

# United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



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## Mayor speaks at international tourism conference

A local mayor is one of only two Canadian speakers at an international tourism forum in China this week.

Leeds and the Thousand Islands Township Mayor Frank Kinsella is part of a delegation of local politicians and economic development staff representatives attending the International Mayor's Forum on Tourism. The forum runs every two years in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan province, and attracts mayors from hundreds of tourism locations around the world.

"It is a distinction and a privilege to be representing Canada at this high-level conference," Mr. Kinsella said.

The four-day conference features addresses by notable special guests, including tourism representatives from a range of jurisdictions, the president of the World Travel and Tourism Council and the governor of Henan province. The other Canadian speaker is George Smitherman, a former provincial MPP who is now vying for the Toronto's mayor's job.

On June 11 Mr. Kinsella joins Wang Yong, Mayor of Sanya, Hainan, China, to discuss "Future City – Leisure and Holiday Destination for Both Citizens and Tourists."

Mr. Kinsella's address highlights the fact that locations need to be competitive and sustainable while meeting the needs of travellers. "All tourist attractions have physical or cultural features that meet one or more of the individual traveller's specific leisure-related needs," he says.

He highlights the relationship between the Thousand Islands area in Canada and its sister community, the Thousand Island Lakes in China. The two communities have signed a Friendship and Cooperation Agreement to become China-Canada tourist attractions.

"It's very important when you are a tourism destination to develop strategies to remain sustainable," he says. "You have to be aware of the life cycle of tourist destinations and constantly review needs. You need to know where you have been to know where you are going."

Other topics slated for discussion at the conference include tourism development and harmonious city environment, construction and development of a featured tourism city, along with business and investment talks. The participants will also experience cultural performances and tours of various sites with a side trip to Expo 2010 in Shanghai.

The UCLG delegation will continue to reinforce a bond established in April 2008 between the Thousand Island Lake, Chun'an County, and the Thousand Islands region in Leeds and Grenville. June 16 has been declared "Thousand Island Day" at the Chinese and Canadian pavilions at the Expo, and other special ceremonies are scheduled for June 19 and 20. The mayors also plan to explore economic growth potentials between the two regions.

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For more information:

Frank Kinsella  
Mayor, Leeds and the Thousand Islands  
613-659-2415

Bill Thake  
Warden, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  
613-273-2886