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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ENTERPRISE RENFREW COUNTY ANNOUNCES COVID-19 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUND TO AID IN PANDEMIC RECOVERY EFFORTS**

**Pembroke, ON:** The County of Renfrew and the City of Pembroke are extremely excited to announce that Enterprise Renfrew County will be launching a COVID-19 Business Development Fund that will provide aid to a number of local small businesses as they begin the process of recovering from the devastating effects of the pandemic crisis.

From very early on, the County and the City recognized the need to assist businesses was a key focus during and post the pandemic. An Economic Task Force was struck to bring business leaders from across various sectors together to discuss and find solutions to the hardships many of the county's industries were facing. A three-phased approach was adopted - Response, Limited Openings, Recovery. In lockstep with our provincial and federal colleagues, County of Renfrew and City of Pembroke staff were engaged with local businesses on a regular basis to ensure that they were kept up-to-date on the various available funding programs. With the recent announcement of a regional approach to opening of the economy which would include the Renfrew County area, Councils of both municipalities recognized the need to provide assistance that would further aid in the recovery efforts and allocated additional funds to Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC), the region's small business enterprise centre. With a long history of supporting small business and the entrepreneurial spirit, ERC is poised to be able to respond quickly to those applying for this new fund.

The COVID-19 Business Development Fund will assist businesses that have been forced to pivot their business, and help them find new technologies, methodologies, or procedures that would assist them with adjusting to a new model of serving their customers. The fund will provide up to \$5,000 (non-repayable) per business and will focus on transformation strategies

including E-business solutions, marketing and customer engagement, service delivery improvements, and other creative solutions/ideas for expansion and sustainability.

County of Renfrew Warden Debbie Robinson expressed; *"The province has recognized the exceptional work done by the residents of Renfrew County to keep COVID-19 at bay in all our municipalities. As restrictions are lifted and our local economy rebounds, I want to encourage our residents to continue to support our local businesses. Go out and shop, participate in your community again but do so as responsibly as we have for the past three months. This fund will help dozens of businesses begin to reopen under the guidelines provided by the Province and our local Public Health officials."*

*"This pandemic has created many challenges for our business community, forcing it to explore new and innovative ways of safely doing business. This fund will help support our creative business owners cover some of the expenses they incur as they continue to transform, change and grow,"* says City of Pembroke Mayor Mike LeMay.

Chair of the County of Renfrew Development & Property Committee, Bob Sweet; *"Development of our entrepreneurial spirit is key to the county's recovery after the devastating effects of COVID-19. While we are taking a cautious approach to the re-opening of the economy, we are encouraged that many businesses have responded with innovation and creativity in transforming how they serve their loyal customers."*

Enterprise Renfrew County has been operating in Renfrew County since 1988. This joint federal-provincial-municipal initiative provides useful information to new and established entrepreneurs about government programs, services and regulations on starting and sustaining an enterprise in Ontario.

Applications for the COVID-19 Business Assistance Fund will be available starting June 15, 2020 and will be received until July 3, 2020. They will be available online at:

[www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com](http://www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com)

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