

Bill Thake Memorial Award for Economic Development Leadership

Nominee Biographies: November 20, 2020



Karen Bedard | Municipality of North Grenville



Karen is a community leader and the founding director of the highly successful Kemptville Live Music Festival, an event that has helped put North Grenville and the entire Leeds Grenville region on the map. Karen and her team are already working hard on a virtual Kemptville Live event for 2021.

Karen is the Event Director and leads over 350 volunteers helping bring the festival to life. Attendance has grown dramatically with more than 24,000 music lovers attending the event last year. In some of its peak years, the festival has brought in \$2.1-million in visitor spending and is an economic driver. Karen is engaged in keeping this model event going for many years to come.

Karen's dedication to her community is evident. She has served in many different roles since moving to the area with her family in 2007. She has been a Girl Guide leader, a Kemptville District Minor Hockey Association board member and tournament coordinator, to name just a few. She has facilitated many events at the North Grenville Municipal Centre, as well as volunteering with the Kemptville 73s JR. Hockey Club.

Janet Campbell | Village of Merrickville-Wolford



Janet Campbell is a dynamo when it comes to promoting her community and the region as a world-class destination. She is the founder and owner of Mrs. McGarrigle's Fine Mustard and Fine Foods. This award-winning entrepreneur has created a cornerstone retail and manufacturing business in the heart of Merrickville that has stood the test of time.

After 32 years and many international awards for her mustards, Janet's business continues to expand. She recently added another 230 local products to her online store. The shop, as well as her respected cooking school, continues to attract chefs, foodies and visitors from local communities, city day-trippers, as well as travellers from across Canada, the US and Europe.

Janet has a strong belief in the collective force of the community's businesses working together. She is quick to promote local food and area producers. She enjoys mentoring new business owners. Janet has spearheaded and taken part in many community initiatives, including raising funds for Juvenile Diabetes, the Beth Donovan Hospice and Eastern Ontario hospitals. Most recently Janet has been tutoring two Syrian children through the Rideau Bridge to Canada program.

Wendy Merkley | Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands



Wendy is a community champion who spearheads a myriad of projects and initiatives in the village of Rockport, as well as the 1000 Islands region.

Wendy is co-owner of Andress Boatworks, a family-run marina celebrating 100 years in business in 2021. She is Chair of the Friends of Rockport Customs House, a volunteer group which has raised funds to purchase the riverfront property in Rockport. Through her efforts, the site now gives locals, as well as visitors, access to the St. Lawrence River and the 1000 Islands. Wendy led a team to rebuild the pier, raise and repair the building, keep the boat launch, and install benches and picnic tables. Wendy also helped recruit and train ambassadors to run the facility.

Wendy has been a part of the Rockport Development Group and is the current Chair. The group promotes quality tourism and beautification of the village while celebrating local heritage with interpretive signs and murals. Wendy is an advocate for local business and has worked hard to address the issues of high water levels. She is the Vice-Chair of the 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation and has served on the board since 2015.

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We are presenting the 2020 award but the time to start thinking of nominees for next year starts right now. Do you know a leader in your community who is deserving of this esteemed award? There are many volunteers helping improve our Leeds Grenville communities and we would like to honour them for their ongoing efforts. If you know someone who should be nominated, please let us know and we will include you in our contact list when we call for nominations in 2021. Connect with us at econdev@uclg.on.ca or call Deanna Clark at 613-342-3840, ext. 5360

Timeline to plan your 2021 nomination:

Starting now ... Let us know if you have someone in mind. We will start a list of potential nominees and provide you with early reminders of the nomination process and deadline.

April/May/June 2021: If you don't already have a person in mind, discuss potential nominees at Economic Development Committee meetings and with business community improvement groups.

Early August: Nominations are open and notification will appear in the *Leeds Grenville Economic Development eNewsletter*, along with a link to an online nomination form.

September: Seek Council endorsement of your nominee at regularly scheduled meetings during the month.

Late September: Deadline to submit your nomination. Letters of reference can accompany the nomination as well as Council endorsement.

November: On November 19, 2021, the winner will be announced at the Economic Development Summit.

Thank you for taking the time to help us acknowledge volunteers who show outstanding leadership resulting in the growth and vitality of the Leeds Grenville economy.