



ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING 2026

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



ADVANCING STRATFORD'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

STRATFORD ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (SEED CO.)

MISSION: Advancing the economic future of Stratford through excellence, creativity and collaborative leadership

VALUES: Professional integrity, collaborative leadership, proactive and responsive solutions, excellence in service delivery

VISION: Relentlessly pursue community prosperity by being a globally recognized City for innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity

Mandate: investStratford is committed to advancing the economic future of Stratford through excellence, creativity, and collaborative leadership. The Corporation offers concierge-style advice, support, and guidance to businesses to attract, maintain and grow business and economic growth in the City of Stratford. The Stratford Perth Centre for Business supports entrepreneurship programs for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys.



Advancing Stratford's Economic Future

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

SEED Co. acknowledges that Stratford is located on land that was shared between the Neutral (Attawandaron), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. It is also important to acknowledge that municipal buildings are on territory governed by two treaties: The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant of 1701, made between the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron Tract Treaty of 1827, an agreement made between eighteen Anishinaabek Chiefs and the Canada Company. Today, this land is still home to many Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and play on this land.

Annual Members Meeting “2025 Year in Review”
Thursday, June 11, 2026
Main Lobby, Stratford Festival Theatre
55 Queen Street, Stratford, ON, N5A 6V2
8:30am - 9:30am

2026
2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

AGENDA

- 8:00am Arrival of Board Members & Continental Breakfast
- 8:30am Call to Order
- 1.0 Board Business Meeting Call to Order – 12th Annual Members Meeting of the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation
 - 2.0 Land Acknowledgement
 - 3.0 Prepared Greetings from John Nater, Member of Parliament.
 - 4.0 Greetings from Matthew Rae, Member of Provincial Parliament
 - 5.0 Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof
 - 6.0 Adoption of the Minutes from Annual General Meeting “2024 Year in Review” and Approval of the Agenda for the 12th Annual Members Meeting of SEED Co. “2025 Year in Review”
 - 7.0 2025 CEO Report – Joani Gerber
 - 8.0 SEED Co. By-law No. 2 Amendments
 - 9.0 Auditor’s Report and unaudited 2025 Financial Statements – Karmen Krueger, Director of Corporate Services, City of Stratford
 - 10.0 Appointment of Auditors
 - 11.0 Appointment and Confirmation of Directors
 - 12.0 Guest Speaker: Jonathan Church, Artistic Director Designate, Stratford Festival
 - 13.0 Adjournment
- 9:30am END

MINUTES from AMM: 2024 Year in Review (for approval)
Held Thursday, June 12, 2025, 8:00 to 9:30 AM
Main Lobby, Stratford Festival Theatre, 55 Queen Street



2025/26 Directors Present: Ekin Alfieri; Brad Beatty; Bill Boon; Kate Dekok; Jeff Graham; Sarah Hamza; Andrew Jantzi; Trevor McNeil; Martin Ritsma; John Wilkinson

Regrets: Mark Hunter

2024/25 Directors Present: Lori Radke

Staff Present: Joani Gerber; Mike Pullen; Elke Bidner; Janis Auster; Kendra Fry; Melanie Reasbeck; Meredith Pearce

Guests: Matthew Rae, Member of Provincial Parliament, Perth Wellington and Chief Government Whip; Karmen Krueger, Director of Corporate Services, City of Stratford

Guest Speaker: John Kastner, former General Manager, Stratford Perth Museum

1.0 Board Business Meeting Call to Order

K. Dekok made welcoming remarks, read the City's Land Acknowledgement, and at 8:30 AM, called the Annual Members Meeting: 2024 Year in Review to order.

2.0 Prepared Greetings from John Nater, Member of Parliament, Perth-Wellington

K. Dekok read written greetings provided by J. Nater, Member of Parliament, Perth-Wellington.

3.0 Greetings from Matthew Rae, Member of Provincial Parliament, Perth Wellington and Chief Government Whip

M. Rae, Member of Provincial Parliament, Perth Wellington and Chief Government Whip brought greetings to Board Members and guests.

4.0 Declarations of pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof

None.

5.0 Adoption of the Minutes from the Annual General Meeting: 2023 Year in Review (held June 13, 2024) and Approval of the 11th Annual Members Meeting Agenda

Moved by: M. Ritsma

Seconded by: T. McNeil

THAT the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting: 2023 Year in Review dated June 13, 2024 be approved; and, that the Agenda for the Annual Members Meeting: 2024 Year in Review of the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation be approved.

Carried.

6.0 Chief Executive Officer Report – 2024 in Review

J. Gerber provided an overview and highlights from the 2024 Year in Review Report, and thanked Board Members for their support and staff for their dedication. K. Dekok thanked J. Gerber, fellow Board Members and the investStratford Team.

Moved by: A. Jantzi

Seconded by: B. Beatty

THAT the 2024 Year in Review Report be received as information.

Carried.

7.0 SEEDCo. By-law No. 2 Amendments

K. Dekok provided an overview and rationale of the recommended amendments to the Corporate By-law No 2, intended to expand the eligibility requirements for new directors.

Moved by: L. Radke

Seconded by: B. Boon

THAT the members of the Corporation do hereby repeal section 10.3 of By-law No. 2 in its entirety, as recommended by the directors, and hereby approve, adopt and enact the following to replace this section with the following:

The Board of Directors shall nominate the remaining, proposed Directors to the members at a meeting of the members, and the composition of the proposed Directors shall be as follows:

- (a) two elected councillors from the Council for the City of Stratford whose nomination has been approved by the Council for the City of Stratford;*
- (b) one person who is an employee or independent contractor of the University of Waterloo or Festival Hydro Services Inc.; and*
- (c) not less than seven but no more than ten persons with skill sets that include, but are not limited to,
 - (i) board & executive governance;*
 - (ii) legal or financial compliance;*
 - (iii) global business and strategic development;*
 - (iv) community involvement and workforce development;*
 - (v) land development and engineering; and*
 - (vi) human resources and technology.**

From amongst such persons, the Board shall: (i) endeavor to ensure that such persons, in the aggregate, represent priority industry sectors including but not limited to small business, hospitality / tourism / culture, agriculture, manufacturing, and technology / finance; and, (ii) a maximum of three of such persons may reside outside the City of Stratford.

Carried.

8.0 Auditor's Report and unaudited 2024 Financial Statements

Karmen Krueger, Director of Corporate Services, City of Stratford, provided an overview of the 2024 Financial Statements.

Moved by: B. Beatty

Seconded by: E. Alfieri

THAT the unaudited 2024 Financial Statements be received as printed and presented.

Carried.

9.0 Appointment of Auditors

Moved by: S. Hamza

Seconded by: A. Jantzi

THAT the City of Stratford's auditor, be appointed as auditors for the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2025.

Carried.

10.0 Appointment and Confirmation of Board Directors

K. Dekok provided the following overview of appointments, executive positions, term renewals and retirements. Following the recommendation from the SEED Co. Board of Directors at the March 14, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting, and at the May 27, 2025 Regular City Council meeting, Council adopted the following resolution:

THAT John Wilkinson, representing the member of the public, be appointed to the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation Board of Directors for a three-year term to June 2028, with an option to extend for an additional two year term, or until a successor is appointed by Council.

AND THAT the following candidates be re-appointed to the SEED Co. Board of Directors:

- **Trevor McNeil**, serving as Board President.
- **Bill Boon**, serving as Vice President.
- **Kate Dekok**, serving as Past President.
- **Jeff Graham**, representing Festival Hydro.
- **Andrew Jantzi**
- **Sarah Hamza**
- **Ekin Alfieri**

City Council Appointments to the SEED Co. Board of Directors are:

- Councillor Brad Beatty
- Councillor Mark Hunter

Ex Officio Board Members are:

- Mayor Martin Ritsma
- Adam Betteridge, Interim City Chief Administrative Officer

Moved by: T. McNeil

Seconded by: B. Boon

THAT the slate of SEED Co. Directors be approved as presented for the 2025-2026 term.

Carried.

Acknowledgement of Retiring Directors' Service

K. Dekok acknowledged the service and thanked retiring Board Members:

- Lori Radke
- Joan Thomson

11.0 Guest Speaker:

John Kastner, former General Manager, Stratford Perth Museum

K. Dekok introduced former General Manager, Stratford Perth Museum.

J. Kastner provided an insightful and entertaining presentation on the founding of Stratford and the history of Stratford's industries over the decades.

K. Dekok thanked J. Kastner and made closing remarks.

12.0 Adjournment

Moved by: J. Graham

Seconded by: A. Betteridge

That the Annual Members Meeting: 2024 Year in Review adjourn.

Carried.

Board of Directors 2025/2026

Trevor McNeil, Manager, MTE Consultants Inc. (Board President)

Bill Boon, General Manager of Administration, Aisin Canada Inc. (Board Vice President)

Ekin Alfieri, Account Manager, TD Commercial Banking

Brad Beatty, Councillor, City of Stratford

Kate Dekok, National Director of Sales – Bernafon (Past President)

Jeff Graham, President & CEO, Festival Hydro & Rhyzome Networks

Sarah Hamza, Director, Audience Engagement, Stratford Festival

Mark Hunter, Councillor, City of Stratford

Andrew Jantzi, Engineering and Quality Management, New-Form Tools

André Morin, CAO, City of Stratford

Catherine Newell Kelly, Registrar, University of Waterloo

Martin Ritsma, Mayor, City of Stratford

Hon. John Wilkinson, E.C.O., President & CEO of Wilkinson Insight Incorporated

investStratford Team

Joani Gerber, Chief Executive Officer

Mike Pullen, Managing Director

Janis Auster, Operations and Administration Lead

Elke Bidner, Marketing and Communications Lead

Holly Mortimer, Business Specialist, Stratford Perth Centre for Business

Kendra Fry, Housing Specialist, investStratford

Melanie Reasbeck, Grand Trunk Renewal Project Coordinator, investStratford

Meredith Pearce, Summer Intern, Stratford Perth Centre for Business

JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

To Our Stakeholders, Community Partners, and Local Businesses:

As we reflect on 2025, the central theme that emerges for the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation (SEED Co./investStratford) is one of remarkable local resilience. It was a year characterized by significant macroeconomic headwinds and trade uncertainties, yet our community demonstrated an unwavering ability to adapt, grow, and thrive.

The broader economic landscape of 2025 presented a complex picture. On a national level, we welcomed the easing of inflation back toward the 2 per cent target, which allowed the Bank of Canada to aggressively reduce the key interest rate to 2.25 per cent. This provided much-needed relief to consumers and businesses alike. However, these positive strides were counterbalanced by global geopolitical tensions and the implementation of U.S. trade tariffs. These trade uncertainties cast a shadow over Ontario's economic outlook, particularly impacting the manufacturing and automotive sectors, and contributing to a sluggish provincial real GDP growth of roughly 0.8 per cent.

Nowhere was the contrast between provincial challenges and local strength more evident than in our labour market. While Ontario's overall job creation slowed—pushing the provincial unemployment rate up to 7.7 per cent—Stratford proudly maintained an unemployment rate below 4 per cent. This figure stands as one of the lowest in both Ontario and Canada. Even with manufacturing accounting for roughly 63 per cent of our local economy during a time of heightened trade anxiety, Stratford's foundation remained exceptionally robust.

This stability is no accident; it is the direct result of strategic investments, community partnerships, and the relentless drive of our local entrepreneurs. In 2025, we saw incredible progress across several key pillars of our economy:

Industrial and Manufacturing Expansion

Stratford witnessed over 300,000 square feet of new industrial space underway. Local companies including Aisin Canada, Cleanfix North America, Tri-Mach, and Accumetal advanced major growth projects, while 75 percent of recent municipal land sales supported the expansion of existing Stratford businesses.

Fostering Small Business and Innovation

Our small business ecosystem continues to be a vibrant engine of growth. The Stratford Perth Centre for Business flourished this past year, supporting the launch of over 40 new local businesses and startups. We also deepened our commitment to fostering a culture of innovation through grassroots programs like Summer Company and Starter Company Plus, and by introducing our highly successful "AI for Small Business" micro-workshop series to keep our local merchants on the cutting edge.

Infrastructure, Housing, and Tourism

Economic development requires a holistic approach, and we tackled growth head-on by fostering a robust environment for industrial expansion. Recognizing that housing is essential for workforce retention, we saw significant progress in our housing supply with more than 323 new market rate units which included 232 townhomes, alongside key supportive and affordable housing projects. Furthermore, the Stratford Festival enjoyed its strongest year since before the pandemic, injecting immense vitality into our downtown core and driving the city's tourism economy.

As we close the chapter on 2025, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to our Board of Directors, our dedicated investStratford team, our municipal partners at the City of Stratford, and the business community that makes this city so extraordinary. While global economic challenges may arrive at our doorstep, our strategic focus on sustainable community building and targeted business support has kept Stratford moving confidently forward.

We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Trevor McNeil

Joani Gerber



Trevor McNeil
Board President, investStratford



Joani Gerber
CEO, investStratford

Annual Members Meeting

2025 Year in Review – Introduction

2026

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2025, investStratford catalyzed substantial economic advancement, reinforcing the City’s position as a dynamic hub for industry, innovation, and community development. The local manufacturing and industrial sectors experienced robust activity, building upon an already impressive footprint of over 7 million square feet. Demonstrating exceptional business retention, 75% of recent municipal land sales supported the expansion of existing Stratford companies, with eight more major enterprises slating growth for the coming years. Concurrently, the City made tangible headway on its housing objectives by advancing diverse supportive, affordable, and market-rate projects under a comprehensive municipal strategy. On the entrepreneurship front, the Stratford Perth Centre for Business nurtured a thriving startup ecosystem, facilitating over 170 consultations, launching dozens of new ventures, and delivering tailored programming for youth and the arts. Highlighted by high-impact engagements like the sold-out AI Summit and the Industry Education Breakfast, the past year underscored investStratford’s unwavering commitment to driving sustainable prosperity and equipping the local economy for future success.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE 2025 OPERATIONAL YEAR INCLUDE:

Company Expansions: Stratford companies continue to grow and are underway with expansions that represent significant new industrial assessment. In the past year we have seen company expansions for Aisin Canada, CleanFix, Magest, Danny's Truck & Equipment Repair, Trillium Hatchery, Tri-Mach and Accumetal. Along with new investments into the City, investStratford is currently working with eight other City companies planning expansions in 2026 and into 2027. These expansions add to the over 7 million square feet of industrial buildings in the City.

Industrial Growth: Automotive and other advanced manufacturing expansions comprise a large portion of industrial growth, along with agri-business and the construction and trades sectors. Since 2015, approximately 75% of City land sales have been to existing companies for expansion purposes, with 25% to companies that have chosen to invest and locate in Stratford.

FDI Missions: As part of the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance, investStratford continued its efforts to lead foreign direct investment (FDI) missions to not only nurture our relationships with our Japanese and German companies, but also to explore and open new markets and opportunities such as agri-business and food processing. This is in addition to implementing strategies to support our many home-grown and Canadian-based businesses here in Stratford, such as new domestic and inter-provincial markets.

Housing: In 2025, the City-owned 398 Erie Street property got underway for development into a supportive housing project, along with the renovation of the City-owned 246 Railway Avenue for a full two-bedroom home to be used by Social Services for affordable housing.

2025 experienced significant residential growth in market housing, with 323 new units of which 232 were townhomes. The educational work being done by City Building, Planning and the Housing Specialist continued to bear fruit in a market that is shifting to match current and future demand with new ARU's and increased numbers of single bedroom units, townhouses and apartments buildings.

2025 SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As the entrepreneurial heart of our community, the Stratford Perth Centre for Business (SPCB) operates under the stewardship of investStratford and its Board, with core funding from the Province of Ontario and vital support from the City of Stratford and partners. Our mandate is to foster a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem across Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys. We achieve this by providing expert advisory services, targeted grant programs, and professional development workshops designed to equip local businesses for success.

The past year marked a period of significant achievement and measurable growth. The SPCB was a key contributor to the local economy, delivering over 170 business consultations. This work directly supported the establishment of 43 new enterprises and the expansion or maintenance of 48 existing businesses.

The activity of these client companies generated substantial economic value, resulting in the creation of more than 123 new jobs for our community in 2025. To facilitate this growth, the Centre administered over \$120,000 in direct investment to 28 local businesses through our two signature programs.

The 2025 Starter Company Plus Program* provided crucial mentorship and a \$5,000 grant to 18 dedicated entrepreneurs from Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County. This year's cohort had a particular focus on the arts and culture sector, empowering a talented group of artists, musicians, and event producers, as well as founders of innovative wellness programs among others. Kevin September created Our Story an Art gallery featuring local artists and experiences. Louise Liu is an Ancient Chinese culture specialist / Tai Chi instructor focused on her Lousie Liu Training business. Kate Kirby's yoga studio situated in downtown Stratford features accessible and inclusive yoga classes.

The 2025 Summer Company Program* continued its tradition of nurturing the next generation of business leaders. We supported 10 student entrepreneurs (enrolled in secondary and post-secondary education) with \$3,000 grants to launch their first commercial ventures. These businesses spanned a range of industries, including financial planning, photography, and home services. The program provides a critical launchpad for these young professionals, with the majority intending to continue their businesses throughout the year.

*Both the Starter Company Plus Program and the Summer Company Program are funded by the Province of Ontario, the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, supported by the City of Stratford and managed by investStratford. The Starter Company Plus provides participating entrepreneurs with 6 weeks of business education including mentorship opportunities, business planning, marketing, financial literacy, and brand development. At the end of the program, participants are eligible to receive a \$5K grant.

NEWS AND EVENTS:

2025 celebrated major industrial expansions, launched new businesses, and strengthened community partnerships, promoting "The Stratford Advantage" and setting the stage for continued growth in 2026. Support for entrepreneurship was an important focus, with the SPCB launching 18 new local businesses through the Starter Company Plus program, 10 student-led summer businesses and planning for new 2026 Arts and Culture-focused winter cohort. The 2025 Summer Company Program graduates were celebrated along with a mix of entrepreneurs via 2 seasons of new podcast entitled "Evolving Entrepreneurship". In addition to major expansion announcements by Aisin and Cleanfix, the organization also led a sold-out AI education event hosted by CampTech's Avery Schwartz as well as a sold-out Industry Education and Awareness Breakfast focused on Community Safety & Well-being. Together, these strategic events and targeted communication efforts successfully amplified our core mission, showcasing our resilient business community and validating the true power of "The Stratford Advantage."

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Summer Company Program Applications:** In January, local students were encouraged to apply for provincial Summer Company grants of up to \$3,000, initially made available to eight student summer start-ups. <https://tinyurl.com/5card5n5>
- **Affordable Housing RFEOI:** In January, the City of Stratford issued a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEOI) for the development of affordable, attainable, and mixed-market housing. <https://tinyurl.com/45av8c94>
- **“Evolving Entrepreneurship” Podcast Launch:** In February, the Stratford Perth Centre for Business launched a groundbreaking podcast celebrating homegrown Canadian resilience and innovation in Stratford, Ontario, Canada. <https://tinyurl.com/2r5nvvak>
- **Grand Trunk Site Renewal Vision:** In February, the City of Stratford advanced its vision for the Grand Trunk site, focusing on housing, community spaces, and economic growth. <https://tinyurl.com/2vh4rsu9>
- **Grand Trunk Renewal Project Co-ordinator:** In March, a special coordinator was hired to advance the Grand Trunk Renewal project as outlined in the 2018 Master Plan. The role collaborated with non-profit and for-profit partners to explore potential uses and design options, while reporting to the CEO of investStratford, the Strategic Initiatives Lead of Stratford, and Members of the Grand Trunk Ad-Hoc Committee. <https://tinyurl.com/mry4d9m4>
- **Stratford Perth Tariff Task Force:** In March, Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County united to launch the Stratford Perth Tariff Task Force to support local businesses and citizens amid international trade uncertainty. <https://tinyurl.com/mr43r6u6>
- **11th Annual Members Meeting:** On June 12, the Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation hosted its 11th Annual Members Meeting at the Stratford Festival. The event celebrated progress and partnerships, with keynote John Kastner *“Economic Development: It’s More Than Just Business.”* <https://tinyurl.com/4mbxwmcu>
- **SKARB Manufacturing Facility:** In June, SKARB advanced its Stratford manufacturing facility to accelerate modular housing production. The facility is expected to create 20 to 30 new jobs in the manufacturing and skilled trades sectors. <https://tinyurl.com/44675rdh>
- **Summer Company Program Launch:** In August, ten new small businesses were launched with the mentorship of the Stratford Perth Centre for Business. Provincial Summer Company grants totaling \$30,000 aided these student summer start-ups. <https://tinyurl.com/52pcr68x>
- **Aisin Canada Video:** *“Why Stratford”* showcases why Aisin Canada chose Stratford, Ontario as the ideal location for advanced manufacturing. With access to skilled talent, strategic transportation links, and a supportive business environment, Stratford offers the perfect blend of innovation, infrastructure, and community. Discover how this thriving city drives Aisin Canada’s success. <https://youtu.be/CEMPSgiQP0c>

- **#HowUSee Stratford Campaign:** Developed through conversations with investStratford, local creator and historian Kevin September launched a campaign to engage residents and visitors of the Festival City by asking them to explain what Stratford means to them. His campaign involved strategically locating notebooks at a few different city landmarks and compiling them into an exhibit.
- **Provocation Festival Partnership 2025:** Community voices were again united under the “City of Dreamers” theme to explore the future of citizen-powered urban development, housing, and culture with investStratford supporting:
 - **Trophy X Dreamweavers:** Trophy X Dream Weavers transformed Stratford’s historic Grand Trunk site into a glowing village of ten intimate tents, each one home to a powerful tale of transformation, hope, and the dreams that shape who we are. Inside each softly lit space, local storytellers share personal stories that reflect the heart of our region—its turning points, quiet awakenings, and bold aspirations.
 - **Maker Multiverse:** Constructing Futures was held on October 16 with a Panel that speaking to the theme *“We Build What We Imagine”*. Community panelists were asked what a truly future-ready Stratford requires—health, affordability, culture, sustainability, and economic dynamism—and how small cities like Stratford can lead. They explored tourism, social infrastructure and resilience, youth attraction and retention, and which technologies should be embraced or avoided.
- **Stratford AI Summit:** In September, the *“Real Skills. Real People. Real World AI”* Sold-Out Summit provided a day of practical skills, real-world examples, and interactive learning to help professionals work smarter with AI. <https://tinyurl.com/5bk4fu27>
- **Cleanfix North America Expansion:** In October, Cleanfix North America broke ground on a major expansion aimed at increasing production output and administrative positions. <https://tinyurl.com/bm4kdn8w>
- **Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce Business and Government Roundtable**, moderated by Aaron Martin, GM of Chamber and Joani Gerber on Oct. 16, 2025. Business leaders and community members had opportunity to connect directly with elected officials and decision-makers. Featured Q&A with MPP Matthew Rae, MP John Nater, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Mayor Sue Orr, Mayor Al Strathdee, Mayor Walter McKenzie.
- **Evolving Entrepreneurship Podcast**, Season 2: In November, the Stratford Perth Centre for Business announced a new season of the Evolving Entrepreneurship podcast, continuing to celebrate resilience, leadership, and innovation in Stratford and beyond. <https://tinyurl.com/478rxrkn>
- **Starter Company Plus** (Arts & Culture) In November, applications opened for the Winter 2026 Starter Company Plus program, inviting the next wave of local creators and entrepreneurs in the arts and culture sector to apply for specialized support. <https://tinyurl.com/4ya2fkwe>
- **Stratford & District Business Excellence Awards**, Nov. 6, returned for 29th year and were hosted at the iconic Tom Patterson Theatre, celebrating the area’s businesses, innovators, industry leaders, changemakers, and community champions. investStratford, a Platinum Partner, sponsored the Business of the Year award which was presented by Bill Boon to New-Form Tools.

- **Tariff Relief Funding for Aisin Canada:** On December 5, MPP Matthew Rae announced \$2.2 million in funding for Aisin Canada Inc. (ACI) through the Ontario Together Trade Fund (OTTF). The investment will create 30 new, good-paying jobs and protect 530 positions in Stratford. <https://tinyurl.com/2bcfccyp>
- **Starter Company Plus Launch:** On December 8, eighteen new small businesses launched into Stratford and the surrounding area, supported by the provincial Starter Company Plus Program and a collective \$90,000 in grant funding. <https://tinyurl.com/tmuebj3x>
- **Community Safety and Wellbeing Industry Education and Awareness Breakfast** – Nov. 26, 2025. Presented in partnership with Social Services, the morning learning session features Kim McElroy speaking to Community Safety and Well-being Plan with Chief Skinner followed by Panel discussion with Moderator Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services and Panelists Greg Skinner, Chief of Police, Stratford Police Services, Neil Anderson, Director of Emergency Services / Fire Chief, Connor Occleston, Acting Chief Building Official, Building and Planning Services and Darrell Chalmers, HSE Specialist, Cooper Standard. Event was sold out and received very positive feedback.

2025 ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

SEED Co. has been active in the following associations and organizations:

- Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO)
- Economic Development Association of Canada (EDAC)
- Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce
- Intelligent Communities Forum (ICF)
- Perth-Huron Builders Association (PHBA)
- Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association (APMA)
- Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) including:
 - Ontario Food Cluster Group (OFC)
 - Ontario Manufacturing Communities Alliance (OMCA)
 - South Central Ontario Region (SCOR)
 - Centre for Automotive Research (CAR)/ Automotive Communities Partnership (ACP)
 - Japan Society and Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ)
 - Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC)
 - Site Selectors Guild
 - Ontario Aerospace Council (OAC)

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

- City of Stratford
- Perth County
- Town of St. Marys
- Province of Ontario (Various Ministries)
- Rural Ontario Development Program
- Government of Canada
- Trade Commission Service
- Invest Ontario
- Invest Canada
- National Research Council (NRC)
- Stratford City Centre BIA
- Destination Stratford
- Stratford Public Library
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario)
- Perth Community Futures Development Corporation
- Stratford Perth Community Foundation
- Stratford Festival
- University of Waterloo – Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business
- Festival Hydro/Rhizome Network
- Four County Labour Marketing Planning Board
- Stratford-Bruce Peninsula Employment Service System Manager
- Partners in Employment
- Conestoga College Stratford Campus
- Avon Maitland District School Board
- Huron Perth Catholic District School Board
- Agilec Employment Services
- United Way Perth-Huron

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2026 AND BEYOND

Trade and Tariffs: The City is fortunate to have so far weathered the impacts of the trade war, with companies reporting that tariffs have had minimal impact on local manufacturing. Toyota automotive production is nonstop and growing, which is having a positive impact on feeder plants in Stratford. Companies are also reporting that while U.S. business has leveled out, other markets are compensating with an increased focus on Canada, Mexico, and other international markets. In 2025, a Task Force comprised of key stakeholders and business leaders was established to keep the lines of communication open and disseminate information.

FDI Missions: As part of the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance, investStratford will continue its efforts to lead foreign direct investment (FDI) missions to not only nurture our relationships with our Japanese and German companies, but also to explore and open new markets and opportunities such as agri-business and food processing. This is in addition to implementing strategies to support our many home-grown and Canadian-based businesses here in Stratford, such as new domestic and inter-provincial markets.

New Industrial Lands: Land for future industrial growth continues to be top of mind to support existing company expansions and attract new investment to further diversify and strengthen the City's economy. A key objective in the City of Stratford's Strategic Priorities 2024-2027 is to support economic growth and diversification by bringing new industrial lands to market. investStratford and City staff continue their work to service and open new serviced business park lands and implement strategic options for future new lands.

Housing: investStratford is participating in the City Housing Strategy Alignment initiative through an interdepartmental working group. The strategy will align the City's major housing-related plans and initiatives and bring forward a consolidated Municipal Housing Approach in 2026 that clarifies priorities, roles, financial implications, and the City's approach to using municipally owned land for housing. This work provides an opportunity to create shared clarity, strengthen internal coordination, and support a unified, forward-looking approach to housing.

Airport: A partnership has been renewed with the University of Waterloo to undertake a 10-year update to the 2015 Economic Impact Analysis Report for the Stratford Municipal Airport. The 2026 Study will also make recommendations regarding business development and revenue generation opportunities. The recommendations contained within the updated Study are to be structured to act as a guide and baseline for a new Stratford Municipal Airport Advisory Committee that is being formed to advise and make recommendations to City Council.

The Stratford Perth Centre for Business is expanding its commitment to an evolving generation of business owners by delivering targeted, inclusive programming that directly addresses the complex hurdles faced by young and new Canadian entrepreneurs. We are enhancing our core advisory services through our hands-on AI Learning Labs, the rollout of new educational support programming, alongside focused guidance on succession planning and grant programs like Starter Company Plus and Summer Company. Recognizing that entrepreneurial success requires holistic care, we are also actively pursuing grant funding to launch a dedicated mental health support initiative. In 2026, we will be fully equipped to help our local business community thrive and innovate in the modern economy.



CITY OF STRATFORD
Corporate Services Department
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(519) 271-0250
Fax: (519) 273-5041
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May 26, 2026

Joani Gerber, CEO
Stratford Economic Enterprise
Development Corporation (SEED Co.)
82 Erie Street, 3rd floor
Stratford, ON
N5A 2M4

RE: 2025 Unaudited Income Statement

I have attached the unaudited income statement for SEED Co. operations for the year ended 2025.

Please be advised that the City of Stratford's annual audited financial statements will be available later this year and will be presented to Council through the Finance & Labour Relations Sub-committee.

SEED Co. is part of the City's consolidated financial statements and will be separated as a note to the statements.

Yours truly,

Karmen Digitally signed by
Krueger Karmen Krueger
Date: 2026.05.19
14:51:27 -04'00'

Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA
Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer

STRATFORD ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (SEED Co.)
Income Statement - General
For the year ended December 31, 2025

	2025 Budget	2025 Unaudited
REVENUE		
City Funding - SEED CO	\$ 610,069	\$ 620,069
City Funding - SBEC	132,439	132,439
Federal funding - SEED CO		20,000
Provincial funding - SBEC	264,506	197,005
Recoverable Expenses	8,250	64,611
Amount Contributed from Accumulated Surplus - Housing Special Project	32,000	32,000
City Funding - Housing Special Project	40,000	35,616
City Funding - Grand Trunk Special Project	200,000	200,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,287,264	\$ 1,301,740
EXPENDITURES		
Operational		
Salaries & Benefits - SEED CO	829,623	691,338
Training/Professional development	7,500	9,644
Insurance & Custodial	6,400	-
Equipment & Capital	5,000	4,973
Support services & fees	30,000	33,133
Office Supplies, Telephone & Communications	59,902	30,473
Rent & Common Area Maintenance	22,286	19,617
Consultants	65,000	197,708
Legal & Audit	5,000	14,240
Meals & meeting expenses	7,553	14,442
Contingency	10,000	-
Total Operational Expenditures	\$ 1,048,264	\$ 1,015,568
Core Programs		
Conferences/trade shows/travel/mileage	50,000	83,443
Promotions/marketing/collateral materials	30,000	35,387
SBEC Grants	109,000	118,500
Memberships	40,000	39,060
Events	10,000	59,235
Total Core Programs Expenditures	\$ 239,000	\$ 335,625
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 1,287,264	\$ 1,351,193
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 0	\$ (49,453)

STRATFORD ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (SEED Co.)
Statement of Accumulated Surplus
As at December 31, 2025

BEGINNING SURPLUS	\$	165,022
EXCESS REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES (EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUE) FOR THE YEAR		
General	\$	(49,453)
Special Projects - Housing	\$	(32,000)
ENDING SURPLUS	\$	83,569

STRATFORD ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (SEED Co.)
2025 Small Business Enterprise Centre - Expenditure Details
As at December 31, 2025

2025
Unaudited

EXPENDITURES

Salaries & Benefits	213,140
Promotions/marketing/collateral materials	-
Training/Professional development	-
Insurance & Custodial	-
Equipment & Capital	-
Support services & fees	-
Office Supplies, Telephone & Communications	9,653
Consultants	-
Legal & Audit	-
Meals & meeting expenses	-
Conferences/trade shows/travel/mileage	-
Contingency	-
Rent & Common Area Maintenance	19,617
Events	59,235
SBEC Grants	118,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 420,145

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Stratford's Crane Business Park Lots 2, 3 and 4 are available for purchase!



SCHAEFFLER



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Industry Education and Awareness Breakfast
Community Safety and Wellbeing