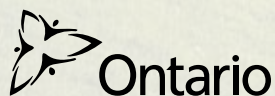




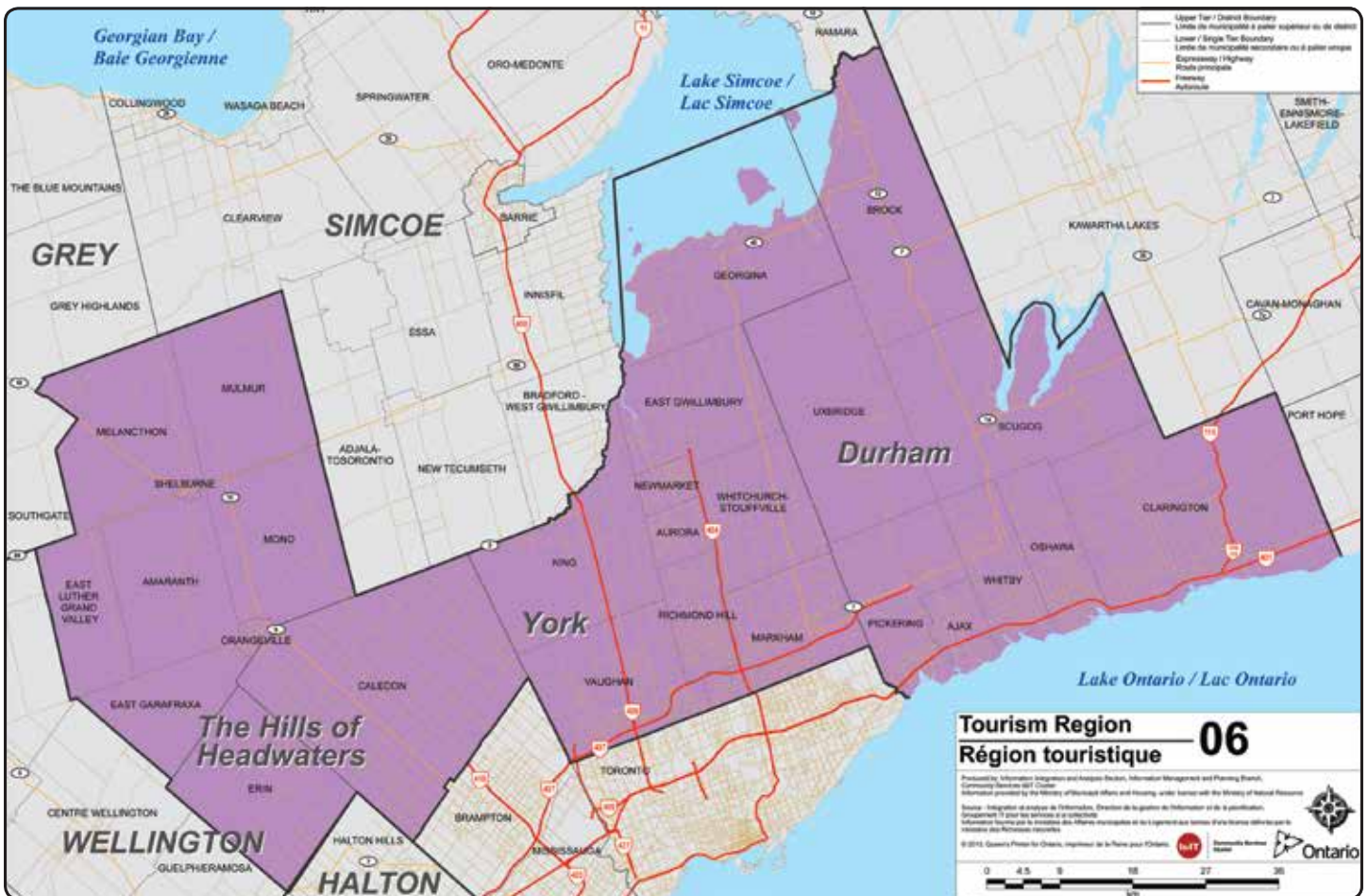
Ontario's Central Counties Media Kit





Background

Ontario's Central Counties (Regional Tourism Organization 6) encompasses the municipalities of York and Durham as well as the area represented by The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association. It is conveniently located just north of Toronto in Southern Ontario. It meets Lake Ontario in the south, stretches up to Lake Simcoe in the North, reaches Lake Scugog in the east, and ends west of Orangeville.



Key Facts

- Our region includes the vibrant urban centres of Markham, Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Ajax, Oshawa and Pickering.
- Central Counties is home to several historic towns and villages including Newmarket, Orangeville, Unionville, Kleinburg and Port Perry.
- Two impressive geological features have shaped the Central Counties landscape: the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine.
- There are more than 21,000 tourism-related businesses in Central Counties.
- There were over 7.5 million visitors to Central Counties in 2010.



○ Key Facts: By Region



- York Region is 1,776 square kilometers.
- It borders with Toronto in the South at Steeles Avenue, and travels north to Lake Simcoe. It meets Durham Region in the east, and Simcoe County and Peel Region in the west.
- York Region has a population of approximately 1,000,000.
- York Region is one of the most diverse municipalities in the province: 43% of the population are immigrants.
- Urban areas meet the countryside in York. The region has over 2,070 hectares of regional forest as well as farmlands, wetlands and kettle lakes.



- Durham Region is 2,537 square kilometers.
- Durham meets Lake Ontario in the south, Northumberland, Peterborough and Simcoe counties to the east, York Region and Toronto to the west.
- The population of Durham Region is over 630,000.
- Waterfront trails along Lake Ontario are accessible from the urban communities of Ajax, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering and Whitby. Further north, rural areas and rolling hills are marked by small towns and villages.



- The Hills of Headwaters includes Dufferin County, Caledon and Erin.
- The Hills of Headwaters has strong agricultural roots and is home to scenic small towns and villages including Caledon, Erin, Mono and Shelburne. The largest centre is Orangeville.
- The region is the birthplace of four major rivers: the Grand River, the Humber River, the Credit River and the Nottawasaga River.
- The Hills of Headwaters is one of the most concentrated equestrian areas in the province of Ontario.



○ Unique Experiences in Central Counties

- The Leviathan at Canada's Wonderland is the newest and biggest roller coaster in Canada.
- Central Counties has over 300 golf courses, and Canada's largest golf facility (Cardinal Golf Club).
- The Canadian Tire Motorsports Park is the largest automotive performance centre in Canada.
- The McMichael Canadian Art Collection houses over 6,000 Canadian works, including Group of Seven, First Nations and Inuit art.
- There are several National Historic Sites in the region including the Sharon Temple (Sharon), Parkwood Estate (Oshawa) and Leaskdale Manse, former home of Lucy Maud Montgomery (Uxbridge).
- Two heritage railways operate in Central Counties: the York-Durham Heritage Railway and the Credit Valley Explorer (Hills of Headwaters).
- Central Counties is home to North America's largest urban park – Rouge Park.
- Uxbridge is known as the Trail Capital of Canada, with 220+ km of protected green space.
- Markham's Pacific Mall is the largest Asian indoor shopping complex in North America.
- The 1860s style Black Creek Historic Brewery was the first in Ontario to replicate the brewing techniques and tastes of that era.

○ Major Events in Central Counties

- Central Counties will be hosting 14 events during the 2015 Pan Am Games.
- The Markham Fair is the largest community based volunteer organization in Canada.
- Taste of Asia in Markham is the largest Asian street festival in Canada.
- Boots & Hearts in Bowmanville is Canada's biggest country music festival.
- The GM Centre (Oshawa) hosts major live entertainment and sports events year round.
- Caledon is known as Canada's largest horse community, and the Caledon Equestrian Park features many prestigious equestrian events between the spring and fall.



○ Story Ideas

Central Counties has a diverse range of experiences to offer visitors. Below are 14 story ideas that we hope will inspire members of the media to visit and write about Central Counties.

1. **Leviathan: Canada's Wonderland**

The Leviathan at Canada's Wonderland is one of the world's biggest roller coasters. It's an extreme thrills experience with an 80° angle of descent. The speed of the first drop is almost 150km per hour. The ride dominates the park's landscape and is its sixteenth roller coaster.

2. **Discover our Trails**

Central Counties has an extensive array of trails for cyclists, hikers and horseback riders. Follow the shoreline of Lake Ontario on waterfront trails in Ajax, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering and Whitby. Connect to the Bruce Trail on the Niagara Escarpment or explore sections of the Trans Canada Trail. Visit Uxbridge, known as the Trails Capital of Canada, for hundreds of kilometres of trails.

3. **A Historic Brew at the Black Creek Pioneer Village**

Tour a recreation of an 1860s style brewery at the Black Creek Pioneer Village. The authenticity begins with the guide's period clothing, continues with brewing according to the techniques and tastes of the time, and ends with a sampling of truly traditional ales.

4. **Race Day at Canadian Tire Motorsports Park**

"Canada's home of motorsports" is a 750-acre, multi-track facility that hosts some of the best road racing series in North America. Watch the pros hit the tracks for Formula 1, IndyCar, sports cars, stock cars, endurance racing, motorcycles, motocross and more.

5. **Rouge Park: North America's Largest Urban Park**

"Canada's premier urban wilderness park", the largest urban park in North America is situated in Central Counties. Join a guided nature hike of Rouge Park to learn more about its inhabitants.



6. **Get to Know the Group of Seven at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection**

Tom Thompson and the Group of Seven were some of Canada's most influential artists. They explored the rugged scenery of Canada in the early twentieth century, and the McMichael hosts an extensive collection of their works. Tom Thompson's shack, his workspace in Toronto, is now located in the gallery's grounds, and six members of the Group of Seven are buried at the McMichael Artists' Cemetery.

7. **Pacific Mall: The Largest Chinese Indoor Mall in North America**

Embrace the Chinese influence in York Region at North America's largest Chinese indoor mall. Hundreds of retail shops sell everything from Asian food to cell phones, household appliances and fashion accessories.

8. **The Children of Peace: Sharon Temple National Historic Site**

Peace, equality and social justice were the values of a small community in Sharon, Ontario. They called themselves the Children of Peace. They built a temple in the 1830s, led Canada's first farmers' co-operative and built the country's first homeless shelter. Attend a Music in the Temple event during the spring and summer season, or visit The Illumination on the first Friday in September.

9. **Parkwood Estate: Movie Magic**

The impressive Parkwood Estate National Historic Site has inspired many filmmakers to use the location as a set. Films and TV series to feature the estate have included *The Kennedys*, *Murdoch Mysteries* and *Chicago*. Tour the property that was once the home of Canadian Autobaron Sam McLaughlin for a sense of Hollywood luxury.

10. **Meet the Celebrities at Bowmanville Zoo**

Bowmanville Zoo has a few VIP residents. Jonas the tiger starred in the film *Life of Pi*. Apparently he had a great time on set in Taiwan and enjoyed lounging under palm trees with his trainer during break times. Wolves Sydney and Kane starred in a Nike commercial, while black jaguar Baghera is very used to the spotlight and has been featured in numerous productions.

11. **Ride the Rails: York-Durham Heritage Railway/Credit Valley Explorer**

Ride on a 1950s locomotive along a line laid in the 1860s at the York-Durham Heritage Railway. William Gooderham had the line constructed so he could transport grain to his Toronto-based distillery. Hop on the Credit Valley Explorer in the Hills of Headwaters to experience "Southern Ontario's Most Scenic Rail Tour".



12. **Green Gables: Lucy Maud Montgomery and Leaksdale Ontario**

Famed author Lucy Maud Montgomery wrote eleven of her twenty-two novels at her home in Leaksdale, Ontario, where she lived for fifteen years. Call in advance for a tour of her home and the church where her husband was a Presbyterian minister.

13. **Pedal Power: Le Tour De Terra Cotta**

Le Tour De Terra Cotta is Ontario's fastest growing race. The annual event brings cyclists to the scenic Hills of Headwaters to compete on an 8.6km stretch of closed roads.

14. **Night Safari at Jungle Cat World**

This unique opportunity to see nocturnal animals during their most active hours begins as the sun sets. Experience an evening feeding tour before settling around a campfire and listening to the wild night sounds. Curl up for the night in the bunkhouse lodging – sleep tight!

Image Bank

Access a multitude of photos from the Central Counties region through our image bank:

<http://images.centralcounties.ca>

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