



# Staff Report to Council - for Information

**Title:** Spruce the Bruce - 2023 Results

**From:** Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

**Date:** February 1, 2024

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## Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

## Report Summary:

The Spruce the Bruce Program is a community development initiative focused on fostering lasting revitalization and development in Bruce County. The program provides grants to businesses, municipalities, and community groups, aiming to enhance infrastructure, safety, and the overall appeal of communities. Noteworthy achievements in 2023 include process improvements in grant approvals, financial support for businesses affected by vandalism, and assistance in updating Community Improvement Plans for three municipalities. This report highlights the programs 2023 achievements, including a total of 76 grants awarded, totaling \$182,375.51 in funding from Bruce County and partner municipalities. The grants span various categories, such as façade improvements, community signage and destination infrastructure. The report also outlines the grants awarded to each municipality, showcasing the widespread impact of the Spruce the Bruce Program.

## Background:

The Spruce the Bruce Program is a community development initiative that motivates lasting community revitalization and development. The program supports infrastructure improvements that make a community safe, welcoming and a place people are happy to call home. Grants are available to businesses, municipalities, and community groups to help communities thrive by creating destinations in our communities and showcasing what makes each community unique.

The Spruce the Bruce program provides communities with the resources to develop strategies and implementation methods necessary to maintain and grow healthy commercial areas in association with the County, municipalities, and local leaders. The program continues to contribute to the betterment of the community. This is demonstrated by the widespread uptake of the program, the unity among businesses fostering a coherent community brand, collaborations between businesses and the partners in promoting their businesses and community events. Also, there is marked enhancement in the community's economic prosperity. Each year, improvements are made to the program based on feedback from municipal partners, demands of businesses and the current economic climate. The purpose of this report is to share program data, showcase the project, celebrate grant recipients and

businesses, and highlight upcoming additions to the program in the next year. This year there were several program highlights during 2023.

### **Process Improvements**

Including staff members from each of the eight communities in the grant approval process has streamlined the program and has improved efficiency for the applicant. As a result of the transparency and collaboration amongst the municipalities and Bruce County Economic Development team, applicants can focus on their project, eliminate red tape and collect their funding quickly.

### **Kincardine Vandalism**

In downtown Kincardine on June 6, 2023, 11 businesses were vandalized, and the front windows of their businesses broken. Together with the Municipality of Kincardine, the 11 businesses were eligible for a one-time Spruce the Bruce grant to help with the window replacements. Businesses were offered \$1,000 to offset these costs (\$500 from Municipality of Kincardine and \$500 from Bruce County). The funds for this project were used from the Spruce the Bruce reserve that was developed in 2022.

### **Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Support**

Economic Development staff supported three municipalities in updating their Community Improvement Plans. As a result, businesses in the Municipality of South Bruce, Northern Bruce Peninsula and Arran-Elderslie are eligible for the following grants:

- Destination Infrastructure and Active Transportation Grant
- Residential Improvement Grant
- Product and Experience Development Grant
- Business Accessibility Adaptability Grant

### **Onboarding Tara and Chesley Façade Guidelines:**

The Communities of Tara and Chesley have completed their Community Brand and Façade Guidelines, making both communities eligible for Spruce the Bruce funding. These guidelines help establish a cohesive brand for each community. The Façade Improvement Guidelines for Tara and Chesley offer practical advice on enhancing building exteriors. The guidelines covers aspects such as the overall context, building shapes, the relationship between buildings and streets, local climate considerations, entrance designs, safety and adaptability.

### **Spruce the Bruce by the Numbers in 2023**

<b>76</b>	Total Number of Grants Given
<b>\$154,030.65</b>	Total Granted by Bruce County
<b>\$28,344.86</b>	Total Granted: Contribution Partnered Municipalities (Township of Huron Kinloss, Municipality of South Bruce Peninsula and Municipality of Kincardine)
<b>\$182,375.51</b>	Total Granted by Bruce County & Partnered Municipalities Combined
<b>\$545,330.58</b>	Total Amount Invested by Spruce the Bruce Applicants
<b>\$1 : \$3.67</b>	Average Rate of Return Ratio

### Grants by Type:

Type of Grant	Number of Grants	Grant Amount
Agri-Food Innovation	1	\$5,000.00
Awning	1	\$732.68
Business Accessibility Adaptability	2	\$4,895.97
Community Marketing	4	\$8,516.75
Community Signage	2	\$5,400.00
Destination Infrastructure & Active Transportation	2	\$5,000.00
Façade Improvements	15	\$69,466.74
Fascia Signage	15	\$11,206.34
Patio Installation	8	\$31,358.48
Perpendicular Signage	9	\$3,684.41
Product & Experience Development / Enhancement	2	\$7,500.00
Residential Improvement	1	\$4,000.00
Streetscape Beautification	3	\$14,924.41
Kincardine Vandalism (one-time funding)	11	\$10,689.73
<b>TOTAL GRANTS</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>\$182,375.51</b>

### Grants by Municipality:

Municipality	Number of Grants
Municipality of Arran Elderslie	3
Municipality of Brockton	16
Township of Huron Kinloss	2
Municipality of Kincardine	17
Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula	5
Town of Saugeen Shores	13
Municipality of South Bruce	4
Municipality of South Bruce Peninsula	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>

### Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing or legal impacts as a result of this report. The funding for Spruce the Bruce was included in the 2023 budget.

**Interdepartmental Consultation:**

Corporate Services was consulted in preparation of this report.

**Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

**Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:**

Spruce the Bruce directly supports the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

**Report Author:**

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**Departmental Approval:**

Jeff Loney, Economic Development Manager

Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

**Approved for Submission:**

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer