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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Leeds Grenville Summit Focuses on New Economic Realities

KEMPTVILLE – Responding to the new economic realities was the focus at the 14th annual Leeds Grenville Economic Development Summit at the North Grenville Municipal Centre.

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Ontario’s Minister of Finance, delivered the first keynote address outlining the progress of the government’s “Plan to Build,” including strengthening the economy and Ontario’s workforce while keeping costs down for families and businesses.

“I am pleased to join this year’s Leeds Grenville Economic Summit to discuss our progress and the new, targeted measures we are proposing in the face of economic and fiscal challenges we’re seeing across the globe,” said Minister Bethlenfalvy.

“When faced with this degree of uncertainty, we need to be flexible and forward thinking with a fiscal plan that is ready to support people and businesses when, and if, the time comes, while also laying a strong fiscal foundation for future generations,” he said.

Pierre Cl  roux, Vice President, Research and Chief Economist at BDC, was the event’s second keynote. Mr. Cl  roux noted economic growth is slowing but he does not expect a recession. Labour shortages will remain a major challenge but global supply chain issues are slowly easing, he noted.

“Overall, Canada is better positioned than most other developed countries thanks to its natural resources,” said Mr. Cl  roux, adding there is cause for caution, not alarm.

The event, being held for in person for the first time since 2019, is hosted by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development Office in partnership with Michael Barrett, M.P., the Hon. Steve Clark, M.P.P., the Eastern Workforce Innovation Board and the 1000 Islands, Grenville and Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporations.

More than 175 business leaders, municipal, provincial and federal government officials, as well as not-for-profit and support service representatives, attended the Summit.

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

synonyme de **qualit   de vie**
et de **reussite en affaires**



"Businesses confronted the pandemic head on, and for many they have adjusted and created new opportunities that have resulted in growth," said Ann Weir, Manager of the Leeds Grenville Economic Development Office. Ms. Weir shared the results of the 2022 Fall Business Survey in her annual Economic Development Update to the summit audience.

"The survey showed 70 per cent are growing despite the pandemic," Ms. Weir said of responses taken from 340 Leeds Grenville businesses.

A highlight of the summit was the "Going Digital," panel session with testimonials from local business owners. The pandemic has brought to light the importance of having your business online. In Leeds Grenville, close to 1,300 small businesses have benefitted from the highly successful Digital Main Street Program. Over 200 have received grants.

A panel discussion on "Welcoming a Diversified Workforce" reviewed how companies can leverage programs to build and fulfill their staffing needs, including immigration.

Additional highlights included special presentations by:

- Clayton Jones, President and CEO of Johnstown's CREWS – Canadian Rail Equipment Works and Services Inc.
- Bonnie Ruddock, Executive Director of Region 9 Regional Tourism Organization

The Bill Thake Memorial Economic Development Leadership Award was presented to two deserving volunteers: Dermid O'Farrell from the Municipality of North Grenville, and Susan Warren, from the Township of Rideau Lakes. They were recognized for their decades of community building and volunteerism contributing to the strength and vitality of the Leeds Grenville economy. *(See partner media release on the award)*

Also honoured for their contributions were nominees JoAnne Sytsma, from the Township of Athens, and Derek Ouellet, of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands.

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