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EDGSJ Q1 2019 Report reports progress amid “turbulent” times

Saint John, NB:

Economic Development Greater Saint John (EDGSJ – formerly Enterprise Saint John) today released its Quarterly Report for Q1 2019, reporting progress despite “turbulent” economic indicators nationally, provincially, and regionally.

“Right now economic indicators are giving us reasons for concern, but also reasons for optimism,” says Ron Gaudet, CEO of EDGSJ. “That inconsistency indicates turbulence – which in turn creates uncertainty. For those of us working in economic development, it means we need to invest our resources strategically.”

The agency pulled numbers from Statistics Canada, the Conference Board of Canada, the Bank of Canada and others, to create a snapshot of the economic context they’re working in.

Key points include:

- Slow growth in population, immigrant arrivals, and gross domestic product for the Saint John region.
- Modest growth in the Saint John region’s labour force.
- Fast growth in the number of vacant jobs available.

The report shows progress made against the agency’s four focus areas, which include workforce development, entrepreneur development, business investment and innovation, and marketing Greater Saint John.

“We are pleased with the progress made this quarter,” says Gaudet. “We, along with Opportunities NB, the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the City of Saint John, have moved quickly on the *Filling Unfilled Jobs* project, and are seeing some great results. We have also laid important groundwork, working alongside partner organizations, toward our longer-term projects.”

Board Chair Andrew Oland concurs.

“Economic indicators show us that our focus areas are strategically accurate,” he says. “But with respect to the unfilled jobs issue, growth in the number of vacant jobs is outstripping growth in the size of our labour force. We need to move quickly and decisively to tackle that issue. It is something we, as a community need to understand and address head-on. EDGSJ board members, staff and partners are committed to better the situation but we need community and industry members actively engaged on the solution side.”

About EDGSJ:

Economic Development Greater Saint John (EDGSJ) is dedicated to achieving consistent, long-term economic growth for the communities of Grand Bay-Westfield, Saint John, Rothesay, Quispamsis and St. Martins.

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