



ElginCounty

Progressive by Nature

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Award

Savour Elgin/Elgin Arts Trail Receive Accolades

Elgin County Economic Development is pleased to be the recipient of an International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Award for its Savour Elgin/Elgin Arts Trail Discovery Guide. The award was presented at the IEDC annual conference in Anchorage, Alaska on October 7, 2015.

"It is an honour to once again be recognized internationally for our Economic Development efforts," said Elgin County Warden Paul Ens. "The Savour Elgin and Elgin Arts Trail programs have received a number of provincial and international awards since their inception, and it is great to see our continued efforts to promote business in the area rewarded."

The Savour Elgin/Elgin Arts Trail Discovery Guide encourages travel throughout the region, by packaging the area's best food, drink and artistic establishments into three unique weekend tours. The guide includes a map, descriptions of each establishment and visually appealing photography.

The award focused on the June 2014 campaign that saw the guide distributed to over 175,000 people via insert in the Summer Edition of the LCBO Food & Drink magazine. This distribution allowed Elgin to promote its businesses and attractions to a large but targeted audience. These promotional efforts were supported by the Local Food Fund administered by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

The 2015/16 version of the Savour Elgin/Elgin Arts Trail Discovery Guide is now available. For copies please visit the Savour Elgin [website](#) or call (519) 631-1460 ext. 168.



Business Resource

Elgincentives - Financial Incentives for Business Owners

Elgin County Economic Development is pleased to announce that the county-wide Community Improvement Plan (CIP) "Elgincentives" is now accepting applications.

A CIP is a tool that allows a municipality to direct funds and implement policy in specifically defined project areas in order to improve economic diversification, enhance the quality of place for residents and visitors, and improve the stability and sustainability of the tax base.

The Elgincentives CIP offers financial incentives that are designed to stimulate private sector investment in land and buildings. Businesses will be eligible for Elgincentives provided that they meet certain criteria and are located in one of the following areas: Downtowns; agricultural areas; and, ports and lakeshore areas.

"Traditionally CIPs focus solely on downtowns," said Economic Development General Manager, Alan Smith. "This CIP is unique in that it is the first of its kind in the Province to be regional in nature while incorporating agricultural and waterfront areas as well as downtowns."

Grants are available for facade, signage, and property improvements; building improvements/restorations; building conversions/expansions; energy efficiency retrofits; feasibility and design studies; and outdoor art projects. Supplemental grants are available for multiple property owners or tenants looking to implement a coordinated approach to improvement projects and to members of the Savour Elgin and Elgin Arts Trail programs.

For more information about the Elgincentives

Community Improvement Plan e-mail jdias@elgin.ca, call 519-631-1460 ext. 168 or download an application our [website](#).



Elgincentives
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Business Profile

AMBER Energy Co-operative - Renewable Energy Initiatives in Elgin County



The AMBER Energy Co-operative (Aylmer, Malahide, Bayham, Elgin Region) is named for the communities in which it got its start, acquired its first projects, and completed the construction of these projects.

Founder Jamie Kent has over 10 years of experience working in the North American renewable energy sector and is the co-founder of Kent Brothers Renewable Energy (KBRE).

The purpose of the AMBER Energy Co-operative is to work with participants in rural areas to find locations for small renewable energy systems, earn renewable energy contracts, and develop and operate these systems for the term of the contracts (20 years). These renewable energy systems include solar panels, biogas and biomass generators, and small wind turbines (turbines are approximately the size of a hydro pole and used to power on-farm operations).

Contracts for these systems are obtained through

the Independent Electrical Systems Operator (IESO) FIT (Feed-in-Tariff) Program. The IESO is the provincial organization that directs what power is being generated in Ontario and where it goes. AMBER Energy Co-operative is classified as a community group under the rules of the IESO FIT Program and since its inception it has received 1.7 megawatts of solar contracts under the IESO FIT 2 program, 1.5 megawatts of solar under the IESO FIT 3 program, and an additional 1.5 megawatts in biogas contracts under the IESO FIT 3 program. These contracts are scheduled to begin construction in the fall of 2015.

The co-operative operates as a partnership between land owners who lease their land for



renewable energy systems, Kent Brothers Renewable Energy (KBRE) who operates, oversees and manages all renewable energy systems on behalf of AMBER Energy Co-operative, and other co-operative members who provide feed stock and farm waste to operate biogas generators.

Biogas is generated with a unique mix of livestock manures, additional on farm waste (corn silage, rotten apples, potatoes), waste from other processing operations (vegetable food processors, corn/soya oils) and bio diesel waste. Biogas is used to operate a generator that creates electricity that is then sold onto the electrical grid as part of the contract system or used on-farm to generate heat for livestock barns, houses, and swimming pools.

In addition to overseeing and operating renewable energy systems on behalf of AMBER Energy Co-operative members, KBRE offers power management systems to agricultural clients. The company will bring in an engineering team to audit an agricultural operation's current power usage and identify opportunities for savings. In some cases a farmer may be able to reduce his or her electrical bills by 50% as a result of power factor correction and the implementation of energy saving technologies. Most farmers see a return on investment in less than four years.

For more information about KBRE visit www.kbrenergies.com or to learn about joining AMBER Energy Co-operative visit www.ambercoop.ca.

Local Event

2015 Western Elgin Community Expo - Come See Why the West Is Best!

Elgin County Economic Development is pleased to once again sponsor the Western Elgin Community Expo. This year, the event will be held on Saturday October 17 at the Rodney Recreation Centre. This family-friendly event has something for everyone under one roof. Take this excellent opportunity to network with businesses, home-based businesses, and community organizations that operate within the western Elgin area.

Event: 2015 Western Elgin Community Expo

Date: Saturday, October 17

Location: Rodney Recreation Centre (135 Queen Street in Rodney)

Time: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Official welcoming ceremonies at Noon

Free admission

Donations to the local food bank will be accepted

Event Contact: Karen Kendrick, Event Coordinator westelginfarmgirl@yahoo.ca

Business Profile

A Bit of Brit - A Taste of Jolly Old England

A Bit of Brit is a little taste of jolly old England right here in the heart of Elgin County. Located in the Village of Sparta, A Bit of Brit has been offering authentic food and collectible items imported directly from the United Kingdom since it opened in June of 2015.

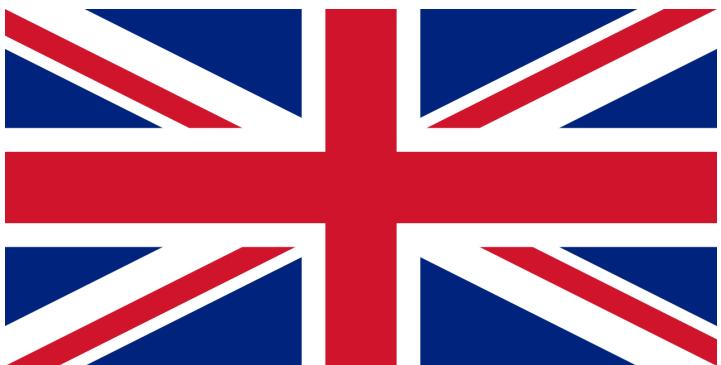
Owner Steve Railton left his hometown just northwest of London England at the age of 18 and settled in Canada where he began a career in construction. He eventually became the Safety Manager for a large construction company in Newmarket, ON until a double hip replacement forced him into early retirement. Looking for a change of pace, Steve and his wife Val left Newmarket for Elgin County. He had always been fascinated with British stores and over the years would seek out the local British store whenever he was travelling for work to stock up on his favourite childhood treats. Steve,

a true people-person, was intrigued by the idea of owning a retail operation, and thought that opening up a British store would be a great way to meet and connect with lots of new people.

A Bit of Brit provides an opportunity for British transplants and Canadians alike to enjoy traditional British candies, desserts, salty snacks, and more without having to step on to an airplane.

British chocolate is a particularly popular item. According to Steve and Val, anyone who has ever sampled chocolate from across the pond can instantly tell the difference between the North American and UK varieties. Slightly different ingredients in the UK chocolate result in a creamier texture and a sweeter taste that have even Canadians coming back for more. The store sells a variety of Cadbury chocolates including the iconic "Flake Bar" as well as the





Galaxy brand of chocolate. In addition to chocolates, A Bit of Brit offers a selection of British candies including Jelly Babies and Horehound's to sooth a sore throat.

If you are looking to host your own authentic British High Tea, A Bit of Brit is the perfect place to stock up on biscuits, teas of all types, jams, and marmalades.

Spotted Dick, a sponge cake with raisins and currants, is the store's best seller according to Steve. "It is a 200 year old recipe," said Steve. "People from the UK buy it because they have always eaten it and people from Canada buy it as a joke for a family member or a friend."

If savoury flavours are more your style, A Bit of Brit has a wide selection of Crisps (Chips) in traditional British flavours such as Prawn Cocktail, Roast Chicken, and Smokey Bacon as well as British condiments, pickled onions, and Branson pickles.

In addition to imported goods, the store also carries a selection of freshly baked meat pies, tarts, and short bread cookies from Scottish bakery Grandpa Jimmy's in Grand Bend, ON. Selections include Steak and Kidney Pie, Chicken Pie, and Cornish Pasties – a hearty meal of potatoes, meat and vegetables wrapped in pastry and traditionally eaten by miners in the UK.

Over the next couple of months A Bit of Brit will

begin to stock Mince Pies, Christmas cake, and various gift baskets perfect for all of your holiday gift giving needs. Other available gift items include t-shirts, mugs, and a variety of Dr. Who, Coronation Street, and Downton Abbey collectibles.

Steve and Val have found the business community in Sparta to be tight-knit and friendly. The Village Collective Gallery and the Sparta House Tearoom among other neighbouring businesses have been exceptionally helpful and welcoming to the new business. The location is also ideal as it is a great fit to have an authentic British tea room in such close proximity to a British store.

One of the greatest joys that Steve has experienced since opening A Bit of Brit is the ability to reconnect British expats with the comfort foods of their childhoods.

"The best part is when people come in and recognize a product that they haven't seen in years and then the stories that they have to tell are absolutely remarkable," said Steve.

A Bit of Brit is open Tuesday to Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday Noon to 4 p.m. For more information about the business visit [Facebook](#) or call (519) 775-1114).

