



## REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Initiatives

**DATE:** September 19, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Request for Support – Elgin Business Resource Centre for “The Pitch”

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### RECOMMENDATION:

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THAT Elgin County Economic Development sponsor the Elgin Business Resource Centre’s annual business competition “The Pitch” in the amount of \$1,000.

### INTRODUCTION:

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"The Pitch" is an annual Dragons' Den-Style business plan competition hosted by the Elgin Business Resource Centre (EBRC). The Pitch features five (5) local businesses or aspiring entrepreneurs who compete for a grand prize package, including cash and in-kind prizes, to support their ventures. The competition is open to businesses in Elgin County and St. Thomas. Applicants must submit their business plans to the EBRC, and the plans are reviewed and evaluated by staff who select the finalists.

### BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

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The competition features five (5) finalists, who present their business plans to a live audience and field questions from a panel of four (4) judges. The grand prize winner is determined through voting by the judges. The competition takes place live and welcomes a diverse audience, including EBRC staff, Board of Directors, local businesses, the general public, media representatives, and family and friends of the finalists. Finalists are tasked with delivering presentations and crafting a one-page executive summary for the judges.

Prizes, including cash and in-kind contributions, are awarded to the grand prize winner and the remaining four (4) finalists, with the specifics of the prize package disclosed at the finale, alongside the names of the sponsors.

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**Past winners are:**

- 2015 Sarah Foshay, Smart Dental Hygiene (Aylmer)
- 2016 Ryan and Krista Harris, Century Chocolates (West Lorne)
- 2017 Jane and Chuck Magri, Wildflowers Tea (Central Elgin)
- 2018 Doris and Gabriel Chordekar, Shebaz’s Shawarma (Central Elgin)
- 2019 Maria Fiallos Castillo, Streamliners Espresso Bar (St. Thomas)  
TimberNook Elgin (Southwold)
- 2022 Markus Hawco, The Ice Box (St. Thomas)
- 2023 Tanya Buttinger, Dogs on 3 (Southwold)

“The Pitch” returns on Wednesday January 24, 2024 for its 8<sup>th</sup> annual event. The EBRC is seeking support from sponsors to help with the prize package. Elgin County Economic Development has supported this event in the past with a contribution of \$1,000 towards the prize package. The EBRC’s goal this year is to raise \$35,000 (\$25,000 cash; \$10,000 in-kind) for the prize package. The Sponsorship Proposal Package is attached to this report.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Economic Development has a budget for special events and projects, and the event sponsorship would be contained as part of this budget.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Serving Elgin	Growing Elgin	Investing in Elgin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enhancing quality of place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to deliver programs and services now and in the future.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.</li> </ul>

**Additional Comments:** The Elgin County Economic Development and Tourism Strategy also identifies leveraging current partnerships and building new partnerships to promote sustainable economic growth in Elgin County as a priority.



### **LOCAL MUNICIPAL PARTNER IMPACT:**

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"The Pitch" is open to businesses in all Local Municipalities, and six (6) winners in the past seven (7) years have been from the County.

### **COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

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Elgin County Economic Development will help promote the competition to the local entrepreneurs.

### **CONCLUSION:**

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"The Pitch" is a great opportunity for businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in Elgin County and St. Thomas to expand their businesses. It is a platform where innovation meets exposure, and the competition not only assists businesses in developing their plans but also provides a stage for them to gain invaluable exposure. "The Pitch" has a proven track record of empowering local entrepreneurs, as seen in the success stories of past winners. To learn more about this competition, visit [The Pitch Business Plan Contest](#), and explore the achievements of last year's winner, Dogs on 3, at [Dogs on 3's Facebook Page](#).

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

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