

Headwaters Arts receives \$44,000 grant from Government of Canada]

Money was granted through government's Tourism Relief Fund

By Zachary Roman

A local non-profit arts organization received grant funding that helped it run its biggest annual event last Fall.

On February 23, Headwaters Arts announced it had received a grant of \$44,201 through the Federal Government's Tourism Relief Fund. The grant was dispersed via the Central Counties Tourism Association.

The Central Counties Tourism Association received a total of \$8.65 million from the Federal Government to help local tourism organizations and businesses "safely welcome back visitors, recover from the impacts of the pandemic and prepare for future growth."

The grant went towards hosting Headwaters Arts' 26th Annual Fall Festival, Juried Art Show and Sale. According to the release the money also supported "multiple keystone Fall Festival events supporting literary and visual arts and live music."

Susan Powell, Chair of Headwaters Arts' Marketing and Communications Committee, and Edward Hutchinson, Press Secretary for the Office of the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), wrote of the importance of the Fall Festival in 2022.

"The enhanced 2022 Fall Festival was an important catalyst to foster and welcome a revitalized relationship with Headwaters Arts and Ontario artists, art enthusiasts, sponsors, the community, and visitors from across the GTA and beyond to grow revenue, build capacity and create more economic opportunities and jobs and retain jobs for the arts and culture sector," they said in the announcement.

Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for FedDev Ontario, said tourism is a cornerstone in economies across Southern Ontario.

"Supporting tourism businesses will grow our communities and attract more and more visitors for years to come," she said.

Margi Taylor, Acting President of Headwaters Arts, shared on behalf of the organization how grateful it was to receive the grant.

"The arts and cultural events and festivals in our communities are our strength," said Taylor. "This investment will help grow and build our engaging and excellent arts experience for our visitors, augmented through partnerships with local food and beverage businesses, talented musical entertainment and gifted literary authors for a well-rounded tourist attraction."

Headwaters Arts operates the Headwaters Arts Gallery year-round at the Alton Mill Arts Centre in Alton. It's an 810-square foot gallery with exhibitions that change monthly and showcase the talent of local artists.

Chuck Thibeault, Executive Director of Central Counties Tourism, said the impacts of the Tourism Relief Fund will be felt for years to come.

"The visitor economy creates thriving, vibrant communities across Ontario. Visitors bring new money into a community and for many businesses in York, Durham and Headwaters, these additional revenues can mean the difference between staying solvent and having to shutter their doors forever," said Thibeault. "Central Counties Tourism applauds the Government of Canada for recognizing the importance of growing our collective capacity to welcome and entertain visitors. Its investment in tourism is helping municipalities and individual businesses build compelling destinations that will attract visitors and residents alike."