

INVEST COB O U R G

MANAGER BLOG



Enabling Stickiness with our Youth and Young Adult Population

Earlier this month, I was given an opportunity to present at the Ontario East Municipal Conference in Ottawa. I presented on a topic entitled "Enabling Stickiness with our Youth and Young Adult Population." This presentation was delivered to a full room and to economic development and municipal professionals and elected officials.

Clearly, there was an interest in the topic of youth and young adults' engagement in communities across Eastern Ontario. Our Economic Development and Venture13 team have taken great strides to advance engagement among this demographic group.

A major theme area that emerged in our 2023-2028 Economic Development and Venture13 Strategy and Action Plan was the retention and attraction of workforce and young families and adults. In fact, the number one priority out of all five the strategy's theme areas was this one. The strategy's background report referenced a declining youth population aged 15-24 years from 2016 to 2021 of 3.0% in Cobourg. This decline was even higher in Eastern Ontario at 6.6% during this period.

The team has responded by offering youth engagement opportunities where they can participate in programs and see the local employment and business opportunities in Cobourg. Some program examples include:

- the Pitch To the Chief Youth Challenge where local high school students create community safety ideas and pitch them to the Chief and Deputy Chief.
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) camps for youth aged 11-14.
- A graduating award for two of Cobourg's youth who are pursuing post-secondary education in STEM and/or business and entrepreneurship.
- Skilled Trades Days and Bootcamps to showcase local opportunities in the trades professions.
- A celebration among employers who hire youth for summer employment opportunities and a panel discussion among our young adults about their experiences.



Winning team for the Pitch To the Chief Competition for Youth, May 2024.



Skilled Trades Bootcamp, in collaboration with Support Ontario Youth, July 2024.

All these programs have led to more engaged youth and a better understanding of employment and business opportunities in Cobourg.

Subscribe to the Cobourg Economic Development Newsletter to stay current on future youth and young adult programs.

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