



April 2025

As we step into May and welcome warmer days, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on a vibrant and engaging April in Central Elgin.

One of the highlights of the month was hosting the St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce 'Business After 5' event at the Riva Italian Restaurant in Port Stanley. It was a wonderful evening of networking and conversation with members of the local community. Thank you to the Chamber, Riva, and everyone who attended for making it such a memorable event.

The evening was also a chance to kickoff the summer tourism season, a vital part of our local economy. Port Stanley is the largest tourism and small business hub in Elgin County, and we're incredibly grateful to the entrepreneurs, shop and restaurant owners who bring the Village to life, season after season. As the warmer months approach, I invite you to rediscover all that Port Stanley and Central Elgin have to offer - beautiful beaches, scenic trails, vibrant shops, many events, and incredible local businesses.

I was also honoured to attend the Chamber's 2025 Impact Awards, which celebrate business and community excellence across the region. Special congratulations to two Central Elgin businesses: Sparta Lavender Farm, nominated in the Champions of the Earth category, and Janis Harris of Harris Flower Farm, who was both nominated and named the winner in the Inspirational Women category. We are proud of these businesses and the contributions they make to our community.

April marked the return of spring community activities, with residents coming together to beautify and care for our shared spaces. Thank you to the 200 Trees for 200 Years, Port Stanley initiative and the ECO class students from Kettle Creek Public School, who celebrated Earth Day by planting trees at the Little Forest on the berm. A big thank you as well to the East Elgin Leos and Lions club Belmont, Ontario for their efforts in both tree planting and clean-up activities in Belmont. It's inspiring to see such dedication to the environment and the future of our municipality.

In April I participated in a meet-and-greet with elected officials hosted by the Port Stanley Village Association Inc. Alongside Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Deputy Mayor Todd Noble, and Councillors Michelle Graham and Morgaine Griffin, we provided updates on local matters and took questions from attendees. One topic that drew particular interest was the Strong Mayor legislation. To provide clarity on this, Central Elgin Council recently hosted an education session led by Paula Lombardi, Partner at Siskinds LLP and our municipality's legal counsel. The session offered valuable insights into what this legislation means for our community. You can view the full session on our YouTube channel.

Throughout May, Central Elgin will mark Building Safety Month with a public awareness campaign. Building permits and inspections play a vital role in ensuring that construction projects are properly designed, structurally sound, and compliant with health, safety, and accessibility standards. In 2024, the Municipality approved 298 building permits and conducted 1,620 inspections to ensure compliance with the Ontario Building Code's safety standards. These permits represented over \$89 million in construction activity and contributed to the development of 57 new homes or residential units across Central Elgin.

All the best,
Andrew