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MEDIA RELEASE

STRATFORD ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION HOSTS 11TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT STRATFORD FESTIVAL

*Celebrating progress and partnerships with keynote speaker John Kastner on
"Economic Development: It's More Than Just Business"*

Stratford, Ontario – June 12, 2025 ... **The Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEED Co.) is proud to announce its 11th Annual General Meeting (AGM), was held today at the Stratford Festival.** The event was open to all members of the public, and highlighted a year of impactful growth, strategic investment, and collaborative initiatives dedicated to shaping Stratford's economic future. This year's featured guest speaker is **John Kastner, former General Manager of the Stratford Perth Museum** and long-time community leader, spoke on the theme "Economic Development: It's More Than Just Business" in which he addressed the City of Stratford's Grand Trunk Railway project as well as the vital connection between culture, community well-being, and economic vitality—reminding the audience that strong economies are built on more than numbers alone. The AGM also included a presentation of SEED Co.'s 2024 Year in Review, confirmed new board members, and outlined key achievements in business development, industrial growth, workforce innovation, attainable housing, and sector collaboration.

More specifically, **the 2024 Year in Review** showcased Stratford's continued economic momentum, marked by significant industrial expansions, vibrant small business growth, and strategic initiatives to address attainable housing needs. Over 300,000 square feet of new industrial space is underway, driven by companies like Aisin Canada and Tri-Mach Group, reinforcing the city's role in advanced manufacturing and emerging sectors. A strong focus on workforce support and housing has advanced key projects, including new affordable units and the launch of innovative policies through the Attainable Market Housing Project and Housing Consortium. Small business development flourished with the launch of over 40 new businesses and hundreds of jobs created through flagship programs like Starter Company Plus and Summer Company. Notable events—from the Ontario Auto Mayors Roundtable to the Housing Symposium and arts-forward collaborations like the Provocation Festival—demonstrate Stratford's commitment to inclusive economic development, cultural vitality, and sustainable community building.

The Stratford Perth Centre for Business continues to play a vital role in supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem across Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys. As a key program of investStratford, the trademark of SEED Co., the Centre provides valuable resources, expert mentorship, and hands-on guidance to small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. Through its provincially funded and municipally supported programs, the Centre helped launch, stabilize, and grow dozens of local businesses in the past year alone - contributing to job creation, economic resilience, and community vibrancy. In the past year, it has supported the launch and growth of 42 businesses and contributed to the creation of 57 jobs—demonstrating the vital role it plays in strengthening the local economy and fostering a culture of innovation. From business planning and grant access to workshops and coaching, the Centre remains a cornerstone of SEED Co.'s commitment to inclusive, grassroots economic development.

investStratford CEO Joani Gerber: *"We're excited to reflect on the year's accomplishments, acknowledge the community and businesses behind them, and look ahead to what's next,"* said Joani Gerber, CEO of SEED Co. *"Stratford's economy continues to evolve in dynamic ways—and we remain committed to continued development that benefits all."*

The complete SEED Co. AGM report is available at www.investstratford.com

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About investStratford:

investStratford is committed to advancing the economic future of Stratford, Ontario, Canada through investment in arts, education, and industry. Globally Connected | Community Driven For more info visit: www.investStratford.com

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