



**Rural Oxford**  
Economic Development

PEOPLE • PROXIMITY • PROSPERITY

# 2024 Year in Review

[ruraloxford.ca](http://ruraloxford.ca)

# Your Rural Economic Development Team



Crystal van Roekel Economic Development Officer

Ronda Stewart - Economic Development Director

# Business Support

182

GENERAL & MARKETING  
INQUIRIES + OUTREACH  
CALLS TO BUSINESS

43

EXPANSION,  
LOCATION/DEVELOPMENT  
SUPPORT INQUIRIES

60

BUSINESS  
SITE VISITS

21

EVENTS  
ATTENDED

18

LOCAL  
INITIATIVES  
SUPPORTED

24

AGRI-FOOD & MANUFACTURING  
BUSINESS BR&E SURVEYS  
SURVEYS COMPLETE

\$17.4M+

INVESTED THIS FISCAL  
BY 24 PRIVATE SECTOR  
COMPANIES

17

COMPANIES PLANNING TO  
EXPAND OR RELOCATE  
IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

\$426.5M+

PROJECTED INVESTMENT  
INTO EXPANSION &  
COMMERCIALIZATION  
IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

# Impact & Engagement

# Community & Collaboration

## 18 Local Initiatives Supported

1. CFO - Tourism Innovation Grant Program
2. CES - Oxford County Career Expo
3. CES- WorkinOxford.ca
4. Canada's Outdoor Farm Show
5. EZT - Transit Pilot
6. Ingersoll BIA - Shop Local Gift Card Program (Research)
7. Norwich Chamber - Taste of Norwich
8. Norwich Chamber Progressive Tour
9. Oxford Connection - SIAL Trade Show

10. Oxford Connection - FAM Tour
11. Oxford County Builders Association Re-Launch
12. Oxford County - Economic Development Forum
13. Rural Networking Events
14. SBC - Bridges to Better Business
15. Workforce Development - EmployerONE
16. Tavistock Chamber - Welcome Program
17. Tourism Oxford Strategic Plan
18. Tourism Oxford - Your Next Stop

# Workforce Development

WorkinOxford.ca. Local Career Expos. EmployerONE Survey.



Your Workforce. Our Future.

A poster for the Oxford County Career Expo. The top half has a yellow background with the text 'OXFORD COUNTY CAREER EXPO MARCH 21, 2024'. Below this, it lists the location: 'Woodstock Agricultural Society &amp; Woodstock Fairgrounds, 875 Nellis St, Woodstock, ON N4S 4C6'. A call to action reads: 'Join us in shaping your future workforce and connect with skilled professionals for your current and future hiring needs.' A circular badge on the right says 'FREE TO PARTICIPATE!'. The bottom half of the poster is white and features two sections: 'Get in Front of 5000+ PEOPLE from Oxford County and Beyond!' and 'Including: London Economic Region, Kitchener/Waterloo, Cambridge, Brantford, Hamilton, GTA Corridor and Beyond.' To the right of this are two time slots: 'FUTURE WORKFORCE 3,500+ Students 8:30AM - 2:00PM' and 'SKILLED WORKFORCE 1,500+ Skilled Professionals 3:00PM - 6:00PM OPEN TO THE PUBLIC'. The background of the top half shows a group of smiling people in professional attire.

# Tourism Innovation Grant Winners



**Thames River Melon Ltd** – to create an educational experience around beekeeping, honey and pollinators.



**The Thoughtful Artisan** – to give participants the opportunity to work with natural fibre yarns and learn about the benefits over acrylics, drawing from a 200km radius.



**Habitual Chocolate** – to provide education and experience around creating a chocolate bark with ingredients from local producers.

Combined, these three award-winning projects will create 4 local jobs, support 21 local suppliers, welcome many new visitors, while investing another \$17,000 into the Oxford County economy.

# Rural Oxford EDC Celebrated 10 Years of Service!

140 attendees, 80 award nominations received for 53 businesses,  
16 businesses and 1 community leader recognized, 12 community partners engaged



*Thank You*

*for being a part of our  
10th Anniversary*



**Rural Oxford**  
Economic Development

**DISCOVER**  
**Rural Oxford**

**THANK YOU  
FOR ATTENDING  
CANADA'S OUTDOOR  
FARM SHOW WITH US!**

**Rural Oxford**  
Economic Development

**CANADA'S OUTDOOR  
FARM SHOW**

**RURALOXFORD.CA/DISCOVER**

## ***Discover Rural Oxford - Testimonials***

"The opportunity to work together with other rural businesses and to have everything so well coordinated for our benefit was tremendous. I highly recommend being part of this opportunity and I hope that we are able to do it again!"

- Stefan Cartmale, Bright Cheese & Butter Manufacturing Co.

"I was proud to be featured by ROEDC in the outdoor farm show. Not only was my brand well represented, but being featured along other rural Oxford businesses allowed for excellent networking, camaraderie and brand exposure. I would do this event again without a second thought." - Erica Merchand, Bear + Fox Apparel

"20/10. The exposure, collaboration, and community feel was amazing. It was very well organized. We felt supported, and felt treated like royalty. Amazing job!"

- Alisha Wilson, Transitions Equine Assisted Learning

"Having the opportunity to showcase our products and build brand awareness at such a large trade show was very valuable to our business. Due to our small size, it would have been impossible to have our own booth and staff it for the length of the show, so the chance to work with ROEDC and other local small businesses was the perfect fit!"

- Marja DeBoer-Marshall, The Golspie Dairy

**WHAT A SUCCESS STORY!**

Learn more at <https://ruraloxford.ca/discover-rural-oxford-exhibit-a-first-year-success>



# Local Marketing & Communications



14 Rural Business Features  
12 Community & Program Updates

[ruraloxford.ca/networking](http://ruraloxford.ca/networking)



141,200 Reach  
+ 350 New Followers

# That's a Wrap on the Oxford Rural Entrepreneurs Networking Event Series!



## 2024 Hosts:

April – Bright Cheese & Butter, 30 guests

May – Willow Grove Animal Wellness Centre, 25 guests

June – Gunn's Hill Cheese, 23 guests

July – Extended Beauty Spa, 10 guests\*

August – Orange Door Acres, 25 guests

# New Beginnings & 150th Anniversary

Beekist Growers, Kintore

Bright Cheese & Butter's 150th Anniversary, Bright

The Block Butcher Shop, Norwich



# New Beginnings & Association Re-Launch

Madmash Brewery, Tavistock

Extended Beauty Spa & Training Studio, Thamesford

Oxford County Builders Association Re-Launch



# Agri-Food & Manufacturing BR&E Surveys



**25 Business Visits**

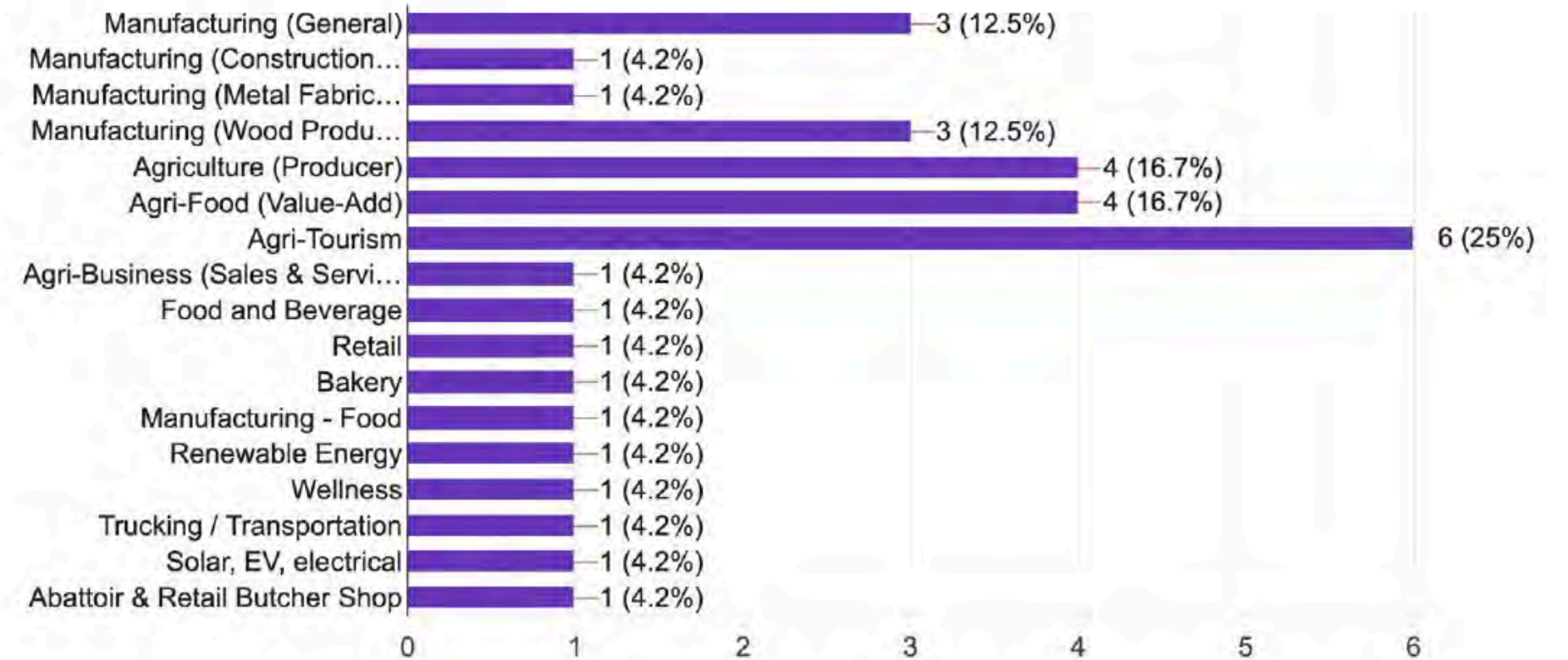
Most were coordinated with value-add introductions to MEDJCT, OMAFA & FedDev Reps



## 2024 Rural Oxford EDC Agri-Food & Manufacturing BR&E Surveys - 24 Surveys Completed -

Please Identify Your Industry:

24 responses



# Agri-Food & Manufacturing BR&E Surveys



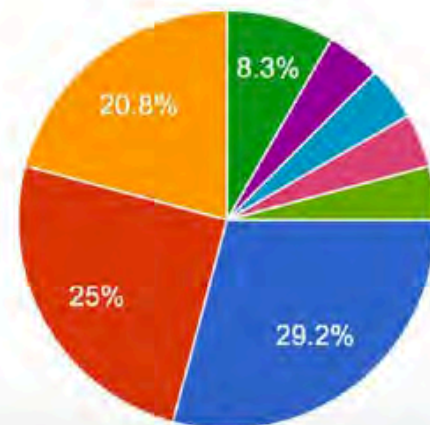
## Revenues/ Sales & Exports Summary:

Combined Total Annual Revenue: \$259,930,000  
 Combined Total Annual Export Revenue: \$113,550,000

Industry	Total Revenue	Export Revenue
Agriculture (Producer)	6,740,000	4,500,000
Manufacturing	217,400,000	106,050,000
Retail, Food & Beverage, Agri-Tourism	17,890,000	0
Other: Agri-Business, Transportation, Renewable Energy	17,900,000	3,000,000
	259,930,000	113,550,000

## Company's Current State

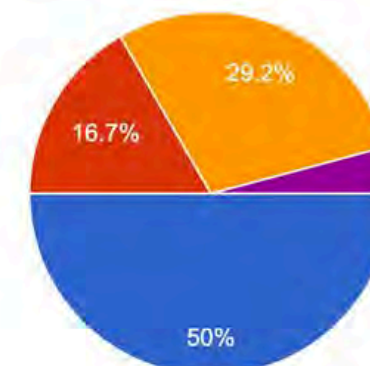
24 responses



- Surviving
- Managing Well
- Growing Organically
- Exponential Growth in View
- We are growing but not at the rate we need to become profitable
- Establishing
- Stagnate
- Was going up, now going down

## Based on the past 3 years, Revenue (as a whole) has:

24 responses



- Increased
- Decreased
- Remained the same
- Prefer not to answer
- See above

# Agri-Food & Manufacturing BR&E Surveys

## Current FTE Employment Summary:

22 of 24 Survey Respondents are Employers

FTE at primary business location: 604

FTE beyond primary business location, Ontario: 369

FTE beyond primary business location, globally: 675

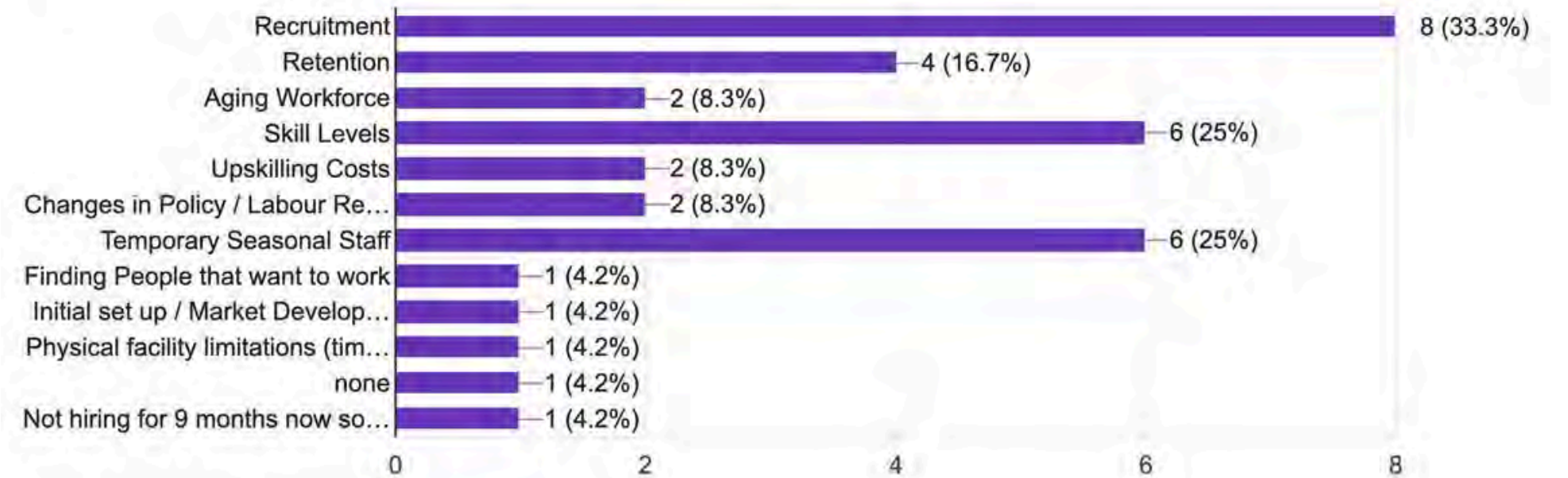
Based on the past 3 years, has FTE:

24 responses



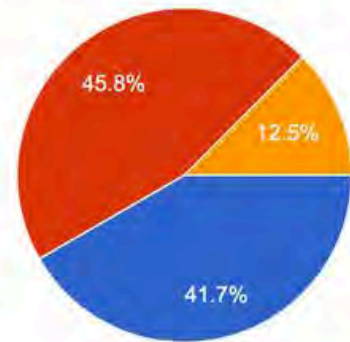
## Top Challenges Related to Employment (check all that apply):

24 responses



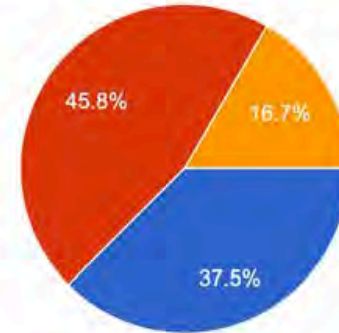
# Agri-Food & Manufacturing BR&E Surveys

Issues & Hurdles: Cost of Borrowing  
24 responses



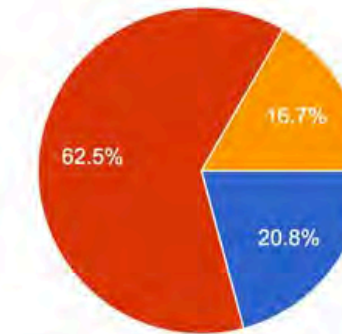
- Little / No Issue
- Increasing But Not Yet Problematic
- Definite Issue

Issues & Hurdles: Supply Chain (up/down stream)  
24 responses



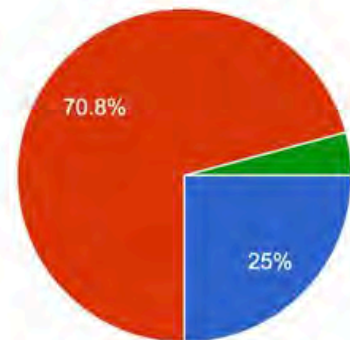
- Little / No Issue
- Increasing But Not Yet Problematic
- Definite Issue

Issues & Hurdles: Productivity / Cost of Goods Sold  
24 responses



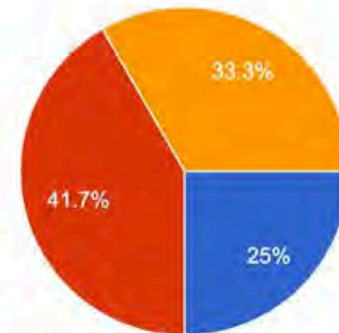
- Little / No Issue
- Increasing But Not Yet Problematic
- Definite Issue

Are you currently receiving any government funding?  
24 responses



- Yes
- No
- N/A
- Name(s) of Government program:

Issues & Hurdles: Wages & Operations  
24 responses



- Little / No Issue
- Increasing But Not Yet Problematic
- Definite Issue



# Agri-Food & Manufacturing BR&E Surveys

## Growth & Investment Trajectory Summary:

Combined Capital Investment this Fiscal: \$17,420,000

Combined 2024 R&D Investment: \$2,053,000

15 Companies invested in R&D

7 Companies did not invest in R&D

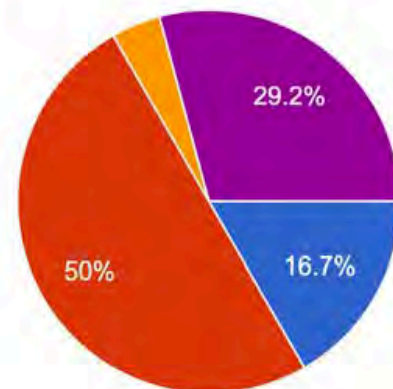
2 Companies did not track R&D investment

17 Companies are planning to expand or relocate in the next 5 years

7 Companies are not planning to expand or relocate at this time

Is your company planning to expand its physical location or looking at options to relocate to a larger facility? If yes, what timeframe would you be planning for?

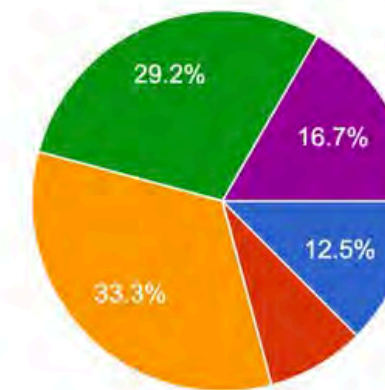
24 responses



- < 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- We are not planning to expand our location or relocate to a larger facility, at this time

Future Plans: (General feedback on your company's future plans) Investing in Smart Manufacturing / Technology Adoption

24 responses



- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Likely
- Very Likely
- N/A

Does your company have any new market interests? If yes, which countries, sectors, markets?

- Yes, the US
- Yes, Eastern Europe
- Yes, Domestic: Agriculture sector, grocery sector
- Yes, we're looking for water filled aggregate pits to put fish farms in Oxford County
- Yes, in Oxford County and Ontario - expanding renewable energy
- Yes, Australia, Brazil
- Yes, Online sales platforms
- Yes, the GTA through a partnership with another delivery service
- No, None

# Agri-Food & Manufacturing BR&E Surveys

**What Commercialization plans (new products/new segments) does your company have for the next 3-5 years?**

- Enhanced exposure of current product line to the US as well as expansion into other aspects of the craft industry
- Solar + heat pump for ag barns
- Adding related and unrelated products to our current line, increase our DTC revenue
- Refrigeration domestic parts
- Expand berry value added product lines into grocery stores and upscale stores
- Growth of fish sales with new sites
- Wind energy expansion
- Planning to supply product to dog treats for a healthy snack treat and supply cheese to a manufacturer for use in further processing
- Opportunity for more custom slaughtering and processing, more "kill and chill" for other businesses. New products including different varieties of sausages and patties, as well as plans for a new line of lamb products.
- Potentially move part of our operation to a facility better suited for that part of the company
- Additional ready to eat meals, expanded products for sale, additional training classes and events, improved farm tours
- Expand wholesale accounts to larger chain businesses
- Looking at creating an event facility on farm
- Expand on our clothing and general merchandise
- Develop manufacturing / marketing site
- Increase wellness and group offerings
- New cheese
- New shop
- None, N/A



**Combined, the approximated investment for these Commercialization plans (new products/new segments) over the next 5 years is \$426,548,000.**

# Rural Oxford EDC - Here to Help



“Thanks for your assistance in advocating for us! The introduction to the planners was helpful. All due diligence was conducted in a very timely and efficient manner. The advisory exchanges with you and the planners pointed us in the right direction.

We hope to continue to develop our property and build more infrastructure in the coming years as our business expands.”

- Dale Horst, President, Marco Clay Products

# Rural Oxford EDC - Here to Help



“The Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation has been a very supportive organization for our business.

They’ve assisted us with marketing opportunities, introduced us to like minded businesses and are constantly updating us with funding opportunities. The Rural Oxford EDC team is very supportive and a great resource to have access to when operating in Oxford County.”

- Chad Jakeman, CEO, Jakeman’s Maple Products

# Rural Oxford EDC - Here to Help



“We're very thankful to the Rural Oxford Economic Development team for helping facilitate our application for fibre optic internet. This development makes a huge difference in the way Coyle's Country Store is able to do business in Rural Oxford.

We look forward to a future of internet stability and without the panic of randomly losing connection to our POS systems. Thank you for all your help and for continually alerting us to the resources, programs and grants available to local businesses.”

- James Coyle, Owner, Coyle's Country Store

# About Rural Oxford Economic Development

## 1 PROUDLY SERVING YOU

In 2014, a Rural Oxford Prosperity Committee proactively formalized itself as Rural Oxford Economic Development - a non-profit corporation with a clear mission to support business growth and development across Rural Oxford.

## 2 WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

Each Member Municipality appoints two community representatives to serve on our governance Board to help set strategy, oversee operations, and ensure fiduciary accountability. Our Board & Staff teams work together in our shared commitment to support Rural Oxford as a whole.

## 3 ACCOUNTABILITY

The financial and governance commitment of the five Member Municipalities has provided a solid foundation for the organization since establishing in 2014. The Township of EZT provides additional support by way of Financial & HR Administration.



Rural Oxford... where people and business can prosper.

*Proudly Serving...*  
**Our Member Municipalities**



*Thank You*