

**NEWS RELEASE**

## **Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington Regions' festivals to Celebrate Ontario with more than \$2.3 million in stimulus funding**

**STRATFORD, Ont.** – In a converted barn, now the Perth County Visitor Centre, in the heart of rural Ontario, the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Regional Tourism Organization Four (RTO4) announced the recipients of \$2.3 million in grants for local festivals and events.

Minister of Rural Affairs Jeff Leal, in collaboration with CEO of RTO4 David Peacock, announced that the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport would be investing \$2.3 million in festivals and events in the Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington Regions over the next year through the Celebrate Ontario and Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster fund.

“These grants, overseen by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, support local tourism by assisting festival and event organizers to develop new and improved experiences to attract more tourists and increase visitor spending,” said Peacock.

The list of the 2013/14 Celebrate Ontario recipients:

2013 International Plowing Match & Rural Expo	\$350,000
2013 Manulife Financial LPGA Classic	\$326,000
Guelph Jazz Festival World Artist Summit	\$75,000
Kitchener Blues Festival - Aboriginal Blues Showcase	\$74,999
KOI Music Festival	\$32,950
Perth County Forbidden Ride	\$25,000
Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival 2013	\$75,000
Stratford Blues and Ribfest	\$40,000
Stratford Festival (Celebrate Ontario & Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster Fund)	\$1,050,000
Stratford Summer Music's Choral Extravaganza, 2013	\$75,000
Victoria Playhouse Petrolia (VPP) Summer Festival	\$75,000
Waterloo Air Show 2013	\$74,300
WE ARE CULTURE! Waterloo Region is the place to be - IMPACT and AWMF collaboration project	\$40,000

The funding announcement comes on the heels of the success of RTO4's integrated reservation system's milestone of generating more than \$250,000 in sales since September 2013. The Reservation System is comprised of over 200 tourism businesses from across the Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington Regions to assist tourists in planning and booking vacations to the regions.

Incorporated in October 2010 by a volunteer board and supported by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports, RTO4 is a driving force in featuring the depth of tourism experiences in Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington.

“It is my great pleasure to work in a region where the spirit, commitment and resourcefulness of its people is evident every single day of every week, all year long, year after year; the ongoing success of the events and attractions from this region is a testament to those values and ingenuity, ” said Peacock. “The Regional Tourism Office is committed to working with our partners to showcase what our incredible region has to offer Ontarians.”

For more information on the RTO4 visit [RTO4.ca](http://RTO4.ca) and [BetterWeekending.ca](http://BetterWeekending.ca).