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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supporting local business is strong emphasis of the Annual Leeds Grenville Economic Development Summit

Helping local business and buying Ontario-made and Canadian products took centre stage at the 12th annual Leeds Grenville Economic Development Summit.

More than 250 business leaders, municipal, provincial, and federal government officials, as well as not-for-profit and support service representatives, viewed the day-long virtual summit.

"I'm thrilled at today's virtual turnout," said Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. "It's a testament to the strong local support for our business community and how many people want to help strengthen the region."

The Counties Economic Development Office hosts the event in partnership with Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes MP Michael Barrett, MPP Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the 1000 Islands, Valley Heartland and Grenville Community Futures Development Corporations, and the Eastern Workforce Innovation Board.

The live webcast featured a keynote address by the Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Minister Fedeli's presentation outlined how Ontario is navigating the pandemic and its plans for growth and renewal.

"It's what we call Ontario spirit," Minister Fedeli said when talking about the Ontario Together Fund. He noted two area companies, 3M Canada and Greenfield Global, answered the call to produce products grow our domestic supply chain in the fight against COVID-19.

"That's a great story for this region," Minister Fedeli said. Another initiative is Ontario Made, which Minister Fedeli said has had a "remarkable response" with 1,550 manufacturers registered and more than 6,000 Ontario-made products, including Kemptville's Best Adirondack Chair Company.

"When you buy Ontario Made, you're doing more than shopping. You're supporting your communities," he said.

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

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

Dr. Trevin Stratton, Chief Economist and Vice-President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce provided global and national snapshot of the economy. He outlined a “K-shaped recovery” where some sectors are already recovering while others will be slower to rebound. “The second half of next year is when we will see economic recovery,” Dr. Stratton said.

Lisa Severson and Jim Pine of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network gave an update on Eastern Ontario’s connectivity. Ms. Weir provided a regional economic development update.

The afternoon portion of the agenda was interactive chat room sessions focused on the Regional Economic Development Priorities of:

- Small Business, Local Business Marketing and Promotion
- Tourism
- Agriculture and Food
- Manufacturing, Transportation, Logistics and Warehousing
- Workforce
- New Economy Opportunities

The Bill Thake Memorial Award for Economic Development Leadership was presented to Janet Campbell, from the Village of Merrickville-Wolford, and Wendy Merkley, from the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. They were recognized for their decades of community building and volunteerism contributing to the strength and vitality of the Leeds Grenville economy.

Also honoured for her contributions to the Municipality of North Grenville was nominee Karen Bedard. She is a founder and event director of the Kemptville Live Music Festival, leading a small army of volunteers to make the event possible. Her team is working on hosting a virtual event in 2021.

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