

# United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

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## United Counties Adopt Economic Development Action Plan

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville at its December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting adopted a new economic development strategic action plan for 2009-10.

The action plan is a culmination of a counties wide collaborative approach that has resulted in the development of a plan for the next 12 to 18 months. Since August, the economic development team has met with municipal leaders, economic development committees and community stakeholders to determine the future direction for economic development across the United Counties. "This action plan builds on the council's commitment to economic development and provides us with a comprehensive road map for pursuing key priority development initiatives over the next year," says outgoing Warden Jim Pickard.

The mandate approved by council is a follow-up to the establishment of the counties new economic development office located at 32 Wall Street, Brockville. "The bold approach taken by council in July to staff and establish a development team was the first step in the planning process," said Bob Cheetham, Manager of Economic Development. "Ann Weir, Economic Development Coordinator and I look forward to working with communities throughout the region to bring strategic projects and priorities to fruition."

The 2009 Strategic Action Plan includes a new economic development vision and mission that positions the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG) as a progressive place to locate and grow a business. The vision sees the UCLG as an engine of economic growth built on a collaborative, regional approach that is focused on growing its business in a sustainable manner, while enjoying a high quality of life that is culturally rich, active and diverse, within a unique, natural historic environment that is globally recognized.

The updated economic development mission statement establishes the United Counties as the engine of growth for three economic corridors of strength through a collaborative regional approach that focuses on growing its business presence in specific targeted clusters, while maintaining economic diversification. The UCLG will focus on "green" inspired development, iconic tourism experiences, knowledge based manufacturing and new agri-bio opportunities that result in economic benefits for the counties and its citizens.

The action plan is comprised of a variety of strategic projects related to tourism development, integrated community sustainability planning, a centralized repository of strategic data, bio-based initiatives, and opportunities that provide for regional stakeholder input.

"The action plan recommendations recognize the important role that existing local organizations have played in economic development in the past, and the ongoing need for strong relationships that are rooted in respect and trust in the future," Mr. Cheetham says. Council will be confirming financial support for the action plan as part of its 2009 budgetary process.

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For more information:

Steve Silver  
Chief Administrative Officer  
613-342-3840 ext. 2301

Bob Cheetham  
Manager, Economic Development  
613-342-3840 ext. 2360