

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **County of Simcoe launches new awareness and award program to help businesses and organizations become age-friendly**

**Midhurst/April 3, 2019** – The County of Simcoe is pleased to introduce its new Age-Friendly Businesses and Organization Guide and Award Program to encourage regional businesses to implement age-friendly strategies and recognize those showing leadership in creating welcoming environments for older adults.

The Age-Friendly Business Guide and Award program is meant to increase awareness of the County's aging population and to help businesses or organizations evaluate their business environment and service delivery. The program provides a guide, resources and assessment tools to help our businesses and organizations adapt to our aging population.

The recognition component awards businesses who take action to become more age-friendly by participating in the program and implementing age-friendly goals and strategies. Further details, application guidelines and forms can be found online at [www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly](http://www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly) or request a copy by email at [agefriendly@simcoe.ca](mailto:agefriendly@simcoe.ca). The annual deadline to submit an application to participate in the program is June 1st. Applications will be reviewed by the Simcoe County Age-Friendly Advisory Sub-Committee. Successful applicants will receive an award package and various in-kind support from the County of Simcoe.

"The County has taken action and shown tremendous leadership to help our communities and businesses adapt to our aging population," said Warden George Cornell. "This unique program not only supports our commitment to making our region more age-friendly, but aligns with our economic development goals to assist our businesses and organizations in preparing for the future."

The Canadian population aged 65 and over is predicted to double to 10.4 million during the next 20 years. In Simcoe County, the proportion of adults aged 65 plus is 18 per cent of the population compared to 16.7 per cent in Ontario (Statistics Canada 2016 Census). As our population ages, it makes viable business sense to adapt to meet changing needs.

#### **About the Age-Friendly Community Initiative**

The County of Simcoe received funding from the Government of Ontario as part of its Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant Program. The funding served to establish a baseline assessment of Simcoe County's age-friendliness and to determine the recommendations for action according to scope of community responsibility. A variety of community engagement processes were used to collect feedback from residents 60 years of age and older, caregivers, and service providers of older adults to produce the "Building an Age-Friendly Simcoe County - 2016 Community Needs Assessment" and the County's "Positive Aging Strategy". Both documents can be found at <http://www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly>. The Age-Friendly Business/Organization and Recognition program is one of the recommendations included in the aging strategy.

County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at **simcoe.ca**.

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**Collin Matanowitsch**  
**Manager, Public Relations**  
**County of Simcoe, Service Simcoe Branch**  
**705-726-9300 ext. 1430**  
**705-734-8386 (mobile)**  
**Collin.Matanowitsch@simcoe.ca**

**Jennifer Straw**  
**Communications Co-ordinator**  
**County of Simcoe, Service Simcoe Branch**  
**705-726-9300 ext. 1036**  
**705-790-5979 (mobile)**  
**Jennifer.Straw@simcoe.ca**