where there is a risk of staff witnessing or experiencing an opioid overdose. Of the workers who died from opioid-related causes last year, 30 per cent were employed in construction – by far the most impacted industry. Bars

and nightclubs have also seen increased opioid usage and accidental overdoses, often because of recreational drugs laced with deadly opioids such as fentanyl and carfentanyl.

Businesses can determine if they are eligible for the program and find additional information on accessing naloxone kits and training at [Ontario.ca/workplacenaloxone](https://ontario.ca/workplacenaloxone). Once the requirement is in effect, Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development's inspectors will take an education-first approach to enforcement.

Changes to the Employment Standards Act: business and IT consultants

Effective January 1, 2023, the Employment Standards Act (ESA) will no longer apply to employees who are defined in the ESA as business consultants or information technology consultants, providing they meet specified criteria outlined in the Working for Workers Act. More information about the change will soon be published in Your Guide to the ESA. In the meantime, you can find the legislation set out in Schedule 2 of the Working for Workers Act.

DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITY





On December 14, staff attended the Elgin Federation of Agriculture's Annual General Meeting at Great Lakes Farms near Port Stanley. It was a great evening to catch up with local farmers, hear about their news and concerns, and celebrate the amazing Donna Lunn's retirement from the board after an inspiring legacy of service to the Elgin ag community. Best wishes, Donna!



On December 20, staff attended an open house event hosted by Harvest Bowl, an incredible local organization that gleans Elgin-grown produce and processes it into nutritious soup mixes for our neighbours in need. We are so lucky to have such a dedicated group of farmers, businesses, and volunteers in our community! Learn more about Harvest Bowl [HERE](#)

FESTIVAL AND EVENT TRACKER



- January 20 - PD Day Activities at [Backus-Page House Museum](#)
- January 20 and 21 - Paranormal Investigation event at Backus-Page House Museum [TICKETS](#)
- January 25 - [Guided nature walk](#) through John E. Pearce Provincial Park at Backus-Page House Museum
- January 27 7pm-8:30pm - New Year, New You Vision Board Workshop at the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre (details below)
- January 28 - Quiz Night hosted by the Kiwanis Club of Rodney (details below)
- Saturdays in January 8am-3pm - [The Old Imperial Farmers' Market](#)

Family P.D. Day Event



January 20, 2023
anytime 10am to 4pm

Backus-Page House Museum

29424 Lakeview Line
Wallacetown, ON
N0L2M0 www.backuspagehouse.ca

**CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY
AN ADULT**

COST: \$10 per child, \$5 per adult

Special Activities:

- Complete our scavenger hunt through the Backus-Page House and Agricultural Centre.
- Try your hand at making butter and/or pastilles (candy).
- Complete your visit with a self guided tour through the wetlands of John E. Pearce Provincial Park.

Guided Walk:

A Hike Through Nature And History



Jan

Tues, 10th - 10am

Wed, 25th - 1pm

Feb

Thurs, 9th - 10am

Fri, 24th - 1pm

Mar

Sat, 11th - 10am

Sun, 29th - 10am

BACKUS-PAGE

HOUSE MUSEUM

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION

\$25 / PERSON

JANUARY 20 AND 21, 2023

6:45PM

Group 1 arrives.

1 Hour Paranormal Investigation
with Whispers Beyond Paranormal

-

8:30PM

Group 2 arrives.

1 Hour Paranormal Investigation
with Whispers Beyond Paranormal

www.backuspagehouse.ca/events



Creative Workshop!

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU!

Make Your Own Vision Board!

Friday, January 27 2023 | 7:00-8:30 | St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre

Ready to accomplish your vision in 2023? Join us for a Vision Board Workshop in the main gallery space as we sip tea to relaxing music to lift your mood towards creativity, resolve, and success while we create together!

This evening will include a mindfulness intro and exercise set on focusing and creativity to truly work towards accomplishing your goals and pursuing your dreams! Create your piece on large poster board, smaller poster and framed for an inspired piece for your wall, or any other size or output you feel led to... the possibilities are endless!

\$25

Supplies included

Bring a friend or
come on your own.

Meet local creatives.

Advance payment and
registration required.

Space is limited.



In collaboration with
Paula Morritt Design



UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENTS



- January Business after 5 hosted by the St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce, January 18- [Details](#)

- 'The Pitch' annual business plan event hosted by the Elgin Business Resource Centre, January 25- [DETAILS AND TICKETS](#)
- 'Lunch with the Mayors' hosted by the St. Thomas and District Chamber of Commerce, March 8- [DETAILS AND TICKETS](#)

Have an event you'd like us to share? Please send details to economicdevelopment@elgin.ca

Elgin County Economic Development & Tourism |
www.elgincounty.ca



Elgin County | 450 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas, N5R 5V1 Canada

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