

GRAND BEND & AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2018 annual report

Grand Bend & Area Chamber of Commerce

The Little Chamber That Does!

2018



1-81 CRESCENT ST., PO BOX 248, GRAND BEND, NOM 1T0

2018 annual report

THE LITTLE CHAMBER THAT DOES!

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CREDIBILITY, VISABILITY, OPPORTUNITY, COMMUNITY, AFFINITY

Since 1957, the Chamber has worked to support and promote local business. Incorporated in 1975 by George Kadlecik, Peter Haist and Donald Southcott, we're a small but active organization, averaging about 180 Members from the Greater Grand Bend Area, including Arkona, Forest, Grand Bend, Ipperwash, Port Franks, Thedford, Bayfield, Exeter, Goderich, Hensall, Kettle & Stony Point FN, St. Joseph, Zurich, Camlachie, Sarnia and all points in-between.



Chamber Member Deja Vudu Studio owner Lynn Lockhart.

Mission Statement

The objectives of the Grand Bend & Area Chamber of Commerce shall be to promote and improve trade and commerce; and the economic, civic and social welfare of the district served by the Chamber.

DIRECTORS, STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Chamber directors are VOLUNTEERS, and give their time, expertise, experience and personal network for the overall good of the Chamber, its Membership and the business community. The Board makes an effort to encourage Members running successful businesses and who are seen as positive, forward-thinking, community-minded individuals to step forward and make the Chamber as effective and relevant as possible.

BOARD EXECUTIVE

<p>Glen Baillie, President <i>Baillie's Picture Framing</i></p>	<p>Mary-Jo Schottroff-Snopko, Past-President <i>Pine Dale Motor Inn</i></p>	<p>Mark Lewis, Vice-President <i>Forever Furniture</i></p>
<p>Doug Pedlar, Secretary <i>RE/MAX Bluewater Real Estate</i></p>	<p>John Choma, Treasurer <i>BMO</i></p>	<p>Veronica Brennan, Director <i>Grog's / MacPherson's</i></p>

DIRECTORS



Mike Corrie, Director
Stone House Brewing Co.

Matt DeJong, Director
Green Bucks Dollar Store

Tina Hayter, Director
Midori Sushi Restaurant

Susan Mills, Manager

Volunteers L-R: Christine Bregman, Jane Girodat, Nadene & Pat Ballantyne

CHAIR & PRESIDENT'S REPORT



GLEN BAILLIE
PRESIDENT 2018-19

Hello Chamber Members

The Grand Bend Area is undergoing a massive change.

Our population is growing, business opportunities are arising and many, such as myself, are making choices which allow others the chance to step up and make investments that will benefit themselves and area residents for years to come.

The recent investments are varied and include artisanal brewing, winemaking, food processing, and other unique taste-oriented ventures. Our real estate sector is buoyed by condo developments, residential neighbourhood construction, and even exciting changes on our iconic Main Street West strip. Even the United Church is opening up into a community entertainment location.

Our challenges remain, as government at all levels finds it easy to ignore us, tucked away at the edge of two counties, two ridings and two municipalities. This has been highlighted by the work done by the county tourism board in introducing a new accommodation tax (Municipal Accommodation Tax). There was little if any communication with the proprietors, and any understanding of the rental market for cottages was only recently discovered. Our involvement in the file has hopefully resulted in a fair playing field and an increase in the professionalism of the cottage rental market.

I look forward to an ongoing role with the Chamber as Past President, and I firmly believe our area to be one of the most unique, enjoyable locations in which to live, invest, and thrive.

MANAGER'S REPORT



**SUSAN MILLS,
MANAGER**

As the manager for this small but active Chamber, every year seems a mad dash from one project to the next with little time for reflection. By the time I'm writing the annual report and working with the auditor, I'm always amazed we're able to accomplish as much as we do. The Chamber membership are very lucky to have an engaged board of directors who care about the members and the community. The directors are volunteers! It is their ongoing commitment, in time, energy and creativity that provides the scope of activities undertaken.

Mary-Jo Schottroff-Snopko will be retiring from the board this year as Glen Baillie steps into the past-president role. It has been a pleasure to work with Mary-Jo, who, despite managing the second-largest hotel in the area, always seems to say yes to new projects.

Her positive and energetic attitude and outlook have contributed much to the Chamber and the community and to representing this area on the county's tourism marketing board (Tourism Sarnia Lambton). Also retiring from the board this year is Vice President Mark Lewis. Mark joined the board in 2012 and has served as Vice President for 6 years. Mark brought years of Chamber governance and operational knowledge to the board, which increased our professionalism in how we approach and do things. He also resurrected the Chamber's golf tournament and for the first few years of the tournament single-handedly raised all the sponsorship while also being its annual chair.

In 2018, we increased the production quantity of IT STARTS AT THE BEACH visitor activities guide to 35,000 copies, as demand in 2017 was so great we almost ran out of copies to distribute before the new guide arrived. Each year this publication surpasses expectations and continues to improve. Benchmarking the guide against award-winning guides from the United States and other areas of Ontario, ensures we continue to produce a highly informative and attractive guide that succeeds because it meets the information needs of area visitors and in turn supports local advertisers. Again this year, we have added new and original content, keeping information fresh and relevant and in the magazine-style of today's guides. The Lambton Shores map, with the mapping of every Lambton Shores business of interest to a visitor and inclusion of hiking trails, continues to be a consistently requested visitor support piece. Downtown core maps of surrounding business hubs (Exeter, Bayfield, Zurich, Hensall), plus a regional map included in the guide is our commitment to border free and tourist-centric destination marketing. The guide and map are entirely supported by advertising dollars, which also enables us to provide 1,000 maps to the **Lambton Shores Nature Trailblazers (LSNT)** for their use at consumer trade shows and trail heads.

In addition to key print lure pieces, the year-round Welcome Centre provides a hub from which we respond to an average of 2,980 phone call inquiries, 2,878 in-person office visits, thousands of emails and individual requests for the mail out of the guide received through our website. Electronic marketing includes a monthly, **event-focused e-newsletter** distributed to 909 subscribers. The e-newsletter enjoys a high average open rate of 26% and a strong click-through rate of 8%. The travel industry average is a 20% open rate and a 2% click-through rate.

GrandBendTourism.com website traffic (we use Advanced Web Statistics) experienced an increase in unique visitors during 2018 with the site having 207,153 unique visitors in comparison to 2017 which had 170,969. At the beginning of 2018, as a means of increasing ease of access for mobile device users, a lot of content was moved to the homepage with links to key information on interior pages. This change may account for a decrease in the number of page views served during 2018 of 7.4-million page views versus 7.6-million page views in 2017. The busiest months continue to be July (40,626 unique visitors) and August (33,247 unique visitors). Google continues to be the highest referring search engine accounting for 77% of all referred web

traffic, followed by Direct¹ (18%), Referral² (4%), and Social Media (0.6%). Top referring websites other than Google and other search engines, include (1) OntarioTravel.net, (2) OntariosSouthWest.com, (3) Wikipedi.org, (4) BluewaterCottageRentals.com, (5) TodaysParent.com, (6) SeaJewels.ca, (7) DuckDuckGo.com, (8) ConstantContact.com (our tourism focused e-newsletter).

For those using a search term to find us, the vast majority (47%) searched using "grand bend" or some combination thereof, like "grand bend beach", "grand bend events", "grand bend ontario", "grand bend tourism" etc..

The number of users typing in our website address into their browser address bar increased by 35% over 2017. This could be interpreted as an increase in our brand awareness. As you might expect, most visitors to the website are using a mobile device - primarily a smartphone (51%) or tablet (9%) rather than desktop (40%). More than 60% of our visitors are women, aged 25-34 (28%), 35-44 (24%), 45-54 (19%), 55-64 (14%). From the homepage, visitors are most interested in the (1) Events, (2) places to Stay (3) FAQs, (4) the online Visitors Guide, (5) Beaches and (6) Shopping.

Daily, we post and share events, venue and business information on **Facebook.com/grandbendtourism**, following 64+ pages to share local news. All Facebook stats increased in 2018 in comparison to 2017.

- Lifetime total number of people who have liked our page: 492,021 unique users (2017: 179,077)
- Total "engaged" users in 2018: 338,189 unique users (2017: 226,672)
- Average monthly total post impressions: 45,742 unique users (2017: 36,639)
- Average monthly "organic" reach³: 6,039 unique users (2017: 5,335)
- Average daily total post impressions⁴: 1,739 unique users (2017: 1,322)
- Average monthly "engaged" users⁵: 1,010 unique users (2017: 751)

TREASURER'S REPORT



**JOHN CHOMA,
TREASURER**

The following report represents a synopsis of the information in the Audited Financial Statements, which are available to any Chamber Member at the Welcome Centre, by request or from the Members Only section of GrandBendChamber.ca.

Fiscal 2018 (November 1, 2017 to October 31, 2018) was again a challenging year in terms of containing costs and raising enough funds to cover those costs.

A positive on the fundraising side, we had a few new sponsorship levels for the golf tournament which enabled us to generate just over \$2k more revenue, simultaneously tournament costs increased, reducing net fundraising results by \$968 in comparison to 2017's tournament. The 2018 awards dinner (held November 2017) generated \$6,587 in ticket sales, sponsorship and silent auction bids and cost us \$4,336 to run, netting \$2,251. A significant improvement over the previous year's net loss. It seemed what we gained on one

¹ **Direct:** Means a person typed in grandbendtourism.com into their browser's address bar.

² **Referral:** Means someone clicked a link on another website that took them to grandbendtourism.com

³ **Number of people** who had any content from our Page or about our Page enter their FB screen. Includes posts, check-ins, social information from people who interact with our Page and more. Includes those who like and have not liked the page.

⁴ The **number of times** any content from our Page or about our Page entered a person's screen. This includes posts, check-ins, ads, social information from people who interact with our Page and more.

⁵ The number of **people who engaged** with our Page. Engagement includes any click or story created. (Unique Users)

project, we lost on another and yet the overall result of an operational deficit of \$1,081 was an improvement over last year's \$2,088 deficit.

While the completion of upgrading the Welcome Centre's light fixtures was completed early in the year, the fireplace requiring a major overhaul and repair presented a significant and unexpected cost, tipping the repairs and maintenance expenses upward to \$2,483, well beyond the originally budgeted \$518.

Government wage grants for summer staff offered another challenge. The federal Canada Summer Jobs program typically provides just under \$6k towards paying a student, combined with the provincial Summer Experience Program grant we are able to hire two students. However, the federal grant was reduced by about \$2k. The net effect of this funding reduction - and the increase in Ontario's minimum wage - was to limit our hiring ability to one student. We can no longer rely on funding consistency when planning summer staffing levels for the Welcome Centre. For the second consecutive year, Tourism & Visitor Services costs exceeded our fundraising ability and despite a healthy net result from Member Services programs and activities of \$13k, we were not able to cover the \$14k operational deficit of providing those Tourism & Visitor Services.

We ended fiscal 2018 and entered fiscal 2019 with \$63,967 in the bank, with an additional \$51k in receivables, \$10k of prepaid 2019 expenses and an overpayment of 2018 HST in the amount of \$2k. On the flip-side, we had only \$6k of current liabilities (\$6,150 accounts payable, \$57 in employee deductions payable) and \$113k of deferred 2019 income.

Overall revenue from all sources - membership programs and services (membership fees, golf tournament fees, passport sales and sponsorship, web listing upgrades, advertising fees, event sponsorships, silent auction bids and group benefits program residuals), including municipal support for tourism services (\$18k) and federal and provincial wage grants (\$7k) provided \$179,578.

Once again, the visitor guide was the largest contributing factor (\$80k). Sales increased again in 2018.

Although revenue increased slightly (+\$1k), the cost of generating that revenue (cost of sales) remained fairly consistent. The Chamber's gross profit of \$84,714 represents a 47.17% gross margin, meaning after the costs involved of generating revenue are accounted for, we are left with 47.17 cents to cover basic operating costs like insurance, bank charges, wages, utilities, repairs and office supplies etc. The higher the gross profit percentage, the healthier the business. This one percentage point more than in 2017 represents an improvement.

Most operational costs increased with a few exceptions like advertising, marketing and promotion, office supplies, travel or mileage and utilities.

Advertising, marketing and promotion: This cost refers to non-monetary exchanges⁶ with partner organizations. We have partner agreements in place with Drayton Entertainment (\$1,110), Pine Dale Motor Inn (\$600) and the Grand Bend Holiday Home Tour (\$300), whereby they provide us with a product or service of equal value to their ads in our visitor guide. With Drayton Entertainment, we have a quarter page ad in their playbill; with Pine Dale Motor Inn we have a year's worth of meetings hosted at no-charge; and with Grand Bend Holiday Home Tour we have an ad in their tour booklet.

⁶ **Non-monetary exchanges:** the exchange of goods/services for a non-cash exchange. Value must be recognized and recorded at fair value.

Travel, meetings and conventions: We were able to reduce this expense to just \$531 (a \$550 decrease compared to 2017), by recovering the HST paid on mileage reimbursement to staff and volunteers.

Most increases were related to fairly mundane expenses, such as:

- Insurance - Property and Director Liability insurance,
- Interest and bank charges - PayPal transaction fees (we don't pay fees on our TD Canada Trust account),
- Memberships - the amount we collect and remit to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce,
- Professional Fees - costs of the annual audit, bookkeeping assistance, the preparation and submission of the corporate tax return and preparing the T4s, and
- Salaries & Wages - the slight increase of \$323 is related to an alteration in the Chamber's benefits plan.

Bad debt: Increased to \$1,429, an almost \$1,200 increase over 2017. Despite the best efforts of our manager, we do experience situations where we've provided a service or product and don't get paid. Of the \$1,429 - \$430 was a visitor guide ad and \$999 were unpaid tickets and sponsorships. Happily, none of our Members are responsible for this bad debt.

Member Services vs. Tourism Services

Across Ontario, Tourism & Visitor Services are provided and funded by government and government agencies. In this area we have a slightly different situation. Tourism & Visitor Services in Lambton Shores is provided by a partnership between the Chamber and the Municipality of Lambton Shores. Originally formed in 2000, this partnership is somewhat unequal in that the Chamber takes on a much greater share of the financial burden.

In addition to taking on 50% of the administrative costs associated with the Welcome Centre's operations, the Chamber also covers the difference between the revenue received from the Municipality of Lambton Shores in support of Tourism & Visitor Services⁷ (\$18k) and the actual costs of providing those services.

In 2018, the tourism function (visitor guide, student wage grants and municipal support) generated \$28,464 of gross profit. When the allocation of the shared expenses related to the support activity of generating that gross profit and providing the non-revenue generating activities (responding to inquiries, operating the welcome centre, promoting events, mailing out tourist information, maintaining tourist-focused website, area tourism advocacy) is applied - an amount of \$42,613 (\$42,183 + \$430 bad debt) - the result is a net loss of \$14,149.

The Chamber relies on member programs and services and fundraising to provide net revenue to cover that annual Tourism & Visitor Services net loss, however program and services net revenue (\$13,069) was not enough, resulting in an overall net deficit of \$1,081.

⁷ **Tourism & Visitor Services** include: Visitor Guide, Map of Lambton Shores, GrandBendTourism.com, Marketing & Advertising, Facebook & Twitter, Advocacy with TSL, SWOTC & Municipality, respond to media inquiries & requests, submit events to OntarioTravel.net, FestivalsandEventsOntario.com., TourismSarniaLambton.com, OntariosWestCoast.ca, staffing and maintaining year-round welcome centre, respond to tourists and event planners by phone, email and in-person, mail tourist information packages, outdoor community bulletin board and map board.

Two consecutive years of deficits have reduced the Chamber's retained earnings or net assets to \$8,496. As a result, the Board has informed the membership that fees will increase for all members starting with the 2020 membership year and immediately for any new members in 2019. As well, we submitted a request for increased support from the Municipality of Lambton Shores in time for their budget meeting and at the time of writing this report it is the Chamber's understanding the municipality will provide \$24k towards the cost of Tourism & Visitor Services in 2019 - an increase of \$6k (25%).

We encourage all members to read the audited financial statements carefully and to form an understanding of how our small Chamber provides events, workshops, advertising opportunities, affinity programs and advocacy, and manages to operate a year-round welcome centre and produce the area's primary marketing tools (visitor guide; tourist focused website), all while keeping membership fees budget friendly.

Special thanks to Shawn Fitzsimmons of The Fisher Corporation for the preparation and review of our financial documents and production of the audited Financial Statements.

Revenues & Expenses

Revenues and expenses in the audited Financial Statements includes a combined Chamber Services and Tourism Services summary entitled "Statement of Revenues and Expenditures" on pages 5-6. For standalone statements for Chamber Services see page 11 and for Tourism Services see page 10.

Chamber Member Services Revenue

\$74,013: The Chamber's REVENUE from programs and services (page 11 of audited financial statements):

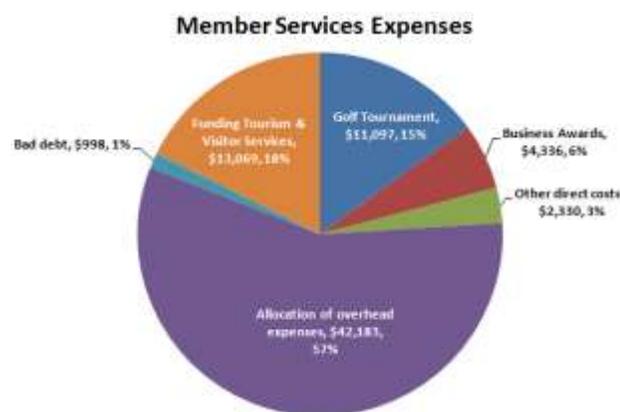
- Business Awards (\$6,587/8%): ticket sales and sponsorship (\$4,018/5%); silent auction bids, listed as donations (\$2,569/3%).
- Golf Tournament (\$15,549/21%): team fees, passport sales, sponsorships.
- Membership dues (\$33,125/45%)
- Weblinks & Upgraded web listings (\$9,356/13%): from GrandBendTourism.com.
- Other revenue (\$9,396/13%): Message Centre Board ads, tickets, sponsorships, workshop fees, group insurance referrals.
- Interest income (\$0/0%)



Chamber Member Services Expenses

\$17,763: COST OF SALES to provide member programs and services:

- Business awards (\$4,336/6%)
- Golf tournament (\$11,097/15%)
- Other direct costs (\$2,330/3%): mixers, mayor's breakfast, websites, McLaren Award, commission, Poppy Fund donation etc.
- Funding of Tourism & Visitor Services (\$13,069/18%):



over and above the general allocation of overhead expenses

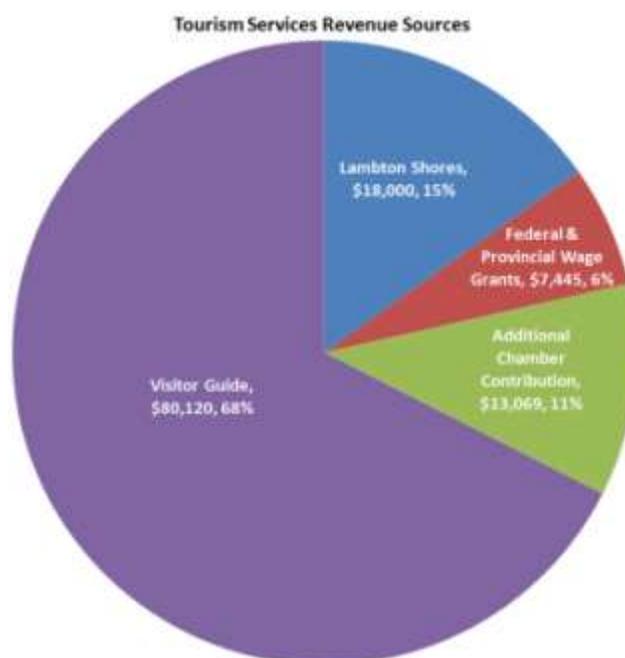
- Bad Debt (\$998/1%)
- Allocation of Overhead Expenses (\$42,183/57%)

Tourism & Visitor Services Revenue

Throughout Ontario, Tourism & Visitor Services are funded by government (federal, provincial and municipal). Although the Municipality of Lambton Shores contributes more than \$70k to Tourism Sarnia Lambton through the County's levy, funding of local efforts that promote Lambton Shores and provides visitor services to this area were \$18k.

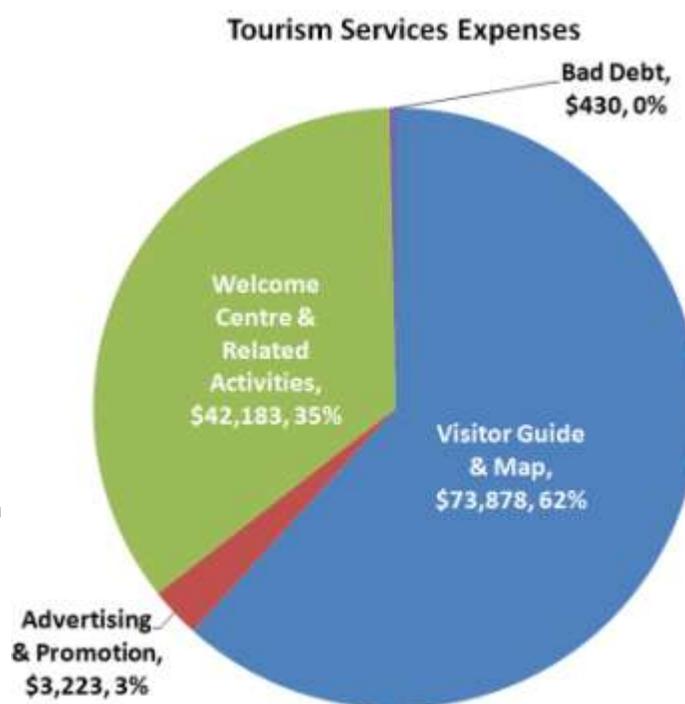
\$105,565 + \$13,069: REVENUE comes from federal and provincial wage grants, municipal support, visitor guide ad sales and a cash contribution from the Chamber's Member Services net revenue:

- Wage Grants (\$7,445/6%): federal (\$3,787) and provincial (\$3,658)
- Municipal Support for Tourism Services (\$18k/15%)
- Chamber's cash contribution to Tourism Services (\$13,069/11%)
- Visitor Guide Ad Sales (\$80,120/68%)



Tourism & Visitor Services Expenses

- **\$77,101 + \$42,613:** In 2018, the Chamber provided Lambton Shores with:
- Visitor Guide & Map (\$73,878/62%): 136-page, full-colour, magazine-sized guide distributed to 198+ locations in Ontario, including provincial Tourism Information Centres, Ontario Travel Centres, Tourist Information Outlets, museums, theatres, libraries, gas stations, hotels/motels, restaurants, retailers, attractions and other business locations in Lambton Shores, Bluewater, South Huron and Goderich. About 4,000 copies handed-out at the Welcome Centre.
- Advertising (\$3,223/3%): No-cost ad exchange in Drayton Entertainment Playbill, no-cost event submissions to FestivalsAndEventsOntario.com, OntarioTravel.net and London Free Press, no-cost service-exchange with Chamber Members Bayshore Broadcasting.



Costs included in the "Allocation of overhead expenses"

- Digital & Web Advertising: GrandBendTourism.com, Merchant Street Mapping, Facebook, Twitter, monthly tourist e-Newsletter, 17 domain name registrations.
- Tourism Event Attendance: i.e. Ontario's South West Conference.
- Area Representation & Advocacy: Represent Lambton Shores' tourism industry – on the board of directors for Tourism Sarnia Lambton, meetings and work with Southwestern Ontario Tourism Corporation (SWOTC) and Regional Tourism Organization 4 (Huron, Perth, Waterloo & Wellington).
- Year-Round Welcome Centre (\$42,183/35%): Welcome Centre handles 11,000+ inquiries annually (phone, email, in-person). Maintenance, staffing and operation of the year-round Welcome Centre.
- Bad Debt (\$430/0%): unpaid invoices related to the visitor guide.
- In-kind Support: to local event organizers (including Paint Ontario, Grand Bend Studio Tour, BeachFest, Summer Sunset Sounds, Canada Day, Holiday Home Tour, Rotary Community Stage Opening, Light Up Grand Bend, etc.).

NOMINATIONS REPORT 2018

Over the past several years, the Nominations Committee has evaluated the suitability of potential directors based on several criteria: the industry sector in the local economy the potential director represents; the person's individual experience and skill-sets; and the person's reputation for being positive, forward-thinking and community-minded.

Current President Glen Baillie will be moving into the Past President role, while current Past President Mary-Jo Schottruff-Snopko will be retiring from the Board. Mary-Jo joined the Board in 2013 and has been a valuable member, always willing to take on a project and provide space for board meetings, she is also a founding member of the Jingle Bell Group and driving force behind ensuring the town looks festive and open-for-business in winter months. Mary-Jo also represents Lambton Shores on the Board of Directors for Tourism Sarnia Lambton.

Mark Lewis, who joined the Board of Directors for the 2012 fiscal year and has served in the role of Vice President for 6 years, will also be retiring from the Board. The Board thanks Mark for his years of Chamber governance and operational knowledge that he brought to our Chamber, and his resurrection of the Chamber's golf tournament and annual chairing of that event brought in much needed funds. Mark also helped emcee Chamber and community events throughout the year.

As part of the electronic AGM package emailed on Friday, November 30, 2018 to all members, director nomination forms were included. The email announced the beginning of the nomination period from that day through to January 28, 2019. This provides a nomination period of at least 45 days (actually 72 days), closing 30 days prior to the Annual General Meeting (February 26, 2019), as required by the Chamber's Bylaws.

The Board was looking to recruit two directors. The Chamber received nominations for Neil Clifford (MyFM 90.5 Exeter/Grand Bend) and Jeff Pacheco (Oakwood Resort).

Neil Clifford previously served as director from 2012 to 2015. With three years of Board experience under his belt, we are happy to welcome Neil back. Neil is General Manager for myFM Radio 90.5 Exeter and Grand Bend, and many will recall prior to that he was the long time publisher of the Lakeshore Advance. Neil will be joining the Board as the sole media industry representative. Neil's extensive knowledge of the area's businesses and their owners will provide valuable insight to the Board.

Jeff Pacheco joined Oakwood Resort as Director of Sales in 2018. As the "sales guy", he's responsible for sales and marketing, revenue management, advertising and promotion, awareness campaigns and customer relationship management. Jeff has more than 20 years experience in hospitality sales for major brands, including the Westmont Hospitality group, one of the world's largest hospitality companies. Apart from experience in Westmont's national sports market, he's also worked at the Station Park Hotel and Delta London Armouries in London. Jeff will be the Board's sole accommodation industry representative.

We are also pleased to announce that all other current directors have agreed to return for the 2019 year.

Your 2019 Board of Directors:

- Glen Baillie (Baillie's Picture Framing / manufacturing),
- Veronica Brennan (Grog's & MacPherson's / restaurant),
- John Choma (BMO / banking & financial),
- Mike Corrie (Stone House Brewing Company / craft brewery)
- Matt DeJong (Green Bucks Dollar Store / retail),
- Doug Pedlar (Re/Max Bluewater Realty / real estate),
- Tina Hayter (Midori Sushi / restaurant),
- Jeff Pacheco (Oakwood Resort / accommodation) and
- Neil Clifford (myFM 90.5 / media).

Board Directors are VOLUNTEERS and give freely of their time and expertise to provide leadership to the Chamber in its efforts to support and improve the local business community.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At the end of 2018, the Chamber had 188 Members (of which 11 are add-on businesses⁸), this represents a *net increase* of 7 Members over the 2017 year. Member businesses that joined in 2018 include:

- Penny Brookshaw - Coastline Business Solutions
- Laura Rideout & Shannon Shurgold - Culture Shock Kombucha
- Lynn Lockhart & Fernando Fornelos - Deja Vudu Studio
- Karen Marcoux - Esthetics by Karen
- Ryan Sharpe - Grand Bend Fishing Charters
- John Dehondt & Andrew Spriet - Grand Bend Gym
- Lee Marcoux - Grand Bend Parasail
- Linda Tilson - Paddington's Pub
- Patrick Dale - Patrick Dale Business Services Corporation
- Dee Niergarth & Paul Nenos - Pinewood Motel
- Justin Konikow & Shannon Grogan - PRIME Real Estate Brokerage

⁸ **Add-On Business:** Members who list an additional owned/operated business with their primary business.

- Tena McKay & Steve Riddell - Sutton Group - Small Town Team Realty Inc.
- Peter Broeders - The Iron Barn
- Guy, Chris & Monica Pritchard - Tim Horton's (Grand Bend & Parkhill)
- Allen Stubbs - Widder Station Golf & Country Club

Member Business Demographics in 2018

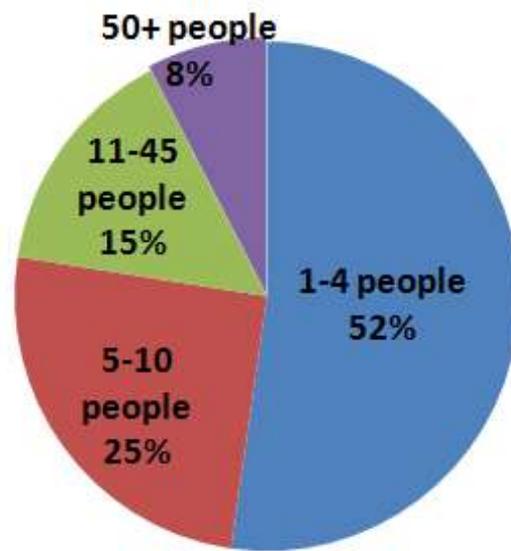
The majority of our Membership is consistently comprised of small, independently owned and operated businesses with between one and four employees (i.e. self-employed plus one or two others).

Since 2013, the percentage has been fairly consistent ranging from 78% in 2013 to 81% in 2016. In 2017, the percentage this group represented dropped to 51% and this year, at a percentage of the membership base of 52%, that trend is holding.

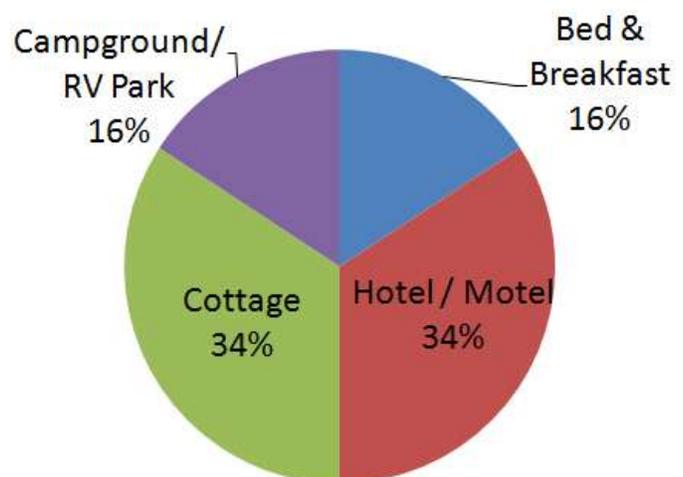
In 2017, the 5-10 employees group grew to 24% and in 2018 this percentage remains consistent at 25%. In 2017, the 11-45 employees group almost doubled to 14% and again in 2018 that figure is consistent at 15%. The largest group, the 50+ employees represented 11% of member businesses in 2017 and dropped to 8% in 2018.

The breakdown of accommodation type could likely be predicted in that cottage owners as a group equal in number the hotel/motel group, both at 34% of the accommodation member base. In 2017, the bed and breakfast group was 15% of accommodation providers and campground/RV parks 12% - that's changed now with both of these types on equal basis at 16% (6 members each). Campgrounds and bed & breakfast groups have seen addition and attrition during 2018 with owners retiring and campgrounds selling to new owners who have not yet joined the Chamber.

Membership by Business Size



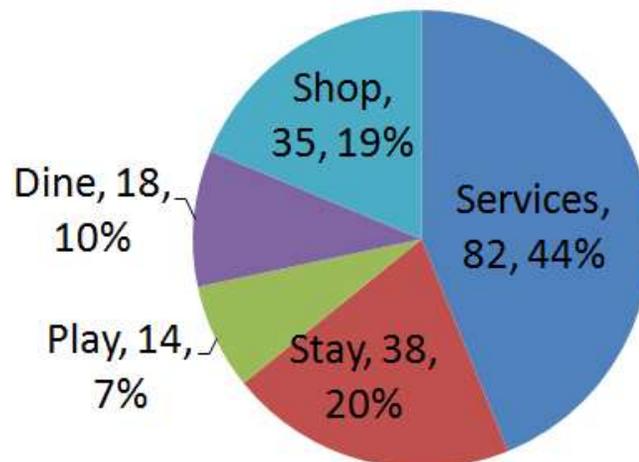
Accommodation Provider by Type



Consistent with previous years, the largest business category for our Chamber remains the "Services" sector (44%) - up one percent over 2017. Retail, dining and "play" member groups have all increased in number of members, although their relative percentages remain consistent over previous years.

Of the Services sector, the overwhelming majority are real estate brokerages (14%), followed by banking & financial (11%), and construction (6%). Tied for fifth place are "health and medical" (5%) members and "marketing, advertising, and business development" businesses (5%).

Membership by Business Type



2018 HIGHLIGHTS

Tourism Development & Partnerships

For the first time, Drayton Entertainment extended their performance season to include the full month of September. This is something area residents and businesses alike have desired for many years. Beginning in October Southwestern Tourism Corporation (SWTC) and Drayton Entertainment discussed opportunities, means and methods of involving local businesses in supporting and leveraging the season extension. Meetings were held February, March and April with stakeholders and local businesses interested in participating in the program. As a result of those meetings, the Fall Into Broadway campaign was launched to tie in with Drayton's Canadian premier of *White Christmas*. Each participating business was to develop an "encore experience" and provide a prize as part of the visitor incentive component. This project provided the Chamber, SWOTC, the Municipality of Lambton Shores and Drayton Entertainment an opportunity to work as a team. All the business encore experience information was handed off to the Chamber for copy development by manager Susan Mills. In turn Lisa Brown from the municipality created the artwork, which consisted of a rack card backed fold-out map showing all of the encore experience locations with descriptions, pricing and prizes. The Chamber developed a campaign landing page on GrandBendTourism.com that mirrored a similar landing page on Drayton's website. Prize entry ballot boxes and promo materials were provided to every encore experience or prize provider. As participants visited the various encore experience



businesses and venues, their rack card was punch-holed or initialed and they could submit their prize contest entry by mail, in person or online. Prize winners were notified and prizes awarded in November. Feedback from participants was very positive and several mentioned they would love to see this done again.

For the marketing stakeholders, such as the Chamber, SWOTC and the Municipality - working together on a project was a positive experience, although the campaign development and production of the supporting materials proved that future similar projects would need to begin much earlier in order to provide the type of campaign time to truly make an activity of this nature take off. Encore experience providers would need to solidify their experience and pricing six months ahead of the theatre season opening in order for marketing materials to be designed, produced and distributed by a timeline that provided sufficient campaign awareness time.

In March, Chamber Manager Susan Mills attended SWOTC's annual tourism conference, this time held in Leamington, Ontario. A report was provided to the Board of Directors. If interested, you can download the manager's notes from the grandbendchamber.ca website (members forum under "Other Documents"). In brief, the message stressed experiential travel is now, so layer it in to your business and instead of struggling to promote yourself have your customers do it for you. Provide the "stage" - a package experience, an event etc., and encourage social media participation. Your customers get to create your social media content. Other trends noted, millennials are 25% of the population and will increase in size dramatically over the next 5 years as the Boomer group decreases. Millennials have affected and will continue to effect change across all product and service categories and how we market.

As a regional tourism organization, SWOTC does a lot of work behind the scenes in supporting local tourism groups - such as the Chamber. Once again, SWOTC has been instrumental in supporting Summer Sunset Sounds, BeachFest and the Huron Shores Transit initiative. We look forward to working with their team in 2019.

Tourism Sarnia Lambton (TSL), the official tourism marketing organization for Lambton County provided two workshops within Lambton Shores in 2018: Is Your Business Motorcoach Friendly (April 9) and a Customer Service Workshop (April 16) in collaboration with Sarnia Lambton Business Development Corporation (SLBDC).

Professional Development

Working with the Community Employment Services group based out of Lambton College and community partner Oakwood Resort, a job fair was organized for Friday, April 6. In attendance were more than 20 employers with 100 jobs to fill. Unfortunately, candidate turn-out was not as great as expected and it is believed this is due in large part to the event being held on a Friday instead of Saturday, especially when the goal was to reach summer students and seasonal candidates. This all-employer job fair was the first to be hosted in Grand Bend in almost 10 years.

Almost daily it seems, TV news reports on a hacked business with personal data now possibly in the hands of would be criminals. Increased use and acceptance of convenient Internet-based financial transactions has given rise to means and methods by which the morally bankrupt take advantage of unsuspecting citizens. From large corporate data breaches, hacked personal accounts, iTunes gift card and Western Union scams, identify theft, continuity scams, enterprise fee schemes, lottery or prize scams, fake charities, romance/catphishing scams, advance fee and overpayment scams, shipping/re-routing/re-shipping scams,

subscription traps, spoofed websites, fake online endorsements/astroturfing, binary options scams, curbbers, Insta-scam, pretender scam, to threats and extortion over your hijacked computer - there seem to be cyber crooks lurking virtually everywhere.

In collaboration with the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, a Fraud Awareness & Prevention day was organized for April 19. Guest speakers included Brock Godfrey (Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre), Manny Parreira (Bank of Canada), Dennis Kuriakose (Bank of Montreal's Fraud Prevention), Gayle Gray (Canada Post's Anti Fraud Team), Cynthia Cook (Crime Stoppers), the Canadian Mint and Tracy Rogers (It's Not Right/Elder Abuse Prevention) with guest appearances by our own Chris Thompson (TD Canada Trust), John Choma (Bank of Montreal and Nancy Starek (RBC Dominion Securities).

Despite the amount of immediately helpful information provided, this event was the lowest attended we've ever organized. Press releases were sent and used by local media. Our manager did two interviews with local radio (myFM 90.5, 104.9 Country), and the usual means of promotion were employed (print ads in local papers, flyers, emails to members, municipal signs, web ads, facebook posts and event etc.).



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Events 2018

The Chamber strives to deliver great networking and business development opportunities.

In 2018, the Chamber hosted **6** Member events (same as 2017; 11 in 2016) with more than **307** attendees (266 in 2017; 329 in 2016).

February

- Breakfast with the Mayor (Feb. 13, 2018) – Oakwood Resort, sponsored by Community Employment Services - Lambton College
- Annual General Meeting (Feb. 27, 2018) – Grand Bend Legion

April

- Members Mixer (April 5, 2018) – Grog's Pub & Grill, sponsored by Stonehouse Brewing Company

September

- Annual Fall Classic Golf Tournament (Sept. 12, 2018) – Widder Station Golf & Country Club

October

- Members' Mixer (October 12, 2018) – Willie's Beach Bar sponsored by Sarnia Lambton Business Development and Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership

November - 2018

- Celebrate the Season Awards Dinner (November 2018) – Hessenland Country Inn

RECOGNITION & CELEBRATION

Celebrate the Season Awards Dinner

Through our annual awards dinner we celebrate and recognize excellence in initiative, innovation, marketing, research and development, increased sales, environmental consciousness, customer service and contribution to our community.

While we realize this is a bit confusing, the information below is for the Celebrate the Season event that took place November 2018, which actually takes place in our fiscal 2019 year. However, the financial results reported for this event in this fiscal 2018 financials are for the November 2017 event.

The November 2018 business awards dinner was held at Hessenland Country Inn.

2018 Award Recipients were:

- Entrepreneur of the Year: **Laura Rideout** and **Shannon Shurgold**, Culture Shock Kombucha
- Business of the Year: **The Growling Gator / Willie's Beach Bar**, the Karamoutzos family of Sam Karamoutzos, and sons Valante and Frankie
- David Scatcherd Community Spirit Award: **Jane & John Musser, Judy & Larry Mason** and **Bonnie & Mike McCann**, The Colonial Hotel / Gables in the Bend
- Phyllis Statchuk Customer Service Excellence Award: **Leo Ducharme**, Oakwood Resort



Director Mary-Jo presents award to Laura Rideout & Shannon Shurgold, Culture Shock Kombucha



Director Doug Pedlar presents award to Sam, Valante & Nick Karamoutzos, Growling Gator / Willie's Beach Bar



President Glen Baillie presents award to Leo Ducharme, Oakwood Resort



Colin Scatcherd presents award to Larry & Judy Mason

Fall Classic Golf Tournament

Since re-launching the annual fundraising golf tournament in 2013, we've had perfect weather each time!

This year we had 74 golfers who competed to win the team trophy. Thank you to all the sponsors and golfers for making this event a favourite and fundraising success.

- **Winning Team:** For the second year in a row, the coveted top team title with a score of 62 (par 72) went to the "The Fairway Ninjas" team of Blair Bressette, Austin Bressette, Carmen Rogers and Kyle Lewis.
- **Ladies Longest Drive:** Carol Stuckless (Straightline Auto) and Danielle Allen (Team Who's Your Caddy)
- **Men's Longest Drive:** Joe Clifford (Team Lords of the Pin) and Jeff Pacheco (Oakwood Resort)
- **Closest to the Pin:** Ron Plasschaert (RPM Promotions); Andrea Joad (Team Who's Your Caddy)
- **Closest to the Rope:** Garrett Pedlar (Re/Max Bluewater Realty)



Carol Stuckless
Ladies' Longest Drive



Danielle Allen
Ladies' Longest Drive



Ron Plasschaert
Mens' Closest-to-the-Pin



Joe Clifford
Men's Longest Drive



Jeff Pacheco
Men's Longest Drive



Garrett Pedlar won
Closest-to-the-Rope

L to R: Director Mark Lewis with the Ninjas Kyle Lewis, Carmen Rogers, Blair Bressette & Austin Bressette.



Andrea Joad
Ladies' Closest-to-the-Pin



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

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 Lambton College
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 Kazwear
 Kiwanis Kineto Theatre
 MacDermid & Assoc./ Co-op Ins.
 MacPherson's Restaurant
 Mainstreet Credit Union
 McGee Motors
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 Equipment
 Mike & Terri's No Frills
 Mitchell & Pearce, Chartered
 Accountants
 Oakwood Resort
 Paint Ontario
 Perfect Image Studio
 Pine Dale Motor Inn
 Re/Max Bluewater Realty
 Rice Corporation
 Rock Glen Family Resort
 Rotary Club of Grand Bend
 Sarnia Lambton Business
 Development Corporation
 Sarnia Lambton Economic
 Partnership
 Sobey's of Grand Bend
 Southwest Marine Services
 Stone House Brewing Co.

Sutton Group - Small Town Team
 Realty Inc
 TD Canada Trust
 The Ashwood Inn
 Tim Hortons - Grand Bend
 Track 21 Graphix
 Youmens Starek Hill Wealth
 Management Team
**MEMBERS REPRESENTED BY GOLF
 TEAMS**
 Grog's Pub & Grill
 MacPherson's Restaurant
 Growling Gator
 Hay Mutual
 MacDermid & Assoc./ Co-op Ins.
 Mitchell & Pearce, Chartered
 Accountants
 MyFM 90.5 Exeter/Grand Bend
 Oakwood Resort
 Re/Max Bluewater Realty
 RPM Promotions
 Straightline Collision
 The Swag Guy
 Tri-County Tree Service
TOURNAMENT VOLUNTEERS
 Kylie Beattie
 Christine Bregman
 Laura Connolly
 Jane Girodat
 Tina Hawkins
 Lynda Hillman-Rapley
 Colin Mills
**SILENT AUCTION & PRIZE TABLE
 DONATORS**
 A Grand Hideaway Bed &
 Breakfast
 Aunt Gussie's Country Dining
 Bad Apple Brewing Company
 Baillie's Picture Framing
 Bill Weber
 Bluewater Cottage Rentals
 Bluewater Motel
 Bob Case Plumbing & Heating
 Bonnie Doone Manor-on-the-Beach
 Casual Industries
 Community Employment Services,
 Lambton College
 Constellation Brands
 Cowbell Brewing Company
 Culture Shock Kombucha
 Dale's Antique Market
 Deja Vudu Studio
 Denny's Drive-In
 Drayton Entertainment
 F.I.N.E. A Restaurant

Forever Furniture
 Gaiser Elliott Insurance/Thames
 Financial
 Gift of Art / Foodies
 Grand Bend Dental & Health
 Centre
 Grand Bend Gym
 Grand Bend Motorplex
 Grand Bend Riverfront Condo
 Green Bucks Dollar Store
 Grog's Pub & Grill
 Hansen's Independent
 Hardt of Huron Bed & Breakfast
 Hayter's Turkey Products
 Hessenland Inn & Schatz Winery
 Home Hardware Building Centre
 In Focus Eyecare
 Kazwear Swimwear
 MacPherson's Restaurant
 McCann Redi-Mix
 McDonalds (Exeter)
 McGee's Motors
 McKay & Riddell Real Estate
 MicroAge Basics
 Midori Sushi Restaurant
 Mike & Terri's No Frills
 myFM Broadcasting / 90.5
 Oakwood Resort
 Pawsitively Purrfect
 Peckitt's Men's Wear
 Pine Dale Motor Inn
 Pinery Market
 Pizza Delight (Grand Bend)
 Prosper's Garage
 Re/Max Bluewater Realty
 Riverbend Pizzeria
 Robert Q Grand Travel & Cruise
 RPM Promotions
 Sea Jewels
 Sobeys (Grand Bend)
 Stone House Brewing Co.
 Straightline Collision
 Sylvan Kitchen & Baths
 The Colonial Hotel/Gables
 The Garden Gate Gifts & Florals
 The Growling Gator
 The Whole Pig
 Tim Horton's (Grand Bend)
 Turnbull Plumbing & Electric Inc
 Ultra Panel Systems
 Vreni Beeler
 Westland Green Houses
 White Squirrel Golf Club
 Widder Station Golf Club