



# MEMO

**To: Economic Development Standing Committee**

**From: The Manager of Economic Development**

**Date: November 1, 2023**

**Subject: Monthly Department Activity Report**

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The following is an update on some of the current activities undertaken by the Economic Development Department:

**Social Media:**

Mr. Heard continues to coordinate all social media for the municipality. Follower numbers to date include:

City of Elliot Lake Facebook – 2,446  
City of Elliot Lake Instagram – 298  
City of Elliot Lake Twitter - 109  
Explore Elliot Lake Facebook – 731  
Explore Elliot Lake Instagram - 437

**Shop Local Event:**

Preparation for the shop local is well underway. There are 32 businesses involved in the event that takes place this fall. The event will feature radio advertising, a mailer sent to each home in the community and a strong social media push. Council and residents are encouraged to keep an eye on their mailboxes for the flyer. The team at ELNOS have agreed to sponsor a shuttle bus from Serpent River First Nation to Elliot Lake so that shoppers from our neighbouring community can take part in the event.

**Town Hall:**

The 3rd quarter Economic Development Department Town Hall was held on October 11th in Council Chambers. Attendance was small but there was lively discussion which had the event pass the 2 hour mark in length. The next event will be held in January.

**General Business outreach and support:**

Staff are working with our community partners and various funders to present a Funders Forum in the city. This event will include presentations from available funders such as the NOHFC, ELNOS and the East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation. The event is tentatively planned for mid-January.

Staff are working with the Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation (AWIC) to present a Labour Market Community Consultation on Wednesday November 8th. AWIC is Algoma's Workforce Planning Board and their goal is to provide access to easy-to-understand, quality-assured Labour Market Information (LMI) for the Algoma region, allowing individuals to make decisions about future careers, employers to plan and find talent, and community stakeholders to inform policy and support local workforces. The Labour Market Community Consultation will provide a venue for stakeholders share feedback on workforce challenges and opportunities. AWIC will present an update on the latest Elliot Lake Labour Market Information (LMI) folled by a Q&A where AWIC aims to get a more in-depth understanding of topics such as local employment opportunities, skills needs and gaps, training priorities and emerging local workforce issues. Information and insights gathered at the Labour Market Community Consultation will be input into AWIC's annual Local Labour Market Planning Report. Emerging themes or topics will inform the development of new workforce research and community projects for 2024 and beyond.

### Surveys

The department also completed two surveys earlier this year to gather feedback from our business community and address issues. These included:

#### North Industrial Transit Survey:

This survey was prompted from a comment made through the BR&E process. In their response, a business in the north industrial stated that having transit to the area would help their business. This survey was distributed both electronically and in person to businesses in the area. There were a total of 8 respondents with 63% stating that regular bus service to the area would have a positive impact on their business. Staff will have the data at the ready so it may be included in the City's upcoming transit study.

#### Drag Race Survey

A survey was distributed to the business community, though the economic development monthly newsletter, to gather data on the impact to businesses brought by cancelling the North Shore Challenge Drag Race. The number of responses was disappointing with only 7 completions, far from a useful sample size for data analysis purposes.

Of the respondents, 2 in 7 stated that their 2023 revenues for the same weekend were lower than in 2022 and 1 in 7 stated that the absence of the event had a negative impact on their business. I would strongly recommend that the committee consider the size of the respondent pool prior to putting too much weight on the survey results.

#### Merchandise Logo Design Contest Winner

The merchandise design contest closed October 16th with the design from Ms. Alicia MacDonald's design being selected as the winner. Staff are working with our clothing supplier to maximize the art for printing and will present the finished product at a subsequent meet. The goal is to have the clothing available for sale for the Christmas season.

### Tourism

Staff are attending the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit in Sault Ste Marie. This event takes place from November 14-16 and topics include Northern Ontario Tourism initiatives and the event also provides the opportunity for staff to network with operators and groups like Destination Northern Ontario and Algoma Country.

The City's Driftscape subscription is nearing the end of its first year. Numbers are promising with more growth expected. Elliot Lake went live in April and since that point, the app has had over 1,000 visitors. The most popular page being the downtown walking art tour. The app will continue to gather momentum and staff are expecting more growth in 2024. Neighbouring communities such as Blind River and Manitoulin have added the service which

only serves to increase Elliot Lake's exposure. Staff will bring forth the request to continue the service through the 2024 budgeting process.

#### Land Sale Inquiries

Land sale enquiries have continued and experienced a bit of an uptick. Nothing official to report but staff are continuously working with possible investors.

#### EV Charging Station

Staff continue to work on a grant opportunity for an EV Charging station in the municipality. Staff received direction from Council in August of 2022 to apply through Natural Resources Canada. That grant is still in process with the city having received a conditional approval. A new grant stream has been made available that allows for grant stacking up to 90% of costs. Staff are working with funders and will bring updates to Committee in due time.

#### Strategy session

The kick off to the updating of the Economic Development and Diversification Strategy took place on November 2nd. Staff will continue to update the Committee on the progress of this initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Antunes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "A".

Steve Antunes