



JANUARY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY Highlights

1. New Business - Closet Collective, The ASOC Gallery, Ripy and Vine, Fresh Burrito (new owner)
2. BIA Member Get Together Visiting LOS ~ Thurs JAN 15 @ 7pm
3. Stratford Winter Film Festival - January 31 & February 6-8, 2026
4. The Nashville Takeover - April 10-12, 2026
5. BIA Coffee Club - January 29th - Conestoga College
6. Ryan Jaques - Using Digital Tools to Grow Your Business - 2026 Plan
7. Monthly Message from BIA General Manager, Jamie Pritchard

NEW BUSINESS

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



Closet Collective



ASOC Gallery



Ripy and Vine



Fresh Burrito - New Owner



**DOWNTOWN
STRATFORD**

YOU'RE INVITED!

The BIA would like to invite you and thank you for collectively being a Founding Partner and the Gold Sponsor of Lights On Stratford. It will be a fun evening get together to witness the collective fruits of our labour, and to experience the magnificent displays both in Market Square and along the trail to Tom Patterson Island.

Thursday, January 15th at 7pm

STOP ONE - Pick yourself up your favourite fun beverage creation at one of the Downtown AI Fresco Participating Restaurants:

**Bentley's
Cafe Bouffon
Mercer Hall
Starlight
Black Swan
End Times
Brch & Wyn
Chuck's Roadhouse
Fellini's
Pazzo Pizzeria**

Also, Coffee Culture is open until 10pm and Balzac's until 7pm.

STOP TWO - Between 7pm and 7:30pm, meet at the BIA office at 47 Downie, visit the cool light installations inside Destination Stratford lobby, and then we'll wander over to Market Square together to experience the dazzling light art installation, **CHRONOHARP**.

STOP THREE - As a group we'll hop onboard a Hop On Hop Off bus and follow the trail down to Tom Patterson Island to feast our eyes on the **BIRDS OF A FEATHER** and experience some larger than life **SHROOMS!**

We'll get off the bus to soak these in up close!

STOP FOUR - Together, we'll take the bus back to Market Square. The night will still young! With new friendships and renewed connections we can hit a local establishment to continue the merriment!

What a great way to meet other businesses in a fun setting. Hope to see you all there! If you have interest, please click the link to let us know though drop ins are always welcome.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GXQCHV6>

STRATFORD WINTER FILM FESTIVAL - JAN 31 & FEB 6-8, 2026



In the heart of winter, the Stratford Winter Film Festival (SWFF) returns for its third year at the Stratford City Hall auditorium, continuing its mission to bring people together through film. From the outset, the festival has emphasized accessibility, family-friendly programming, and strong artistic merit, all grounded in a deep sense of community. What began as a modest initiative has steadily grown into a valued cultural event, built on the belief that cinema is at its best when shared.

Running over two weekends from Jan. 30 to Feb. 8, this year's festival explores the theme Friends, Foes and Strangers. Opening Friday features a free community event celebrating movie musicals and sing-alongs, followed on Jan. 31 by a full day of independent films of varying lengths.

The second weekend offers a curated lineup of nine films, beginning Friday evening and continuing with four screenings each day. With all programming housed in a single venue, the festival delivers a smoother, more engaging experience—creating the perfect opportunity for downtown businesses to welcome visitors for shopping and dining before or after a screening. Supporting the festival is simple: share festival posts, spread the word, and encourage customers and colleagues alike to come downtown for a dose of film culture!

Excerpts from Stratford Times Article by Lisa Chester

For more information as it is released, visit stratfordwinterfilmfestival.ca.



The Nashville Takeover is not a festival. It's a movement!

For three days, Stratford's downtown will transform into a network of intimate, undisclosed stages—each one hosting rising songwriters from Nashville and across Canada. This is a movement built on original country music, raw storytelling, and moments you can't livestream or recreate.

There's no standing at the back. No barricades. No distance. You sit just feet from the artists. You hear the stories before the songs. You feel the room hold its breath, then react together. You talk to the writers between sets. This is country music the way it started—up close, unfiltered, and personal. Large-scale events simply cannot deliver this kind of connection.

The downtown Stratford venues will be disclosed in February based on the demand for space.

The lineup stays secret by design. This weekend isn't about hype—it's about discovery. The songwriters stepping on stage are among the most compelling emerging artists from Nashville and Canada, many with millions of streams, national radio play, and major writing credits. Some are about to break wide open. You'll hear them before the rest of the world catches on!

April 10–12.

Multiple undisclosed venues.

More than fifteen elite songwriters.

No big stages. No distractions. Just songs, stories, and the kind of electricity that only happens in a room full of people who *get it*.

This is where country music goes when it wants to be heard again.

For further information and ticket purchases [click here](#).

Backyard Music Co. was founded by Billboard-charting artists Scotty James and Andrea Watson. Their journey began during the unique times of COVID when Scotty shared joy through music in close by neighbourhoods. Today, they specialize in crafting Nashville-style concert experiences inspired by Nashville's legendary 'Bluebird Cafe' and bring them to our venues as an exclusive experience for Stratford.

BIA COFFEE CLUB - THURSDAY, January 29th



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

Join us this month for your morning brew on Thursday, January 29th at the gorgeous new campus of Conestoga College on Erie St! This meet up is in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce - so a chance to meet some Chamber members as well!

To assist us with the coffee order, we'd like to request an RSVP by January 27th. That said, unregistered drop-ins are welcome!

[RSVP](#)

Photos of November's Coffee Club are on our [website](#). Thank you to Sartaj for hosting Coffee Club in November on the special 25th anniversary of her business!

USING DIGITAL TOOLS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Jump onboard!

Ryan Jacques, owner of Cannabis Cannabis has mapped out a year long plan on how to use digital tools to grow your business. Follow this space, month by month, to create a digital presence that turns foot traffic into visibility, trust, engagement, and repeat visits by the end of the year!

PLAN for 2026

Phase 1: Foundations



(Months 1–4)

“Exist clearly and consistently online.”

Phase 2: Engagement & Momentum
(Months 5–8)

“Turn presence into interaction.”

Phase 3: Optimization & Leverage
(Months 9–12)

“Make it work harder with less effort.”

January’s theme ~ Know what you have before you decide what to build. Before adding new tools, platforms, or ideas, the most valuable digital work you can do is take inventory.

Getting Started: List every place your business exists online today, your website, Google Business profile, social accounts, directories, email lists, booking tools, anything. Don’t judge or fix yet. The goal is awareness: what exists, what’s active, and what’s been forgotten.

Going Further: Check each touchpoint for accuracy and consistency. Are your hours correct everywhere? Does your description still match what you actually do? Are customers being sent to the right links? Inconsistencies create friction, especially for first-time visitors.

Growing & Scaling: Map how these digital touchpoints connect, or don’t. What’s your “source of truth”? Where do you want customers to end up? This becomes the foundation for every improvement you’ll make this year, from your website to social to in-store prompts.

This year’s Website Quick Wins will follow a practical, month-by-month digital journey I’m actively working through myself as a downtown business owner for Cannabis Cannabis. If you want help auditing or organizing your business’ digital presence, contact me (Ryan Jaques) at ryanmjaques@gmail.com.

MONTHLY MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER

Welcome 2026!

As we step into 2026, many of us are carrying plans—plans to improve ourselves, strengthen our businesses, embrace change, and raise the bar just a little higher than the year before. The page is blank, and the next chapter is yours to write.

Before turning fully toward what lies ahead, it is worth pausing to reflect on our collective efforts during the 2025 holiday season. From a marketing perspective, the BIA produced a strong and successful campaign. Our social channels were



active and engaging, highlighting Winter-Wanderland events, Downtown Dollars, the Wanderland Passport, the LOS launch, the Nashville Takeover, and much more.

What truly elevated these efforts, however, was you. A campaign is only as powerful as the community behind it, and our members showed up in full force. Your willingness to share our campaigns on your own social platforms amplified our reach exponentially. Time and again, you helped carry the message further—and that is how momentum is built.

Thank you for your continued support, your engagement, and your belief in the collective strength of downtown. Your participation creates success. Truly—you create success.

Your BIA is here for you and is always interested in your feedback. If you see me rollin along downtown on the silver ghost scooter please catch my attention, I would love to hear from you!

jpritchard@downtownstratford.ca

See you Downtown!

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!](#)

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.

Facebook: [@downtownstratfordbia](#)

Instagram: [@downtownstratford](#)

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