



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021





## MESSAGE FROM **PRESIDENT**

### TO ALL MEMBERS OF OUR BIA

The best part of 2021 is that it is over. I open with this as I know how we, business owners and managers, feel about the challenges that we have been facing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Is it over? I don't have that crystal ball, however I do look forward to a freer and more prosperous future.

Meanwhile our BIA has been active in several ways. The first is our online marketplace which was launched in December of 2020 – Francomarket.ca. One of our goals is to continue to grow this ecommerce site to benefit our members by its focus on shopping local.

As you review this report you will see that we have been busy exploring and developing different ways to enhance our bottom-line in terms of member support to increase consumer traffic towards our business community. This is a tall order during a pandemic, but knowing that our members have all been challenged by these past two years, the work must continue.

**Here are some of the initiatives we have worked on over the past year:**

**FrancoMarket for Artisans** – an affordable artisan market, initially set to launch in the Fall 2021 at Bonnie Doon Center, its opening was delayed due to the pandemic.

**An ambitious proposal was developed and presented to the Federal government to fund several initiatives including:** video production for our members; an electronic billboard; a French Quarter Marketplace – le Marché du Quartier francophone.

In this annual report you will find more information on these initiatives as well as the renewal of the summer flower program.

Enjoy reading our report and know that I am always there to answer your questions.

*Martin Van Keimpema*

President, Board of Directors



## SUMMER FLOWER PROGRAM



Several business owners have asked us why we do not have flowerpots and flower barrels in our BIA? The answer is easy. Given the impact of the Pandemic we chose to invest in tools and approaches that would have a direct positive impact on our business members. We invested our resources in an ecommerce platform which will continue to evolve: <https://francomarket.ca/>

The good news is the flower program is back for the early summer 2022!

## FRANCO MARKET

### A WEB ECOMMERCE PLATFORM FOR OUR MEMBERS



As stated above, we reinvested the budget allocated for the flowers as well as our accumulated surpluses to allow us to innovate by developing an online marketplace: [www.francomarket.ca](http://www.francomarket.ca). We invite you to visit this ecommerce project. We presented this concept as an in-progress project in our last Annual Report.

Throughout 2021, we have continued to add merchants to the online market. We will continue to do so through various initiatives described in this report (FrancoMarket for Artisans; French Quarter Marketplace and future pop-up markets).

There are still many merchants who have yet to make the move to join our ecommerce space. We understand there are many reasons for this. Not everyone has the same needs. For some, business has been doing ok with a curbside or delivery service. Others have been swamped by the lack of manpower because they had to reduce their operations down to one person operations. This resulted in the owners assuming 100% of the operations and bordering on burn out, or at the very least extreme fatigue due to the stress, the isolation and the lack of time to transition to an online platform. This situation also



hampered our ability to be in direct contact with our members. We felt that to pop-in to your stores or businesses would be taking the place of a paying customer in a pandemic situation. As a result, we have chosen not to go in if there were customers already in your business. When we were able to drop in, the discussions led us to the difficult realities our members were in. Sometimes just to 'lend an ear' provided a limited amount of support and it allowed us to further understand the reality that many have experienced these past two years.

Our approach moving forward is to continue building on this ecommerce initiative and continue to reach out to our members and local micro businesses to join us online. We had a fee structure for this service – one year free with a fee that varied depending on your business – member or not; a storefront commerce or a professional service, etc. We are rethinking the fee and looking at other funding models to support the ongoing operations of the [www.francomarket.ca](http://www.francomarket.ca). A decision will be forthcoming regarding fees.

We also invested in purchasing equipment to produce videos for our members to use on social media and to allow a greater collective marketing strategy by our members and our BIA. To date we have produced over a dozen short videos and have had really positive responses. This is an invitation to our members to contact us to discuss how and when we could produce a video for them, one that they can have and use to promote their commerce as we proceed to do the same. Our goal is to build capacity within our BIA with a vision to make a real and measurable difference for our members.





# FRANCOMARKET FOR ARTISANS AT BONNIE DOON



A recent addition to our programming is the creation of the 'FrancoMarket for Artisans'. This project was in our plans in June 2021. Covid had a word to say in whether we would be able to move forward with this project. We had attempted to launch this market in late September 2021, again in early and then late November. We decided to put this project on ice as we were starting and stopping and frustrating the merchants who were keen about being part of this new initiative.

Why would the French Quarter BIA decide to venture into this type of project? The reason is twofold. 1.) The Covid 19 pandemic had a devastating impact on some of our merchants with a huge loss of merchants who were located at the Bonnie Doon Centre. Granted, the Construction of the LRT was a huge factor in the decline of income experienced

by businesses located there. The Covid-19 pandemic completed the devastation of these businesses. In all, we have seen a total loss of 40 businesses. Others have filled the gap but when one sees the vacancies that remain at the shopping centre, we can safely conclude that a lot of work will have to go into changing this trend. 2.) A second motivation is to create a modest side income for the BIA so as to ensure that the levy stays at its current level which is a 10% decrease. It is important to state that the City will be collecting only 50% of the levy for 2022 and pay the difference to the BIAs.

The main purpose of the FrancoMarket for Artisans is to bring a new form of energy to the Bonnie Doon Centre. Your BIA feels a responsibility to do its part to create a new vibe at the center and allow the team at

the Center to be able to not only declare how dynamic the center is but also how appealing it has become for new merchants to come in. We see this as a two year effort at least and in fact feel that it should become an ongoing entity at the Bonnie Doon Centre. Some may suggest that this is the responsibility of the Centre. We see this situation differently. We are all in this together and we are all stronger if we rally together to ensure that all commercial spaces are occupied by thriving businesses.



# PRAIRIE CAN PROPOSAL

This year (late 2021 and early 2022) we have prepared and submitted an important funding proposal to Prairie Can. This proposal, entitled The French Quarter Participatory and Inclusive Marketplaces, will create a larger presence of our BIA through three key initiatives. One is the purchase and installation of an electronic billboard that will provide us with a tool to enhance our business community's visibility. A second is developing an internal marketing and ad agency to the benefit of our members and a third part is to create a marketplace that will further enhance a walkable business district and will include 4 events that will coincide with the four seasons.

This is an ambitious plan, but any organisation that manages a status quo is one relegated to a back seat and offers very little value. The French Quarter prides itself on being progressive, innovative and an effective influencer. This can be demonstrated by our branding utilising banners throughout our business district. The Bridge without Borders – a flag display of the countries who have French as an official language or a language of high importance for their country. And our qualities will be greatly demonstrated through this funding proposal.





# MOVING FORWARD

## WE WILL FOCUS ON 3 KEY THINGS:

### 1. Increasing Our Social Media Presence

The hiring of Soufiane Chounani, a graphics designer, visual artist, and our in-house video production guru, has given us the ability to offer additional services to our members such as: logo design, social media assistance, video production .... Give your BIA team a call so we can learn more about what your needs are and how we can best serve you. Our goal is to maximise the tax levy to your benefit and all of our efforts will be to ensure your continued business growth and your ongoing success.

### 2. Growing the FrancoMarket for Artisans

The FrancoMarket for Artisans launched on April 29, 2022. It is located at the north end of the Bonnie Doon Centre and we are planning to grow the number of merchants to 40 + artisans. Of course, with a market there needs to be some animation in order to add to the 'presence' of this dynamic market. We will bring musicians, buskers such as acrobats and acts of all types in order to enhance the ambiance – one that is upbeat and celebratory in nature.

### 3. Focusing our energies on a 'you campaign': Your Success Guarantees Our Success.

All of these initiatives require a sustained marketing effort by the BIA, the Bonnie Doon centre, the merchants, the customers and all members of the French Quarter BIA. This is important because if we all promote one another this will turn into a massive marketing campaign to the benefit of the merchants at the market, merchants at the mall and all other merchants within the French Quarter Business Improvement Area.

We, therefore, are reaching out to the entire French Quarter BIA family: merchants at the Bonnie Doon Centre, merchants west of the Millcreek Bridge (Bridge Without Borders); merchants along 91 Street north of 82 Avenue; and merchants along 82 Ave east of the Millcreek Bridge (Bridge Without Borders) to 83 Street. We are reaching out to all of our members to promote, share, and participate in all facets of social media – promoting oneself and all of the others so others can picky-back on your efforts to share and promote all our business district to the benefit of all who do business in our BIA. "All for one and one for all!" (I would end with a smiley face)

“ This coming year will be an extremely important one as we have launched the FrancoMarket for Artisans and with a positive outcome to our request for funding we will be extremely busy putting into motion our French Quarter Market Place, special events and a marketing and advertising program. ”



## FRENCH QUARTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

### Statement of Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2021

	Budget 2021	Total 2021	Total 2020
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Levies	\$ 132,000	\$ 132,268	\$ 165,124
Amortization of deferred contribution related to equipment and website <i>(Note 6)</i>	-	18,400	1,134
Other	80,000	11,922	-
	<u>212,000</u>	<u>162,590</u>	<u>166,258</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Salaries and benefits	113,400	115,658	86,210
Amortization of equipment and website	-	31,835	12,735
Office	51,050	25,369	10,714
Rent	14,612	16,932	14,534
Street beautification	10,000	6,111	215
Professional fees	8,000	5,800	8,199
Advertising and promotion	2,000	4,364	15,348
Insurance	1,200	1,229	1,069
Board	2,000	1,096	3,049
Telephone	1,500	1,078	1,063
Travel	3,000	677	145
	<u>206,762</u>	<u>210,149</u>	<u>153,281</u>
<b>EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 5,238</u>	<u>\$ (47,559)</u>	<u>\$ 12,977</u>



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