

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **\$400K IN FEDERAL FUNDING AWARDED TO INVESTSTRATFORD TO SUPPORT PROJECTS SPECIFIC TO TOURISM RECOVERY**

*Economic Response and Recovery Task Force to Administer Funds Supporting Tourism*

Stratford, ON – June 4, 2020... **Today investStratford announced they will receive \$400,000 in federal funding redirected to support projects specific to tourism recovery.** The funds, delivered through FedDev Ontario's the Canadian Experiences Fund (CEF), will be administered by investStratford for the City of Stratford's Economic Response and Recovery Task Force. The funding will help to mitigate damages incurred to the area due to COVID-19 and the resulting drop in tourism revenues for local businesses.

The anchor of Stratford's hospitality and tourism sector, the Stratford Festival attracts more than 500,000 patrons from local and international locations between the months of April and November. Earlier this month, it announced it would suspend the 2020 season. The effects of the announcement, and subsequent postponements of Stratford Summer Music, the Canadian Dairy Xpo and others has had a dramatic effect on the retailers, restaurants and accommodation providers in the city.

In an effort to combat the effects of COVID-19 on area businesses, the CEF funding will support a number of projects and programs to increase visits to the city during the summer, fall and early winter seasons.

Working in collaboration with the Stratford Tourism Alliance, the Stratford City Centre Committee, the Stratford Festival and other tourism-related entities, projects investing in tourism infrastructure assets, public health and safety resources and arts/culture/heritage events will begin immediately.

The City of Stratford's Economic Response & Recovery task force meets weekly. To submit ideas, feedback and to learn more about membership, objectives and activities, please visit [www.investstratford.com](http://www.investstratford.com).

**The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages stated** *"From scenery to history to culture, Stratford is truly one of Southern Ontario's gems. We know that the suspension of the Stratford Festival 2020 season is having a major impact on local businesses, and we're here for them. This significant investment will help the City show visitors just how much it has to offer and keep them coming back. Our message to small businesses and those whose livelihoods rely on them is clear: we're working with you to help our economy come back stronger than ever."*

**Mayor Dan Mathieson** stated *"These funds are a welcome investment in the tourism recovery in the City of Stratford. The cancellation of the Festival season, and a likely reduction of a summer tourism season has immediate and long-term impacts. Projects funded by this grant will provide a much-needed boost and encourage safe leisure travel and local engagement."*

**Joani Gerber, CEO of investStratford** stated *"This investment will allow the Recovery Task Force to engage and execute on projects that will provide immediate relief and long-term benefit. I'm grateful to the support of FedDev and look forward to working closely with the City of Stratford and our tourism partners."*

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: [investStratford.com](http://investStratford.com)*

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