



## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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### SEPTEMBER Highlights

1. New Business - The Blowes Inn
2. New Executive Director - Stratford Pride Community Centre
3. Check out our latests Blog posts - Grotto Hair & Stratford Blooms
4. Restos - Sign up to provide uni and college student discounts!
5. Filming next week in Market Square
6. Orange Shirts - Look out for pick up dates!
7. 2025 Accessibility Award - Nominations now open
8. BIA Coffee Club - September 28th @ Modo Yoga
9. Dragon Boat Festival this weekend!
10. Stratford's first-ever Floating Silent Disco!
11. SAVE THE DATE - Film Screening Sept 30 & WW Nov 29/30
12. Website Tips from Ryan Jaques
13. Monthly Message from BIA General Manager, Jamie Pritchard

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### NEW BUSINESS

Click the button below to read our New Business story in the Business Spotlight section of our website.



The Blowes  
Inn

**NEW Executive Director**

The Stratford Pride Community Centre is a safe space for the Perth-Huron LGBTQ+ community to share social, educational and health-related issues, and is the only rural-based Pride centre located in southern Ontario. Welcome to new ED, A.J. Ashley, pictured on the right here with staff member, Sidney

(on the left)! Click [here](#) for more info.



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## CHECK OUT OUR BLOG POSTS!



Jillian & Grotto Hair



Amanda & Stratford Blooms

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## LOOKING FOR FOOD BUSINESSES TO OFFER STUDENT DISCOUNTS



The brand new Conestoga College campus in downtown Stratford at 60 Erie St is officially open to students! This fall term sees 70 students here to study Early Childhood Education, Personal Support Worker and Academic Upgrading.

We'll have more information to share in next month's newsletter.

We'd love to welcome Conestoga AND University of Waterloo students properly, offering them food and beverage businesses downtown where they can get a

discount when they show their student ID. Neither of these schools have a cafeteria and as you likely know, university/college students live on tight budgets. The BIA had designed a window decal for participating shops and restaurants. Please sign up via the button below if you are keen to participate!

## Student Discount Program

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### FILMING IN MARKET SQUARE



September 10th-12th, filming of a Hallmark movie will be taking place in Market Square and parts of Wellington St and Market Place. Market Place will be closed to through traffic and there may be halted traffic for a few minutes here and there on Wellington. Each day activities will begin around 10:00 am and go deep into the night. Please be respectful of cordoned off areas during this time period and the set up days of September 8th and 9th. Thank you!

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### ORANGE SHIRT - Pick Up Info



Thank you for your enthusiasm! We had an amazing number of t-shirts ordered. We expect downtown to be awash with orange on September 30th!

If you have pre-ordered T-shirts, you are welcome anytime to drop into Destination Stratford, 47 Downie St, to pick them up.

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### 2025 ACCESSIBILITY AWARD

#### **NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN until Friday, October 3**

This is National AccessAbility Week, an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the ongoing efforts of those who are working to remove barriers in our community.

For the past 14 years, the City of Stratford's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) has presented its Accessibility Award to acknowledge one business, organization or individual in Stratford that has worked hard to make their space or service more accessible to everyone.

Nominations are now open for the 2025 award. Nominate your business or someone else's. Lets ensure those trying are getting noticed.

The AAC is looking for assistance in choosing and honouring someone locally that supports the idea that all citizens should move freely and without restriction

through our city.

Nomination will be accepted until Friday, October 3, and can be submitted to [adviscom@stratford.ca](mailto:adviscom@stratford.ca)

Past nominees are welcome to apply again.

More information about the Accessibility Award, along with an online nomination form, is also available at <https://www.stratford.ca/en/news/accessibility-award-nominations-open.aspx>

Previous award winners include:

2024 - Stratford Festival  
2023 - Nathaniel DeWeerd  
2022 - MacLeods Scottish Shop  
2021 - The Bruce Hotel  
2020 - Infinity Dance Studio  
2019 - Romeo Public School  
2018 - Jobsite Brewing  
2017 - 27 Marketplace  
2016 - Avondale United Church  
2015 - Stratford Country Club  
2014 - The Local  
2013 - Stratford Northwestern Secondary School  
2012 - Stratford Festival  
2011 - Stratford Business Centre

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## BIA COFFEE CLUB - THURSDAY, September 25th



**DOWNTOWN  
STRATFORD  
BIA COFFEE CLUB**

**Thursday September 25th  
8:30 to 9:45am  
164 Downie Street**

## **STOP IN, HAVE A COFFEE, WIN A PRIZE & MAKE NEW CONTACTS!**

Join us this month for your morning brew on Thursday, September 25th at the newly renovated MODO Yoga, downtown Stratford's eco-friendly hot yoga studio.

To assist us with the coffee order, we'd like to request an RSVP by September 23rd. That said, unregistered drop-ins are welcome!

Photos of August's Coffee Club are on our [website](#). Thank you to Milan and Jay of Chuck's Roadhouse for hosting Coffee Club in August!

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## 28TH ANNUAL DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL



By now you will have received your Chinese lanterns and hung them in your front window in celebration of this exciting event this weekend!

Get ready for an unforgettable day on the banks of the beautiful Avon River as we celebrate the 28th Running of the *Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival!* With over 40 teams from across Ontario competing in more than 30 thrilling races, this is one of the premier dragon boat events in the province — and spectator admission is completely free!

Come for the Competition – Stay for the Fun!

Enjoy the heart-pounding races starting at 8:00 a.m.

- Explore the Vendor Village for Dragon Boating related items
- Grab a bite from delicious Food Trucks
- Sip a cold drink in the Beer Tent
- Enjoy live music starting at 1:00 p.m.
- Keep the little ones happy with Face Painting and fun in the Kids' Tent

Don't Miss the Powerful Opening Ceremony at 11:00 a.m.

Featuring the traditional Dotting of the Eye ceremony and a moving Breast Cancer Survivor Carnation Tribute, this is a special moment you won't forget.

From the booming drumbeats to the strength and coordination of 20 paddlers per boat, there's excitement in every race — and the Broadcast Booth will keep you informed and entertained all day long.

More Than a Festival – It's a Cause

Every cheer, every race, and every dollar supports a great cause. Together, we've raised over \$1,000,000 to invest in vital community projects — powered by

incredible volunteers and generous sponsors.

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## STRATFORD'S FIRST-EVER FLOATING SILENT DISCO



On Saturday, September 20, Lake Victoria will be transformed into a one-of-a-kind dance floor on the water. Destination Stratford, Light Up the Night Kayaking, and [The Boathouse](#) are teaming up to present Stratford's inaugural Floating Silent Disco, featuring DJ Ethan Maac performing live aboard The Razzamajazz.

Guests can rent illuminated kayaks, canoes, or pedal boats, wireless headsets, and experience an unforgettable evening of music and movement under the stars!

Full details available online: [www.avonboathouse.ca/s-events](http://www.avonboathouse.ca/s-events)

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## SAVE THE DATES

# SAVE THE DATE for FILM SCREENING

September 30<sup>th</sup> | 9AM & 1PM | City Hall Auditorium

**FREE**  
ENTRANCE

**FREE**  
POPCORN



Hosted by Downtown Stratford BIA, City of Stratford, Stratford  
Public Library on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



# SAVE THE DATE! WINTER WANDER-LAND 2025 NOV 29 & 30



## TECH TIPS



This month's theme: Building trust and credibility to increase conversions. Show visitors they can trust you, and they'll be far more likely to act.

**Getting Started:** Make sure your website signals credibility immediately. Add trust elements like client logos, testimonials, awards, etc. on every page. Align content and visuals with the page's purpose: blogs educate, product pages highlight benefits, pricing pages clarify value. Clear, consistent messaging reassures visitors and encourages engagement.

**Going Further:** Expand trust signals into micro-experiences. Display product-specific reviews, add answers to real sales FAQs to pricing pages, and feature customer stories in blogs. Place CTAs near these elements to guide users naturally toward subscribing, booking, or purchasing.

**Growing & Scaling:** Use analytics to see which pages earn confidence (e.g. high

conversions) and which are less helpful (e.g. high bounces), and highlight testimonials, guarantees, and local success stories where they matter most. Turn trust into action by strategically guiding visitors through your site with credibility boosts and insightful answers at every step.

Reach out to Ryan at [ryanmjaques@gmail.com](mailto:ryanmjaques@gmail.com) to explore how these quick wins can be implemented on your site, and start turning more visitors into loyal customers today!

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*Ryan Jaques builds websites and big ideas! Whether you're launching a bold new venture, taking your brand online for the first time, or ready to scale up and stand out, Ryan could be of great assistance. He creates affordable, effective websites designed to grow with you—built with strategy, style, and staying power. He is currently helping the BIA with the Downtown Stratford website, and we so appreciate his work! We'll be sharing Tech Tips with you every month, to help you better help your customers!*

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## MONTHLY MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER



### **What Does September Mean to You?**

For me, no matter how old I get, and no matter how long it's been since we've sent our little ones out the door for the first day of school, September always carries the feeling of a new beginning. It's a kind of reboot in the year—one that just feels right.

This season has already been a busy one, and all signs point to it continuing through to Christmas. Our theatre productions have pushed past previous limits, with performances extending further into the year than ever before in Stratford. The steady flow of cars and buses into our city brings a much-needed boost to our local economy. The streets have been buzzing with life all summer long!

I've never seen Shakespearean Gardens so full—guests from all over taking in the beauty of one of Stratford's most beloved spots. Market Square, too, has been vibrant, filled with people enjoying the atmosphere and the charm of our city.

One personal highlight for me was working with Carlie Pearce to help bring her stunning Ellam's artwork to life. It beautifully captures the essence of days gone by. I'd also like to extend my thanks to the new building owners, John (Ioannis) and Xanthi Georganas, who graciously allowed this meaningful piece to be displayed. They have exciting plans to reanimate the space, and I can't wait to see their vision unfold.

While I'm naturally an optimist, I'd be remiss not to acknowledge some of the harder moments this season. We lost Rheo Thompson this year—a true Stratford icon and a founding member of the BIA. His legacy is deeply woven

into the fabric of our community.

We also faced a challenge from Mother Nature, with water levels at the lake dropping to record lows, temporarily halting operations at the boathouse. But even in that setback, there was a silver lining—witnessing the incredible way our community came together to support one another.

As summer slowly bows out, I look ahead to fall with excitement. If the past few months are any indication, there's much more greatness to come.

Your BIA is here for you, and we're always interested in your feedback. If you see me rolling through downtown on the Silver Ghost scooter, don't hesitate to wave me down—I'd love to hear from you!

[jpritchard@downtownstratford.ca](mailto:jpritchard@downtownstratford.ca)

See you Downtown!

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## BIA COMMUNICATIONS VIA WHATSAPP - JOIN NOW!



### **UPDATE | We have 79 followers on our WhatsApp Channel so far!**

In an effort to improve our communications with you, we are trying a new way to send information to all BIA member businesses! It's easy and painless and direct to your phone!!

This WhatsApp channel of communication is one-way, to be used only to inform you of important events and information pertaining to downtown. It is NOT a discussion forum.

We ask that you please follow this link to join the channel. You will be prompted to download WhatsApp if you don't already have it installed.

We look forward to welcoming you to this group and keeping you apprised of "all things Downtown Stratford!"

<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbAnSTLIiRopo2fRWE37>

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## SOCIAL MEDIA - GET IN TOUCH!

If you haven't already we'd love for your to join our BIA MEMBERS ONLY Facebook Group. A great discussion and sharing forum for all things business & downtown!

**JOIN NOW!**

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Reach out to us through our Downtown Stratford BIA Social Media platforms and remember to tag us so we can share in our stories!  
If you need your hours updated in our [online directory](#), contact Kim at [kgriffiths@downtownstratford.ca](mailto:kgriffiths@downtownstratford.ca).

**Facebook: @downtownstratfordbia**

**Instagram: @downtownstratford**

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519-508-1415 | [kgriffiths@downtownstratford.ca](mailto:kgriffiths@downtownstratford.ca) | [downtownstratford.ca](http://downtownstratford.ca)

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