

Ontario Investing \$18,150 to Support Festivals and Events in Ajax

AJAX— Ontario is providing \$18,150 through the 2025 Experience Ontario program to support the St. Nedela Annual Festival, hosted by St. Nedela Macedonian Orthodox Church in Ajax.

This is part of a nearly \$20-million investment in festivals and events across Ontario to help organizers expand programming and draw visitors to stay longer in local accommodations, eat in restaurants, shop at local retailers and support main street businesses.

The announcement was made by Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby, and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Colleges,

Universities, Research Excellence, and Security, on Sunday, April 27, 2025, during St. Nedela's Bazaar and Bake Sale.

"Festivals and events showcase the best of Ontario; it's people and its culture all while inviting people near and far to experience and enjoy our province. They help create local jobs, provide economic benefits and bring communities together," said Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. "Now more than ever, it is important that we come together to take part in made-in-Ontario experiences that celebrate our collective identity and support local communities."

In total, Experience Ontario 2025 is supporting more than 350 festivals and events



across the province.

"Our government's investment in local festivals and events—like the St. Nedela Annual Festival—demonstrates our commitment to strengthening communities and showcasing the unique culture of the Region of Durham," said Lorne Coe,

MPP for Whitby and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and the Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence, and Security. "Through the Experience Ontario program, we're helping to create

vibrant, welcoming experiences that drive tourism, create jobs, and bring people together."

- Tourism plays a critical role in the Ontario economy, in 2023 visitors to Ontario spent \$33 billion and supported more than 325,000 jobs.
- Since 2021, the Ministry's Experience Ontario program (formerly known as Reconnect Ontario and Celebrate Ontario) has supported over 2,000 Ontario festivals and events.

- In 2024-25, the ministry invested more than \$20 million to support more than 250 festivals and events around the province.

- Festivals and events supported by Experience Ontario benefit communities by drawing more visitors who stay

longer in local accommodations, eat in restaurants, shop at local retailers and support main street businesses.

- The Experience Ontario 2025 application period launched on November 28, 2024, with direct outreach to over 4,000 stakeholders and closed on December 30, 2024. To get your festival or event on the contact list for Experience Ontario

- 2026, email experienceontario@ontario.ca
- In 2024-25, our government invested over \$192 million in the tourism sector through funding programs, Regional Tourism Organization grants, Destination Ontario, ministry attractions, and tourism agencies

Historic Oshawa partnership secures 30-year agreements with Oshawa Generals and Oak View Group

The City of Oshawa announced 30-year partnerships with the Oshawa Generals Hockey Club and Oak View Group. The announcement included the City's \$50 million taxpayer investment to modernize the Tribute Communities Centre (TCC), with enhancements including a new prime location for the Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame. This is the same facility that has ran in the past to the tune of one million operating deficit. Last un-official figures were estimated to \$500,00/year.

This meaning that the people of Oshawa have been paying for the original building to the tune of \$50million and about one million extra for operations and maintenance.

With this new agreement, Oshawa taxpayers will have to flip the bill for another 50 million plus operating costs. This historic agreement ensures that the Oshawa Generals will continue to call the City of Oshawa home for another three decades.

As operators of the City-owned TCC, Oak View Group is also extending its agreement for management and food and beverage services for 30 years, as well as investing \$1 million in facility infrastructure, including a modernized concession area. The Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame will be relocated to a new prime location in front of the TCC, providing 24/7 exposure to its displays and further increasing awareness of Oshawa's sports achievements.

Oak View Group, the global leader in live event venue development and management and hospitality services, has managed the TCC since 2008. Since its opening, the multi-purpose venue has been a symbol of pride and unity for the Oshawa community, bringing together fans, families, and visitors. In addition to serving as the home of the Generals, the venue has welcomed more than seven million guests and hosted electrifying shows including Elton John, KISS and Jerry Seinfeld and prestigious events such as the 2015 Pan American Games and the 2023 Canadian Tire National Skating Championships.

On hand for the press conference were Oshawa Mayor Dan Carter and members of City Council, Oshawa Generals Owner Rocco Tullio and Vice President I General

Manager Roger Hunt, Oak View Group President of Venue Management Greg O'Dell and Ontario Hockey League Commissioner Bryan Crawford. The dignitaries signed custom Oshawa Generals jerseys, which were then presented to the Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame to commemorate the historic announcement.

Since 1937, the Oshawa Generals have been more than just a hockey team — they have been part of Oshawa's DNA, existing almost as long as the city itself. The City greatly values their contributions to our community and are proud of their legacy that includes five Memorial Cups, 13 OHL championships, and countless hockey heroes like Red Tilson, Bobby Orr, Marc Savard, Eric Lindros and John Tavares who have inspired generations. Created and named in honour of automaker General Motors of Canada, the Oshawa Generals Hockey Club has a longstanding and deep-rooted history in our city, including their former home ice in the Civic Auditorium built by Oshawa GM workers. When the time came to create a new and bigger home, we came together to build a world-class facility — now the Tribute Communities Centre. The facility opened in November 2006 and included space for the Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame to recognize over 50 different sports and honour the achievements of Oshawa individuals and teams. Over the years, significant investments in the TCC have included a new video scoreboard and upgrades to player amenities including a new weight room, medical facilities and an NHL-caliber players' lounge.

Recent changes to NCAA eligibility have created a major win for Ontario Hockey League (OHL) teams, increasing competitiveness. In 2024, the OHL announced a significant expansion strategy, focusing on broadening the league's footprint. To meet the needs of players and fans, many OHL facilities are being renovated (Kitchener, London) or new facilities constructed (Brantford, Sudbury, Ottawa). Similarly, as the Oshawa Generals have continued to grow and thrive over the years, their operational and facility needs have changed and evolved. The modernization of the TCC

facility will include a main entrance expansion, fan experience upgrades, interior renovations, seating for a minimum of 7,000 and an updated concession area. The upgrades will ensure that the TCC is eligible and ready to host a Memorial Cup and improve player facilities to support top-tier talent. The modernization will support Oak View Group in further marketing the facility and attracting more sports and entertainment events and performances and fans by offering an improved experience.

The \$50 million modernization of the TCC will not impact the tax rate. It will be funded through various sources, such as the new Oshawa Generals and Oak View Group agreements, Municipal Accommodation Tax, and additional seat revenue. Construction is anticipated to be phased over two years beginning in 2027 to minimize disruption for the Oshawa Generals, concerts, and other entertainment shows.

"As Mayor of the great City of Oshawa and a longtime Gens fan, I am immensely proud of Council's decision to invest in the modernization of the Tribute Communities Centre as a world-class facility for sports and entertainment. I am ecstatic in knowing that our beloved Gennies will continue to be an integral part of our community for another 30 years and I sincerely thank Oak View Group for their partnership and investment in this premier sports and entertainment facility."

— Mayor Dan Carter, City of Oshawa

"As President and Governor of the Oshawa Generals, I'm thrilled to announce that the Generals and the City of Oshawa have agreed to a 30-year lease extension — a powerful partnership that secures the future of hockey in this community for generations to come. This milestone ensures that the greatest fans in Junior Hockey will continue to cheer for the best team in the league, right here in the heart of Oshawa.

I want to sincerely thank Mayor Carter, City Council, and everyone who played a role in bringing this vision to life. Your investment and unwavering support make it possible for the Generals to proudly continue calling Oshawa home for the next three decades.

Junior hockey has always been more than just a game — it's a proving ground for players, coaches, staff, and future leaders alike. When I first purchased this storied franchise 17 years ago, the standards were high. Today, they are even higher. The demands of the game have evolved, and so must we — ensuring we continue to attract elite talent and deliver a first-class experience for our fans that is second to none.

This lease extension not only solidifies our roots, it also creates the foundation for new dreams to be built, new talent to be nurtured, and new generations of fans to fall in love with the game.

Thank you again to everyone who helped make this historic day a reality. I look forward to celebrating this moment with our loyal hockey fans and the community of Oshawa. Go Gens Go!"

— Rocco Tullio, Owner, Oshawa Generals

"We are honored by the City's continued trust in our ability to deliver exceptional fan experiences, and incredibly proud of the tremendous work our team in Oshawa has achieved at Tribute Communities Centre. This renewed partnership reinforces our ongoing commitment to the City of Oshawa and the Oshawa Generals. With a newly renovated Tribute Communities Centre, we look forward to building on our shared successes and deepening our community impact."

— Greg O'Dell, President, Venue Management, Oak View Group

"I just closed my downtown Oshawa business due to lack of parking and walk in traffic. Why should taxpayer put out more money for a facility that does nothing for the downtown merchants. I was under the impression that the original construction cost 50 million. Now to add an addition they are expecting another 50 million. Does is not sound excessive. Not, to mention that I heard it costs the city almost a million to operate with no profit since it opened. Then again it is not their money and it happens to fall on the eve of the 2026 municipal election. Who is really getting the kickback?" Alex Muirel, ex-Oshawa merchant.

"After all of the work done behind the scenes to get an even more effective working partnership between the City

of Oshawa, the Oshawa Generals, the Tribute Communities Centre (TCC), and the Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame (OSHF), they have come up with a concept to bring Oshawa's TCC into the future. It will give us an updated facility to bring the people of Oshawa a better game experience and a better insight into the rich sports history of our city."

— Adrian Vanhemmen, Chair, Board of Governors, Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame

"The Oshawa Generals are one of the OHL's historic franchises, with a league-leading 13 J. Ross Robertson Cup championships in their decorated history. Today's exciting

announcement guarantees that the team that produced names like Eric Lindros, Dave Andreychuk and John Tavares will be a mainstay in Oshawa, playing in a first-class facility for decades to come. I'd like to commend Mayor Dan Carter and the City of Oshawa, along with Generals Owner and President Rocco Tullio for their great work in bringing this together, and I look forward to what the future has in store for a Generals franchise that continues to strive for excellence both on the ice and in the Oshawa community." Bryan Crawford, Commissioner, Ontario Hockey League



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