



# Staff Report to Council - for Information

**Title:** Energy Transition Initiative Update

**From:** Jeff Loney, Director of Government Relations

**Date:** April 23, 2026

**Report Number:** GR-2026-012

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## Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

## Report Summary:

Bruce County's Energy Transition Initiative (ETI), partly funded by the Rural Economic Development (RED) program, has completed its first full year of implementation since launching in March 2025. The initiative has been supporting businesses across the county in exploring, planning, and adopting cleaner, lower-carbon energy solutions. The initiative delivered awareness efforts, training, one-on-one business consultations, access to pilot-technology opportunities, and practical planning resources, helping businesses explore cleaner energy solutions while positioning Bruce County as a regional leader in cleaner energy innovation.

## Background/Analysis:

The Energy Transition Initiative focuses on:

- Supporting local businesses in adopting cleaner energy sources.
- Offering training, planning support, resources and one-on-one consultations and concierge support for businesses.
- Building partnerships with suppliers, funders, and technology providers.
- Connecting businesses with emerging and innovative pilot technologies.

Projects that focused exclusively on energy efficiency, such as reducing energy usage, are not included in this initiative.

## 2025 PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS:

Over the past year, the ETI has expanded Bruce County's clean energy leadership through new outreach, enhanced resources, and deeper business engagement. The initiative has built strong momentum and helped local businesses better understand and pursue cleaner, lower carbon energy solutions.

## **1. Business & Community Engagement**

Through the ETI, economic development has deepened relationships with over 450 businesses, sharing information on training, funding, pilot opportunities, and providing on-site guidance. This was accomplished through a variety of ways including: attending more than 15 local events, including Chamber activities and municipal business walks. A Teeswater community session engaged over 30 residents and businesses. Collaboration with municipal economic development officers, chambers, and BIAs continued to streamline support and align priorities across the county.

## **2. Projects Supported Across the County**

Through the ETI, several projects were supported that allowed businesses to pursue a broad mix of cleaner energy solutions. Some of these projects included solar photovoltaics, air-source heat pumps and fuel switching, geothermal systems, battery storage, waste-to-energy micro-projects, EV and fleet assessments, and hybrid heating and commercial HVAC upgrades. These projects built confidence, reduced risk, and offered practical examples, while success stories showcased local leaders and demonstrated clear pathways for others.

## **3. Energy Transition Toolkit**

An Energy Transition Toolkit was developed and has become a frequently used resource, with more than 450 views and downloads. It continues to support businesses in scoping projects, preparing for supplier conversations, exploring pilot opportunities, and understanding regulatory steps before committing capital.

## **4. Cleaner Energy Ecosystem Building**

The ETI strengthened the local cleaner energy ecosystem by establishing over 80 supplier connections across technology providers, funders, engineering firms, research groups, and financial institutions.

## **5. Events, Training & Sector Knowledge**

Bruce County advanced local clean energy knowledge through the Energy Transition Showcase, which featured hands-on demonstrations of heat pumps, geothermal systems, biogas, wind-battery integration, and solar photovoltaics. ETI-led training sessions were delivered with strong engagement, highlighting practical insights and early project successes. Participation in key national events, including the EV Charging Expo, Retrofit Canada Conference, and MaRS Climate Impact Week, supported the ETI by identifying emerging industry trends and opportunities and connecting with partners and organizations that support the initiative and local businesses.

## **6. Digital Reach and Awareness**

The ETI saw strong online engagement, including over 4,200 visits to the Energy Transition landing page, 477 engagements with the Toolkit, 120 engagements with the Technology Pilot Studies page, and 1,734 engagements with the first Success Story.

## **7. Marketing & Communications**

A targeted two-month social media campaign expanded ETI's visibility, generating 280,496 impressions, nearly 900 clicks, and 72 local business leads. The Energy Transition brochure

was distributed during business walks and mailed broadly to businesses and farms countywide, alongside digital promotion of success stories and training opportunities.

### **Overall Impact**

In its first year, the ETI focused on establishing the initiative, building partnerships, and supporting local businesses through targeted outreach and practical tools.

### **Upcoming 2026 Projects**

In 2026, the ETI will focus on advancing and supporting additional business-led cleaner energy projects across the county. Planned activities include:

- Continued one-on-one business consultations, providing tailored guidance and project support to businesses exploring cleaner energy opportunities.
- Delivery of new training modules and hands-on workshops.
- An ETI-led energy assessment initiative designed to support selected businesses explore cleaner energy opportunities.
- Expansion of the Energy Transition Cluster by broadening participation through outreach to new businesses and collaboration with suppliers and regional partners.
- Additional pilot projects developed in partnership with regional and provincial collaborators to bring emerging technologies into Bruce County as real-world demonstrations.
- An updated 2026-2027 Incentives and Grants Catalogue, ensuring businesses have access to current funding pathways and regulatory information.

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

The ETI is partly funded through the Rural Economic Development program where \$150,000 was provided over a two-year funding period.

### **Interdepartmental Consultation:**

NA

### **Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

Environment and Climate Change - Build capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change

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

Economic Development Strategic Plan 2022-2026

**Report Author:**

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**Departmental Approval:**

Jeff Loney, Director of Government Relations

**Approved for Submission:**

Sean Morphy, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**Attachments:**

None