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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three area entrepreneurs honoured with Leadership Award

KEMPTVILLE – For the first time since its introduction, the Bill Thake Memorial Economic Development Leadership Award is going to not one, but all three outstanding nominees.

The winners of the 2017 Award recognizing leadership in building Leeds Grenville's economy are Wendy Banks, creator of Wendy's Country Market, Heather Howard, owner of FoxRun By-The-River Retirement Residence, and Gerald Tallman, founder and chair of the Tallman Group.

Warden Robin Jones presented three awards at the ninth annual United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development Summit in Kemptville. The event was a sell-out. Warden Jones was assisted by Bill's widow, Marlene Thake, and Glenn Allen, the inaugural award recipient.

"This is definitely a moment to remember – three impressive community leaders being recognized for making this region a better place to work and live," said Warden Jones.

"We are proud to honour individuals who have made major contributions to their respective communities and to Leeds Grenville overall," she said.

Wendy Banks, from the Township of Rideau Lakes, is a trail-blazing 6th-generation farmer and retailer who has revitalized and strengthened the relationship between producers, consumers and restauranteurs in Eastern Ontario. For the past 10 years, Wendy has been raising the profile of local food and the Local Flavours network. She operates her on-farm store and Wendy's Mobile Market, a delivery service connecting more than 70 farms and their products to hundreds of individuals, restaurants and B&Bs. Wendy helps farmers increase their sales and broaden their markets. Wendy recently launched Furnace Falls Farm, an event venue and B&B.

Heather Howard, from the Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands, is an entrepreneur who has launched several successful businesses in locations throughout Leeds Grenville. Most recently, she invested millions to build independent living units beside her FoxRun By-The-River Retirement Residence near Gananoque, providing both jobs and living options for seniors. She also owns the 1000 Islands Duty Free and Johnstown Duty Free shops. Heather has played an

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

synonyme de **qualité de vie**
et de **réussite** en **affaires**

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active role in regional economic development through her volunteer involvement with the 1000 Islands Community Futures Development Corporation and the 1000 Islands/Gananoque Chamber of Commerce.

Gerald Tallman, from the Municipality of North Grenville, is a self-made entrepreneur who started from humble beginnings but quickly rose to become sole owner of the Kemptville Truck Centre. Today his award-winning company, Tallman Group, is the largest private sector employer and job creator in North Grenville. The company has locations throughout the province and employs more than 500 people, making them the largest international truck dealer in Canada. Gerald is known for sharing his success with his neighbours through job creation and his support of numerous community events and services.

Over the past seven years, 30 deserving women and men have been nominated and 10 have received the award. Past recipients include Glenn Allen, of Westport; Jean Jacque Rousseau, Municipality of North Grenville; joint 2013 winners Don Ross, of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, and Don Munz of North Grenville; Richard Dumbrille, Township of Augusta; George Tackaberry, Township of Athens; and Robert Noseworthy of North Grenville.

The summit attracted over 200 business operators, not-for-profit organizations and government representatives from Leeds Grenville and neighbouring regions. It was hosted by the Counties Economic Development Department in partnership with Gord Brown, MP for Leeds-Grenville, 1000 Islands and Rideau Lakes, and Steve Clark, MPP for Leeds-Grenville, the 1000 Islands, Valley Heartland and Grenville Community Futures Development Corporations, and the 1000 Islands Region Workforce Development Board.

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