

Leeds Grenville Economic Development Summit

Presenter Biographies

November 22, 2019



Improved Connectivity for Today and Tomorrow

Lisa Severson | Communications / Stakeholder Relations Officer, Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN)



Lisa Severson has worked in the municipal sector for 17 years in a variety of positions with the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, including the economic development department. In 2007 she began working with the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) in a support position and worked closely with the Caucus in the development of the Eastern Ontario Regional Broadband Network (EORN) proposal. In 2009 Ms. Severson was seconded from her position at the Counties to become the Communications and Stakeholder Relations Officer for the EOWC Eastern Ontario Regional Network Project, a \$175 million high-speed, high-capacity broadband network and is now a full-time employee of EORN. She is a key liaison with MPs, MPPs, Boards of Education, First Nations and the 100+ municipalities in Eastern Ontario. She is a sitting member of the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council and of her local municipal economic development and tourism committee.

CareerLabsVR: What's It All About

Sue Watts | Executive Director, Employment + Education Centre



Sue Watts is the Executive Director of the Employment + Education Centre (EEC), a charitable, not-for-profit, multi-service organization. Sue has over 25 years' experience in the not-for-profit sector and prides herself on building and growing community collaborations for the purpose of meeting the needs of and positively impacting her communities. Sue is the recipient of Provincial and National awards for her work in this sector. Under the leadership of Sue, EEC hosted two international delegations (guests were from South Korea, Germany and Japan) which resulted in sharing of best practices regarding employment services for various populations. Sue is an innovator, and with Elisabeth, has recently moved CareerLabsVR, career decision-making system using the immersive power of virtual reality, from concept to reality.

Elisabeth Meyer | Program Manager, Employment + Education Centre



Elisabeth Meyer is the Program Manager for the Employment + Education Centre and CareerLabsVR - a virtual reality career exploration system. With over 15 years of career and business development experience, a creative edge and an entrepreneurial mindset, she leverages her skills to focus on program advancement and cultivating connections.

Keynote Session: Giant Tiger – Building of a World-Class Distribution and Transportation Network

Mike Quinn | Vice-President, Warehousing & Distribution



Mike started with Giant Tiger in 1991, as the Giant Tiger Warehouse Manager. In 2002, he became the Director of Warehousing & Distribution, and in 2007 he was promoted to Vice President, Warehousing & Distribution.

Prior to joining Giant Tiger, Mike spent 18 years with Kmart in various store management roles. He lives in Ottawa and hobbies include, hockey, golf, skiing and pretty much any other sport. He takes pride in having grown Giant Tigers distribution and transportation from 25,000 sq. ft. to 700,000 and growing the Tiger Trucking fleet from 5 trucks to over 90 power units and 180 trailers. He attributes his success in growing Giant Tigers logistics to a fantastic team of management and associates.

John Hubbard | Vice President, Distribution Operations



John Hubbard started with Giant Tiger Wholesale in 2006 as the operations manager. In 2010, he became Director of Warehousing; in 2012, he was promoted to AVP of Warehousing, and in February 2019 promoted to his current position of VP Distribution Operations.

John has over 25 years in operations with a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Ottawa. He started his career in Montreal, Quebec and moved to the Ottawa region in 1996 where he currently lives.

James Johnstone | Associate Vice President, Transportation



James Johnstone is a seasoned transportation professional and strategic leader having held several senior leadership roles in the areas of Fleet Management, Intermodal and Over The Road Transportation.

James is the AVP of Transportation for Giant Tiger, an iconic Canadian retailer with over 250 stores across Canada and is responsible for the organization's international and domestic transportation programs.

Leeds Grenville Economic Development Update

Ann Weir | Economic Development Manager, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



Ann Weir works regionally on behalf of the Counties and its 10 member municipalities while collaborating with the region's many partners. In September 2017, Ontario East Economic Development recognized her as the Economic Developer of the Year for her exceptional performance in her region and to the advancement of the economic development profession.

In her role at the Counties, she has led the region's branding, its Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and strategically developed a framework for regional economic development to create an environment for communities to work together while maintaining their individual priorities and advancing their goals. Through her efforts, she has positively influenced many new investments and while supporting business expansions in the region.

Keynote: Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria | Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / MPP, Brampton South



Prabmeet Sarkaria has the honour of representing his community as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Brampton South and serving the people of Ontario as the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

Before answering the call to public service, Prabmeet worked as a corporate and commercial Associate at Miller Thomson LLP. He earned his law degree from the University of Windsor as well as a Bachelor of Business Administration from Wilfrid Laurier University, where he majored in Finance. Prior to his legal career, he worked at TD Securities.

Passionate about community, Prabmeet is an active volunteer. He served on the City of Brampton's Property Standards Committee as well as the Board of Directors for Hockey for Humanity and KarmaGrow. He is an avid sports fan who enjoys playing and watching hockey, basketball, baseball, and football.

Prab entered public service in order to be a strong advocate for hardworking families in Brampton South and all across the province he loves—and is committed to giving voice to the concerns of the everyday people he is humbled to serve.

Local Update: JAE Automation

Eric Martin | President



Eric Martin, an Electronic Engineering Technologist, is owner and President of JAE Automation. For over 23 years, Eric's passion has been about making things, and how to make them better. Since founding JAE Automation in 2000, along with leading his team, Eric has been engaged in automation design for the automotive, consumer goods, food and beverage sectors and many more.

Funders Update and Opportunities Ahead / Break-out Session

Lynne Groulx | Director (A), Business Advisory Services Branch, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade



Lynne has been involved in Economic Development for over 25 years. A researcher by training, an entrepreneur by default, Lynne has been serving the business community since the early '90s in what she (affectionately) calls Ontario's "Far East". Lynne has an Honours Bachelor from the University of Ottawa, is certified in Economic Development, Commercial Lending and in International Trade. She has completed her Lean Service Yellow Belt and the Emerging Leaders Mentorship Program and was honoured with a ministry award in 2017 for Outstanding Leadership. Today, Lynne is Director of the Business Advisory Services Branch for the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Along with her team of 26 seasoned senior business advisors located across Southern Ontario, they deliver a range of programs, services and tools to help Ontario based businesses innovate and compete in today's fast-changing global economy.

Michèle Bridger | Manager of Investment Readiness Program, Community Foundations of Canada



Michèle Bridger works at Community Foundations of Canada. As Manager of the Investment Readiness Program, Michèle is focused on leading the Investment Readiness Program for CFC, while working alongside the many other IRP Partners to grow capacity and resilience in the social enterprise and social finance sector.

Prior to her work with CFC, Michèle worked on the Procurement and Investment Readiness Fund for social enterprises, with the Canadian Community Economic Development Network and a variety of Ontario partners. Michèle has a range of experiences working in sustainable agriculture, funding and economic development.

Giuseppe (Joe) Esposito | Senior Innovation Advisor, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada



With over a decade consulting SMEs on research & business development, strategy consulting & local economic development strategic planning Joe has committed to building and managing collaborative relationships with businesses and government departments to see them achieve success. As a Senior Innovation Advisor with Innovation Canada, Joe is in direct contact with businesses throughout Eastern and Northern Ontario assisting them in resolving growth challenges and issues as well as directing them towards innovation opportunities. Joe is constantly in-the-know about all of the government programs and services available to help businesses scale and grow.