



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City receives five Excellence in Economic Development Awards

(Barrie, ON) – The City of Barrie has been recognized by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) for three economic development initiatives. The City's Invest Barrie team was presented with five awards during the IEDC Annual Conference held in Dallas, Texas.

The awards included:

- Gold in the Partnerships with Educational Institutions category for the Rapid Skills Micro-Credentials project
- Gold in the Paid Advertising Campaign category for the Invest Barrie Entrepreneurship Campaign
- Silver in the Talent Development & Retention category for the Rapid Skills Micro-Credentials project
- Silver in the Multimedia/Video Promotion category for the Rapid Skills Micro-Credentials project
- Silver in the Special Event category for the Simcoe Muskoka Craft Beverage Forum event

"I'm thrilled to congratulate the City's Invest Barrie team and our community partners on being recognized internationally for their collaborative efforts to address skills development in the manufacturing sector, growth of Barrie's entrepreneur community and support for the region's growing craft beverage industry," said Mayor Alex Nuttall. "In Barrie, we're fortunate to have a network of community partners and businesses dedicated to strengthening our local economy."

IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships, marketing materials, and the year's most influential leaders. These awards honour organizations and individuals for their efforts in creating positive change in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Winners are recognized at IEDC's Annual Conference.

About the Rapid Skills Micro-Credentials Program

The City of Barrie and partners were successful in securing over \$1 million in funding through the Skills Development Fund (SDF) supported in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to address skills development and labour shortages within the manufacturing sector. Working with Georgian College, the County of Simcoe and Simcoe Muskoka Skillforce, the project addressed industry demands for increasing the future manufacturing workforce and enabling current and new employees to access skills training, including upskilling currently employed workers through a micro-credential program.

About the Invest Barrie Entrepreneurship Campaign.

In June 2022, Invest Barrie worked with Access Barrie to launch a business attraction campaign with the purpose of positioning Barrie as the perfect place for entrepreneurs to start, grow or scale their business. The campaign included the launch of a dedicated webpage for entrepreneurs and startups on the Invest Barrie website, a sponsored article in the National Post, a local business support guide in both hard-copy handout and interactive digital formats, digital ads with Village Media, and a social media campaign. Each tactic of the campaign was supported by photos featuring leaders from Barrie's business support network and two Barrie-based entrepreneurs. Partner organizations included Invest Barrie, Georgian College's Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department, Barrie Chamber of Commerce and the Sandbox Centre. Entrepreneurs featured in the campaign included Marcia Woods, founder of Fresh Spoke and Dan Saso of Beaver Rock Coffee.

About the Simcoe Muskoka Craft Beverage Forum

Through speakers, panels, and interactive sessions led by ecosystem partners and industry leaders, over 60 beverage entrepreneurs learned how they, with support from their economic development colleagues, can chart their own paths for growth moving forward at the Simcoe Muskoka Craft Beverage Forum. Key speakers from



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leading beverage producers shared their stories, while others focused on the zero-waste movement, supply chain challenges, ensuring product quality, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and adaptations to the changing workforce. Through this collaboration with the Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing, Georgian College's Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre, the County of Simcoe, Tourism Muskoka and the Sandbox Centre, beverage producers gained valuable insight into industry specific developments and opportunities.

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