



where **lifestyle**  
**grows** good **business**

## 2013 Economic Development Executive Summary Report

Presented to Village of Merrickville-Wolford – September 23, 2013



Athens | Augusta | Edwardsburgh/Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge  
Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Rideau Lakes | Westport



Presented by:  
Deanna Clark, Economic Development Officer  
Joanne Poll, Economic Development Administrator  
Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager

## 1.0 Overview

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development Office collaborates with its 10 member municipalities in the delivery of Economic Development. Counties strategic directions and action plans include, but are not limited to; leadership, facilitation, community capacity building, marketing, investment readiness / attraction, and business retention / expansion. The Counties also collaborates with its three partner municipalities on individual economic initiatives of mutual interest.

In 2008, it was recognized in the previous Economic Development Report the importance of providing a strategic approach to the creation of a regional economic development office. Reflecting on the past four years, the Leeds Grenville Economic Development Office has provided strong leadership in building a solid foundation for a regional economic development operation. A new vision, mission and economic corridors of opportunity were created, and have brought about an environment of collaboration. Strong relationships have been developed with various ministries and agencies focused on economic development.

The Economic Development Office has supported community development through programming and encouragement of leadership within municipalities. The Economic Development Summit has generated a significant profile while providing outstanding professional development and networking opportunities to the local leaders. The Economic Development Leadership Forum and the newly created awards program, recognizes leaders and their talents. In the fall of 2010, we launched the Counties new brand. Staff and community members were complimentary of the brand and happy to support its implementation that has occurred over the past two years. Upon the adoption of the new brand, the Counties Economic Development Office undertook the task of establishing the framework and redesign of the Counties new website and central repository for information.

While these projects were significant for future external communication and marketing, the Economic Development Office was open for business. We hosted several site selector and familiarization tours including two foreign / immigration delegations. Over the past several years, significant steps have been made in establishing and adopting a regional approach to investment readiness. A professional team has been established and web-based database is available including commercial property listings.

In 2011-12, the Economic Development Office facilitated the development of a Regional Integrated Community Sustainability Plan that is recognized as one of the largest completed in Canada. Support was provided to businesses through new programming and events. These included visitor services at the ONroute Travel Centres to encourage visitor spending, partnering to create a formalized mentorship program and supporting the development of an Angel Network. Also support was provided to develop new experiences and events ie. Ottawa Ride for Dad, The Great Waterway Signature Cycling Route and the Great Waterway Classic – Canadian Golf Tour. Economic Development staff worked directly with various businesses and organizations to encourage business sustainability, exploration of opportunities and growth.

## **2.0 Strategic Approach and 2013 Action Plan Summary**

The 2013 Strategic Approach and Action Plan will align the Counties economic development resources to work closely with businesses in Leeds Grenville, finalize its investment readiness toolkit, build upon corridor / cluster opportunities and further develop its investor outreach. The strategic approach includes seven goals for the period of 2013-2016 and an associated action plan for 2013.

### **Goal 1 – Maintain and Build Economic Readiness**

A structured re-engagement with member municipalities will occur early in 2013 for mutual updates on economic plans and projects. We will continue to nurture community capacity and combine the Economic Development Summit and Leadership Forum. Consideration will be given to events that will further engage business. The investment readiness toolkit will be a priority for completion, with the support of member municipalities.

#### **2013 Action**

##### **Facilitate the Development of an Updated Regional Profile (June – October)**

With the release of 2011 census, it would be timely for the production of a regional profile consisting of competitive economic analysis.

### **Goal 2 – Implement Strategy for Retention and Expansion of Existing Businesses**

A strong focus will be given to business retention and expansion through corporate visitation and communication of provincial and federal funding programs. Counties will work focus on sector / cluster support and development initiatives. Counties will be a supporting member of the Brockville and Area Angel Network , the Business Success Program and the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium - iMin program.

#### **2013 Action**

##### **Agriculture Sector – Cold Storage Assessment (October – May 2014)**

The agriculture community has expressed the need for cold storage facilities. The Counties will undertake a needs assessment for a cost-effective community cold storage facility that would be utilized by multiple municipalities.

##### **Chemical / Bio Products – BR&E (October – December 2014)**

Leeds Grenville has a strong chemical cluster of industries that are seeing retention challenges while the chemical industry continues to thrive as it explores the opportunities with bio-products. A consultant-led sector specific BR&E will be undertaken.

### **Goal 3 – Take a Leadership Role in the Development of Tourism**

Tourism is a sector that most member municipalities recognize yet we have a fragmented structures that a not sustainable. A regional strategy would assist in gaining efficiencies and marketplace positioning. Support will be given to the Eastern Ontario Events Centre to find an alternative partner or strategy for the continuance of its operation.

Counties will continue to seek a visitor service presence at Mallorytown ONroute Centres and complete tourism marketing initiatives. It will be an active Board member of the Great Waterway Regional Tourism Organization and the Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association to ensure Leeds Grenville is part of any product development and marketing initiatives. To maximize visitor spending, an assessment of accommodations should be considered in the future.

#### **2013 Action**

##### **Prepare a Counties Tourism Strategy (August – December)**

Leeds Grenville has world-renowned natural and man-made attractions that should be positioning us to be one of the top places in Ontario to visit. Counties will bring members of the various tourism entities together with consulting support to formulate a strategy to give us a stronger position in the marketplace.

#### **Complete Tourism Marketing Initiatives**

##### **Website Calendar**

##### **(June – April 2014)**

Develop a Regional Event Calendar with a full content management system for multi-users. The calendar platform design would have the capacity to filter categories and be shared with municipalities in a future phase, similar to the Business Directory.

##### **Regional Guide**

##### **(June – April 2014)**

Produce a multi-purpose promotional guide that showcases our communities, people and investments. This guide will replace the outdated Community Guide that was utilized during the International Plowing Match in 2007.

### **Goal 4: Create Entrepreneurial Development Strategy**

Continued support will be given to developing the entrepreneurial culture, with future plans beyond 2013 to complete a formalized strategy that brings together entrepreneurship programming organizations, school boards and post-secondary institutions.

### **Goal 5: Develop and Support Business Attraction Opportunities**

We will become more involved with Ontario East Economic Development Commission (OEECD) programming opportunities. Support will also be given to the Port of Prescott in exploring new market opportunities in their future Business Plan. We will seek to leverage new domestic and foreign investment occurring in the region and align our investment attraction opportunities with Invest Canada.

As the Eastern Ontario Regional Network broadband is implemented, a promotional program will be developed in 2014 to attract more entrepreneurs and professions in the creative economy. As this plan evolves, consideration will be given to further developing strategies for Bio-Products / Chemical sector and Transportation / Logistics.

#### **Action 2013**

##### **Support the Port of Prescott Business Plan Development**

Through previous site selection tours and inquiries, the Port has played a significant role. A stronger business development plan will bring mutual benefit and opportunities to the municipalities, the Counties and private sector industries.

### **Goal 6: Support Area Redevelopment, Community Development & Quality of Life**

Counties Economic Development will work with local municipalities to develop a multi-partner resource structure to support developing their unique sense of place. We will also work with communities in creating a regional trails strategy that supports a healthy active lifestyle.

### **Goal 7: Implement a Strategic Marketing Approach**

The Counties new brand is now established and ready to be extended to new marketing tools. An economic development market position statement has been developed. Target audiences include intra-regional, domestic and foreign.

The Counties website - Invest and Visit sections will continue to be the foundation to all marketing pieces. Member communities will again be provided the opportunity to become part of the expanded municipal online business directory. Several new marketing tools will be initiated in 2013. These include e-newsletter, video, social media, regional guide, local advertising and event partnerships. Future consideration will be given to the development of an investment opportunities brochure and way-finding road signs.

#### **Action 2013**

##### **Video**

##### **(May – April 2014)**

A library of raw footage will be gathered from various industry sectors, municipalities and lifestyle experiences for the production of a series of videos that would be utilized for investment attraction, labour force recruitment and tourism promotion.

### **E-Newsletter (May – July)**

An online newsletter will assist in building awareness and education on economic development activities and opportunities with businesses located in Leeds Grenville and be part of the business attraction promotional kit.

## **3.0 Operations**

The Counties Economic Development team has been utilized to facilitate and carry out projects that have created positive advancement for the organization. It is now time to refocus the team's resources on the core functions of economic development.

### **Community Development Officers** (related to Goal 6)

Many communities are not in the position to house a full-time economic /community / tourism development officer type position. Recognizing the value of working collaboratively, significant efficiencies could be gained through the Counties expertise and programming investments. A funding model could be considered that would allow for municipalities to share staff through a three-way agreement. Municipalities would bear the associated costs. The individual would be fully accountable to the funding community based on a contractual agreement that would outline duties, projects, measurements and reporting requirements.

## **4.0 Measurements**

The Economic Developer Association of Canada (EDAC) completed the Performance Measures in Economic Development Report in September 2011. There was no single metric identified by all respondents. The Economic Development Office recommends a monitoring program that includes reporting on the implementation of the action plan as well as tracking metrics.

Metrics:

- Number of business visits and consultations conducted
- Degree of relationship development with local businesses (as measured by connectivity through website and social media)
- Degree of relationship development effort with key investment influencers (as measured by participation in events, familiarization tours, investment missions)
- Professional development opportunities and participation of stakeholders
- Influence on new revenues for the community, businesses and organizations,
- Influence on new jobs created and existing jobs retained

The Economic Development Office will provide the Governance & Finance Committee of Counties Council a plan update in June and a year-in-review report in November that would be communicated at the Annual Economic Development Summit. Any new actions would be presented as part of the following year's budget and planning document.