



Bruce County

Heritage Documentary Project

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$139,100 OTF Grant Brings History of Bruce County to Life

SOUTHAMPTON, Ontario – For both the County and the Country's 150th celebrations, the citizens of the Bruce will be making their debut on small screens across the province.

"We call it a docu-drama," says Zach Melnick, the Director of the Bruce County Heritage Documentary Project. "We'll be combining real archival elements – like film, photos, and paintings, with re-enactments of historical events, and comprehensive interviews with area Elders and Historians. The result will be a professional suite of media that explores why Bruce County was an amazing place historically and celebrates our communities and Knowledge-Keepers today."

The Living History Multimedia Association (LHMA) – makers of the award winning *Ontario Visual Heritage Project* – have teamed up with the Bruce County Historical Society, to bring the people of Bruce County together to create an entertaining, broadcast-ready, multi-part tv-series about the history of Bruce County. The culmination of citizens' efforts will be shared through free Community Launch events, complimentary distribution to schools; and with hundreds of thousands of Ontarians on TVO. A mobile app, comprehensive website, and free course guide for educators will complete the Project.

On Thursday, the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre was host to a Brainstorming session where stakeholder groups were invited to share their ideas about what stories from Bruce's natural, cultural, and economic history the Project should tackle. MPPs Lisa Thompson and Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) volunteer, Janice McEachnie, were on hand to participate in the sessions and announce a two-year, \$139,100 Grow grant made to LHMA. MPP Bill Walker, who was unable to attend, also sent congratulations on news of the local project.

"I am proud of the history of Bruce County and believe our future is shaped by our past. I am pleased to see money invested in preserving and promoting our unique arts, culture and heritage, and look forward to seeing the documentary which will be a great asset in telling the history of our storied community."

- Bill Walker, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound

"The people of Bruce County have a rich and distinguished history when it comes to making remarkable contributions. From politics to tourism, education and healthcare, there is a passion and a commitment to community that defines the good people of Bruce County. I am excited to see this dedication showcased through the efforts of the Living History Multimedia Association and the Bruce County Historical Society."

- Lisa Thompson, MPP for Huron-Bruce

In addition to the OTF's funding, the call for support has also been answered by: the County of Bruce, Bruce Power, Ontario Power Generation, and the Society of Energy Professionals.

"We have been very fortunate to live in a County where we have great community support and remarkable partners for this Project; and we thank each and every one for their support. We are also grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for believing in our Project. Through Bruce historians, we are sure to develop some interesting stories, but still need the assistance of people in our communities to bring them to life," says Irene Howe, President of the Bruce County Historical Society.

“What’s really exciting about this Project is that it will give people throughout the County the chance to be a part of telling Bruce’s story, while at the same time connecting them with local culture and heritage organizations,” says Melnick.

The Project will use a collaborative, community-based production model that will involve the citizenry in all aspects of production - from a steering committee who guides the content, to local actors who bring the story to life, to a high-school volunteer program that gives students the chance to participate both behind, and in-front of the camera.

Anyone who was unable to attend the Brainstorming session is invited to submit their story, shooting location, and resource ideas to the Project’s Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/BruceCounty/> In the coming year and a half, the Project team will also be looking to connect with Elders, Historians, and Knowledge Keepers of all kind, as well as local talent to cast in the roles of the area’s most celebrated, and notorious, historical figures. Enthusiastic folks of all ages and experience levels are invited to contact Project Producer, Yvonne Drebert at yvonne@visualheritage.ca to get involved.

The non-profit Living History Multimedia Association (LHMA) has been empowering Canadian communities to tell their unique and important stories to the world since 2001. The LHMA works with individuals, municipalities and NGOs to create compelling multimedia tool kits to teach, preserve and promote our history to audiences young and old. The LHMA believes that all communities have a history worthy of commemoration and celebration - and each one of us is an active, living part of that story.

The Bruce County Historical Society actively promotes and encourages public awareness and interest in our local history, and the dissemination of Bruce County historical and heritage information by organizing and featuring programs and promoting discussion.

The leading grantmaking foundation in Canada, the Ontario Trillium Foundation strengthens the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives. An agency of the Government of Ontario, OTF builds healthy and vibrant communities.

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