Welcoming Communities:
New Resident Toolkit

2018

A resource guide for municipalities and community groups
to support and engage new residents.

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1. Welcoming Communities Action Team
a) Why Was The Team Established?

In September 2016, Bruce Power and the County of Bruce partnered to launch the Nuclear Economic Development and Innovation Initiative. The partnership, a first of its kind, recognizes the important role that Bruce, Grey and Huron Counties play in supporting growth and sustainability in the region over the next several years.

The Initiative was launched in response to Bruce Power's multi-year investment agreement with the Independent Electricity Systems Operator (IESO) which established a commercial framework for Bruce Power to advance a long term investment program to refurbish its nuclear fleet and help secure the site's operations until 2064.

The agreement will result in significant investment by Bruce Power and a profound economic impact across Ontario – in particular, across the region.

The multi-billion-dollar investment program will bring 1,000's of new residents into the region over the next several years and, as a result, there was recognition for a need to advance a coordinated approach to provide support, information and resources to communities in Grey, Bruce and Huron Counties to attract and retain new residents.

1. Welcoming Communities Action Team

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1. Welcoming Communities Action Team

a) Why Was The Team Established?

Bruce Power's economic impact is seen across the Bruce, Grey and Huron region. Its employees live in communities across the three Counties and its community investments occur across the region. In order to be successful, the governance across the region collectively works together to support, inform and move this Initiative forward.

To guide the Initiative, a Nuclear Industry Regional Advisory Committee was established that brings together key economic and political leaders across the Bruce, Grey, and Huron region. A Welcoming Communities Action Team was established under the Advisory Committee to move forward on the Nuclear Industry Investment Strategy's goal to:

"Support and promote community investment readiness to better align with an expanded regional supplier network and increased employment opportunities."

a. Why Was The Team Established? (Cont.)

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1. Welcoming Communities Action Team
b) Why Was The New Resident Toolkit Developed and Who Is It For?

The **Welcoming Communities: New Resident Toolkit** is a key deliverable created by the Action Team to support the goal of community readiness.

The New Resident Toolkit was developed to provide a framework for collaboration by identifying opportunities and ideas on ways that municipalities, and its community organizations, can engage new residents and create a welcoming environment that helps ensure that new residents are active community members and contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of the region.

The Toolkit is a compilation of activities and ideas on how communities can be active participants in prospective and new resident attraction and retention efforts.

Although designed for municipalities in Bruce, Grey and Huron Counties – it takes a community of interested organizations and individuals to collectively work together to achieve the goal of active and engaged residents. This Toolkit is not only for municipalities, but also our community leaders who want to welcome and engage new residents to the area.

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2.   What It Means To Be A Welcoming Community

The key characteristics of a Welcoming Community are:

Respect for Diversity: A community becomes more accepting as its population becomes more diverse. With concerted effort, the process can be accelerated. This also includes fostering a positive attitude toward newcomers and cultural diversity.

Public Services: A community's public services – police, hospitals, recreational facilities – should be able to address newcomers' needs. This may include making provision for people who speak languages other than French and English.

Education: Ensure that educational services and facilities (daycares, elementary, secondary, post-secondary, adult continuing education, etc.) are available and ready to accommodate the special needs of newcomers.

Health and Wellness: Newcomers need to feel confident that your community can provide adequate resources to address health issues, special needs and emergencies.

Employment Opportunities: Provide newcomers with a primary source of income – ideally in their field of knowledge and experience. Integrate newcomers into the workforce as soon as possible so that they can contribute to the local economy.

Fostering Social Capital: This is achieved when a community supports employment, integration and the emotional well-being of newcomers through strong connections in cultural and intercultural social networks.

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2.   What it means to be a Welcoming Community (cont.)

Examples of ideas that can assist a community becoming more "welcoming":

- Cultural diversity training for community, schools and workplaces (potential to add businesses as well – selling diverse products to diverse customers)
- Policies for schools and the workplace that demonstrate an ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures
- Resources, tools and information to assist the community
- Settlement information
- Language training (for newcomers and the community)
- Access to employment and business information
- Accessible health care
- Hiring policies that encourage equitable access to opportunities
- Training on Canadian work standards
- Affordable and suitable housing
- Presence of newcomers and newcomer-serving agencies
- Municipal services sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers
- Available and accessible public transportation options
- Presence of diverse religious organizations
- Non-denominational worship space
- Favourable media coverage and representation
- Opportunities for use of public space and recreation facilities

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community taken from CIRRO Guide – OMAFRA and Attracting and Retaining Newcomers in Rural Communities and Small Towns – Wayne Caldwell, Brianne Labute, Bakhtawar Khan and Natasha D'Souza Rea

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3. Products and Support For Prospective and New Residents

a) Regional Welcome Website

www.greaternuclearenergyarea.ca

The Welcoming Communities Action Team, through the advice and leadership of the Nuclear Industry Regional Advisory Committee, launched www.greaternuclearenergyarea.ca – a one-window portal into the region.

The website provides an overview of the region, and links to the region's municipalities to provide prospective and new residents with a 'one-stop shop' for links to county's, municipalities, education, health care, and recreation in the region.

There are three main features to the website:

I.   Housing: Information and links to temporary and permanent housing information.
II. Local businesses: www.couponcountry.ca. This website connects consumers to local businesses, raises awareness of the breadth and range of services and products available in the region and promotes opportunities to shop locally.
III. Community Maps: Information and links to: municipal services, schools , health care, recreation, and other government services.

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3. Products and Support For Prospective and New Residents

b) Website Checklist and Best Practices

Local Websites

The regional welcome website provides a 'window' into the region and it is important to work with all of our community partners to help ensure they have the right information and resources on their websites when prospective residents are in search of their new community, or new residents trying to navigate their communities.

Website presence is an essential cornerstone for municipalities when presenting their communities, services, amenities and offerings to prospective and new residents. For many people interested in relocating to the region, a search of community websites provides the 'first impression' for newcomers.

To help municipalities tailor their websites to answer questions a prospective and new resident may have, a checklist was developed (from the perspective of a new resident). In addition to the checklist, a list of best practices was also developed.

Municipalities invest a lot of time and resources in ensuring their websites are up to date and accurate. Given the collective interest and understanding of the important role a municipal website plays in attracting and retaining residents – there was an opportunity to help support these investments by providing ideas and recommendations on ways to ensure websites can respond to information and resources a prospective and new resident may need to settle, remain and actively engage in their community.

b. Website Checklist and Best Practices

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3. Products and Support For Prospective and New Residents

b) Website Checklist and Best Practices

Website Checklist

This checklist will assist your municipality/community to ensure that you have created a user friendly and welcoming website for newcomers to your community/municipality.

Does your website contain the following information?

Getting started:
- Local utility provider
- Home phone providers
- Cable providers
- Internet providers
- Information about garbage collection
- Information about recycling in the Municipality

b. Website Checklist and Best Practices (Cont.)

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3. Products and Support For Prospective and New Residents

b) Website Checklist and Best Practices

Website Checklist (cont'd)

Education:
- Preschools/daycares
- Elementary schools
- Secondary schools
- Private schools
- Colleges/universities (if applicable)

Health, Social & Emergency Services:
- Hospitals
- Physician offices/clinics
- Dental offices/clinics
- Long-term care/nursing homes
- Other health care services (chiropractor, physiotherapists, naturopath, massage therapist, etc.)

Social, Support and Wellness Services:
- Not-for-profit organizations & for profit resources
- Service clubs
- Social support services (seniors' centres, counselling, community living, children and youth with disabilities services and resources, etc.)
- Places of worship
- Foodbanks
- Early Years Centres/parenting centres

b. Website Checklist and Best Practices (Cont.)

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3. Products and Support For Prospective and New Residents
b) Website Checklist and Best Practices

Emergency Services:
- Fire
- Ambulance
- Police
  *Emphasize that 911 is the emergency number only
  *Include administration numbers to emergency services as well

Downtown Information:
- What's downtown (linked to the local business directory) – could include retail, other services, restaurants, etc.
- Link to the BIA and/or Chamber of Commerce

Tourism/Entertainment/Recreation/Cultural:
- Tourism Information Centre
- List of B&B's, Inns, Motels, Hotels, Campgrounds and other types of accommodation
- Events – festivals, concerts, etc.
- Recreation facilities
- Sports venues
- Entertainment options e.g. movie theatre, outdoor patios etc.
- Cultural attractions/ venues
- Sports associations
- Recreational Leagues (hockey, baseball, soccer, etc.)

Government Services:
- Service Canada office
- Service Ontario office
- County administration offices
- Municipal office information

b. Website Checklist and Best Practices (Cont.)

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3. Products and Support For Prospective and New Residents

b) Website Checklist and Best Practices

Best Practices for Developing a "Welcoming Website"

- Your website is the first impression that a newcomer has of your community. Ensure that it is up to date and includes information that is relevant in order for them to be able to assess your community accurately.
- A tab for "Newcomers" to your community is very helpful. This tab would list all the information needed for newcomers from garbage/recycling information to emergency services information.
- Include pictures on your website from all seasons as this is part of our local landscape. If all seasons are not included, then don't have any seasonal pictures posted on your website.
- Include the following list of items on your website, as this seems to be the information that newcomers are looking for:
    - **Getting started** – items like the local utility provider, home phone providers, cable providers, internet providers, information about garbage collection and recycling
    - **Education** – include information on preschools/daycares, elementary schools, secondary schools, private schools, colleges/universities (if applicable)
    - **Health, Social & Emergency Services** – included would be information regarding hospitals, physicians' offices/clinics, dental offices/clinics, long-term care/nursing homes, other health care services – chiropractor/physiotherapists/naturopath/massage therapists etc.
    - **Social, Support and Wellness Services** – this would include information on not-for-profit organizations and for profit resources, service clubs, social support services like senior's centres, counselling services, community living etc., places of worship, foodbanks, early years centres/parenting centres
    - **Emergency Services** – this would include fire, ambulance, police and emphasize that 911 is the emergency number only and include administration numbers for emergency services

b. Website Checklist and Best Practices (Cont.)

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3. Products and Support For Prospective and New Residents

b) Website Checklist and Best Practices

- **Accessibility & Inclusion** – this would include services and buildings that are accessible
- **Downtown Information** – include what's downtown (maybe linked to a local business directory) and could include information on retail, other services, restaurants etc., and a link to the BIA or Chamber could also be included
- **Tourism/Entertainment/Recreation/Cultural** – this section could include information on B &B's, Inns, Motels/Hotels, campgrounds and other types of accommodations, events/festivals/concerts, recreation facilities, sports venues, entertainment options, cultural attractions, sports associations, recreation leagues (hockey, baseball, soccer, etc.)
- **Government Services** – Service Canada offices, Service Ontario offices and Municipal Office information

Great Ideas from Other Municipalities/Communities

- A section titled: How Do I? (with a drop down menu) – this lists information on garbage/recycling to information on local health care facilities
- List items alphabetically if someone is looking for information it's easier to find this way
- **Ensure that the information on your website is current and up to date**
- Ensure that contact information is included with listed organizations and resources
- **Consider a mobile friendly version of your website as many residents/visitors search for information on mobile devices**

b. Website Checklist and Best Practices (Cont.)

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4. How Can You Engage New Residents?

a) Connecting With New Residents – Getting Started

Communicating to New Residents

There are a number of avenues that can be used to find and communicate directly to new residents, and they include:

- Working with your employers to provide them with information and resources to include in orientation packages for new hire
- Using social media and buy and sell swap website to advertise events and activities
- Providing information packages and resources to local realtors
- Providing packages to new businesses opening in your community

Establishing a Welcoming Community Group

An important starting point in creating a welcoming community is identifying your community champions – individuals and organizations – who are interested in taking an active, leadership role in moving forward on welcoming community initiatives.

Launching a 'Welcoming Community Group' is a great start. It will allow the municipality to identify their community champions who are interested in volunteering their time to coordinate and organize events and activities. A Welcoming Community Group can:

- Gather resources and information that can be provided to new residents through realtors and employers. They can help you identify what type of information should be provided to new residents.
- Identify opportunities for stronger cultural connections by connecting new residents with cultural services including: translation services and connecting with others of the same cultural background etc.
- Provide one-on-one support- donating time to support new residents as community mentors
- Organize events and activities for new residents

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4. How Can You Engage New Residents?

a) Connecting With New Residents – Getting Started

Opening a Welcome Centre

A critical part of creating a Welcoming Community includes opening up our existing public assets to act as Welcome Centres. Identify a location in your community that serves as a 'Welcome Centre' where you equip these locations with information and resources for new residents; educating staff on how to guide/ support new residents and acting as a 'window in' to a community when a new resident arrives. These can include:

- Libraries
- Municipal administration centres
- Visitor centres

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4. How Can You Engage New Residents?
b) Activities & Events

There are a lot of great ways that communities within Bruce, Grey and Huron and across Canada currently engage new residents. There are opportunities to leverage existing success stories and tailor these ideas and recommendations to meet your community's needs.

These approaches can be led by municipalities, community organizations or a combination of interested organizations. We will only be successful if we work together. Tap into your community leaders, existing networks and champions to help ensure new residents feel welcome and become lasting members of your community.

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4. How Can You Engage New Residents?
b) Activities & Events

Community Information Nights

Host a 'tradeshow' style event bringing together various organizations to raise awareness of programs; services and offerings in the local community to help new residents better navigate and integrate into your community.

In addition to providing information to new residents, it is also a great networking opportunity for new residents to connect with other new residents.

This event could provide general information on programs and services in the community but you could also host targeted events including:

- Volunteer organizations (Volunteer Sign Up Day)
- Recreation programs (Municipal Leisure Tradeshow)
- Multicultural day

Best Practices:
Bruce County Libraries currently hosts municipal tradeshows in communities across Bruce County. It is an opportunity to familiarize new residents with programs and services and connect with other new residents.

Saugeen Shores and Brockton currently host tradeshows that provide an opportunity for all residents to sign up for activities and recreational programs. It is a great opportunity to learn about all of the programs available in their community.

Kincardine currently hosts a multicultural day that brings together various cultures in the community to showcase their culture. The event is a great opportunity to introduce your broader community to various cultures within your community

b. Activities & Events

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4. How Can You Engage New Residents?
b) Activities & Events

Targeted Demographic Events

There is an opportunity to host a series of events targeting various demographics at different locations around the community. Examples of these types of events include:

Young Professionals Creative Mixer: Targeting your under 35 new residents and providing an evening out event that can be hosted in a local restaurant; golf course; micro-brewery with music/ entertainment and food

Best Practices:
- Grey County hosted an event in Owen Sound that brought together young professionals in a relaxed; casual environment.
- Huron County started "Engage Goderich" an organization for younger professionals that offers social and networking opportunities on a regular basis.

Other demographic focused events can include:

Parents & Young Children: Targeting families with young children (under the age of 5).There is an opportunity to utilize EarlyON centres across the region; in libraries; in community centres

Parent's & School Aged Children: Hosting an event in a community centre; park to engage new residents with school aged children and can be promoted in the local schools.

Teen Nights: Hosting events for new teenagers in the area that can take place in a community centre and provide an opportunity to engage in activities during the event.

Although these events are identified as opportunities to engage new residents, there is also an opportunity to bring together existing residents with new residents in these types of forums to help create stronger connections and build relationships with the broader community.

b. Activities & Events (Cont.)

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4. How Can You Engage New Residents?
b)   Activities & Events

Business After Hours

With an increase in local residents, there is the potential for an increase in new business start-ups or expansions in our region. There is an opportunity to help new businesses integrate into the community and help support the integration of their new employees.
Business After Hours events are a great opportunity to connect the local Chamber of Commerce; Business Association or BIA to lead in organizing these events with their local businesses.

Best Practices:
- Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce currently hosts these events for their new members.
- The Organization for Canadian Nuclear Industries hosts "Tuesday Talks' for suppliers in the region – inviting new employees to mingle and learn about the local communities
- The South Huron Chamber of Commerce and the Huron Chamber of Commerce regularly hold business after 5pm events to highlight local businesses. The Municipality of Huron East has encouraged new businesses to start by offering a competition called "Win This Space" where the winner is offered free business mentorship.

b. Activities & Events (Cont.)

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4. How Can You Engage New Residents?
b) Activities & Events

Moving Forward

The New Resident Toolkit was developed to provide a framework for collaboration by identifying opportunities and ideas on ways that municipalities, and its community organizations, can engage new residents and create a welcoming environment that helps ensure that new residents are active community members and contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of the region.

Although designed for municipalities in Bruce, Grey and Huron Counties – it takes a community of interested organizations and individuals to collectively work together to achieve the goal of active and engaged residents.

Together we are stronger and will achieve great success in integrating new residents into our communities and create the right foundation for long term success in our region.

b. Activities & Events (Cont.)

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