

## **OAKVILLE ARTS COUNCIL to receive Digital Main Street Community Collaboration Support**

[Oakville, ON - May 20, 2021] Haltech Regional Innovation Centre is pleased to announce that the Oakville Arts Council (OAC) will be participating in a Digital Main Street Community Collaboration project to design a new web portal that will help its 47 member organizations to engage more effectively with each other, the many individual artists practicing locally and the broader Oakville community. Over the coming weeks, members of the OAC and anyone interested in the arts will have an opportunity to provide input on the project.

“This is just a fantastic opportunity for the Oakville Arts Council and the arts sector as a whole. We know that arts and culture activities have been dramatically affected by the pandemic and now is the time to explore new ways of serving our artists and the community,” said Bernadette Ward, executive director of the Oakville Arts Council. “This collaboration and funding initiative will introduce us to leaders in digital innovation in our community with the goal of creating a new digital road map.”

This Digital Main Street project was made possible through financial support from the Government of Canada through FedDev Ontario’s Regional Relief and Recovery Fund.

The goals of the collaboration are to:

- support OAC in defining the requirements for a digital portal for members and the Oakville community to engage in arts and culture.
- explore available digital tools and services that can help members develop their content in ways that can be accessed digitally.
- develop a digital marketing strategy and marketing plan that will encourage the target audiences, including young adults and newcomers to Oakville, to use the OAC Portal and support their local artists.

According to Shann McGrail, Executive Director of Haltech: "We are excited to work with the Arts community to help them develop new digital solutions and support recovery from COVID lockdowns through this DMS Community Collaboration project. The Oakville Arts Council project will not only improve their e-commerce store, but also prepare them to streamline critical operational activities including membership management and grant administration."

Local businesses Victoria Stasiuk & Associates, Arts and Culture Consulting and Caju Multimedia are also involved in the project. Victoria, having recently become a Haltech client, remarked: “Over the past year, I have been working with the local technology eco-system as well as digital cultural professionals to emphasize the importance of remaining online and connected to volunteers, staff, artists and other arts organizations to continue to build online experiences and online presence. This project is an excellent opportunity to put some of this information and expertise to use in the Oakville community.”

The project will be complete by the end of June and a report will be available on the OAC website by mid-July: [www.oakvillearts.com](http://www.oakvillearts.com).

#### About FedDev Ontario

For more than 10 years, FedDev Ontario has worked to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation and growth in Canada's most populous region. The Agency has delivered impressive results, which can be seen in southern Ontario businesses that are creating innovative technologies, improving their productivity, growing their revenues, and in the economic advancement of communities across the region.

#### About Digital Main Street

Digital Main Street was created by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) with direct support from the City of Toronto. DMS is also supported by a group of strategic business partners, including Google, Mastercard, Shopify, Microsoft, Facebook, Intuit QuickBooks, Square, Yellow Pages and Lightspeed. A \$42.5-million investment from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) and a \$7.45-million investment from the Government of Ontario brought together the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association, the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, Communitech and Invest Ottawa to expand the Digital Main Street Platform in order to support more businesses going digital in response to the impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario.

#### About Haltech

Haltech is a not-for-profit Regional Innovation Centre funded by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Haltech provides entrepreneurial education, advisory services and strategic connections to technology start up and scale up companies in Halton Region to help them accelerate growth and bring innovations to market.

#### About the Oakville Arts Council

The Oakville Arts Council is a not-for-profit charitable organization that serves a membership of artists, arts organizations, and the general public. We support and enable local artists and arts organizations and encourage participation in the arts.

#### About VS Associates, Arts and Culture Consulting

VS Associates, Arts and Culture Consulting offers expertise in audience development and revenue development for artists and arts organizations through the improvement of online channels, brand awareness and e-commerce strategies.

#### About Caju Multimedia

Caju is a multi-disciplinary agency that works with a variety of clients across a broad spectrum of industries. Caju provides services of marketing strategy (traditional and digital), branding, print, web design and development, content management, interactive and motion design. Caju focus on the ideas and passions of their clients to drive their brands forward.