

**MAYOR WENDY LeBLANC'S SPEECH at  
CARLETONPLACE AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BREAKFAST  
MEETING**

October 18, 2011

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here this morning to speak with you about the economic present and future of our community as part of Salute to Small Business Month here in Ontario. We are all aware that 75% of our working force from Carleton Place travels the highway to Ottawa daily, but it is the remaining 25% that your small businesses employ... your businesses are the backbone of our community and I want you to know that we appreciate and want to support you.

Carleton Place is a stable, well-run community with sound infrastructure, well-managed finances, and a dedicated staff and Council. Ours is also a community that is fortunate to be in the enviable position of having to deal with the growth that comes

- as the result of the four-laning from Ottawa,
- as a result of being deemed the centre of a settlement area for Lanark County, and
- as a result of the quality of life that we have to offer to people of all ages and family makeup.

But before we look to the future, let's roll back in time a few years. We all know, for the past 10 years, Carleton Place has witnessed significant, positive change.

First, through the foresight of previous Councils in the 1990s we have seen the expansion of retail development on McNeely Avenue.

For most residents, this has been positive... We can now purchase the goods and services we previously could only get in the city....And, the result is more money stays in the community, more jobs are created in the community, and other new retailers will look to our community to locate their businesses here.

Second, we have now a completed 4-lane highway linking Carleton Place to Highway 417 making the distance between our community and our nation's capital even shorter,

Third, and as a result of the highway improvement project, we have seen unprecedented growth in our community.

Construction starts of new homes are averaging about 60 new homes a year, resulting in local trades-people being busier than ever, and more new home building is on the horizon. With the relocation of the Department of National Defence to the Nortel complex in Kanata we have a great opportunity to market Carleton Place to the DND employees who tend to seek affordable, family-oriented communities close to their work.

And while this growth is good news, I must point something out. Much of what Carleton Place is experiencing is not economic development. It is property development. And without **real** economic development-- that is, without building on our businesses that are already here and without attracting new industry and new enterprise to create jobs, and employ professionals right here in our community, we will remain a bedroom community and never realize our full potential.

So finally, after much consultation with the public and your new Council, we have developed what I call a "Community Plan" for Carleton Place that was first released a year ago during the election campaign.

First, real economic development is a high priority for your Council.

We recognized that we need to seek the advice and guidance of a professionally trained Economic Development Officer to work to retain and expand existing businesses and to actively seek new ones. In the 2011 we earmarked \$70 000 for the position of an Economic Development Officer. I would like to tell you that we have someone in that office, but we have had to move the hiring process forward until the new year. This came about as a result of the realization that while we had the budget to cover the salary, we did not have our ducks in a row in order to be able to encourage new industrial growth or even, for that matter, expansion of what we already had.

To that end, we have worked to acquire more industrial land in Industrial Park North and have created a tentative plan of infrastructure development for that area. We are currently investigating the acquisition of another approximately 30 acres for employment lands within the town boundaries. In order to make realistic and feasible decisions about future growth – both industrial/commercial and residential – we hired Stantec to study our sewer and water capabilities and to make recommendations on areas of future growth based on these infrastructure capabilities; this report is also necessary as we position ourselves to carry out a review of the Official Plan and the Development Permit Bylaw over the course of the next 6 months. At the same time, Lanark County is also creating for the first time an Official Plan, and we want to ensure that our own Carleton Place Official Plan is strong.

Second, we have completed most of the steps towards annexation of properties from Beckwith Township; these include a small piece of property known as Maple Lane, and several hundred acres east of McNeely Avenue and south of Cavanagh Road. These lands are earmarked for future residential growth, and in fact we saw preliminary plans for the area just last week. A significant annexation for the immediate future was that of Roy Brown Park located at the end of Lake Avenue West and over to Highway 7. Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to report that we have just sold a 4 acre parcel of that property to the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority for their new 14 000 sq ft state of the art headquarters; this deal was contingent on the land being within the boundary of Carleton Place. This is a significant feather in the cap of our community and I applaud the work of Councillors Louis Antonakos and Doug Black in bringing this to fruition. The remaining 30 acres will be developed in

future as parkland for the community with the Conservation Authority assisting us with trail development in the wetlands area of the park.

Additionally, we have recently hired Doyletech to develop an Industrial Strategy and Downtown Corridor Enhancement Plan. Many communities in Eastern Ontario have hired Economic Development Officers, and there appear to be many similarities from one community to another with regards to their strategies. We were very conscious that we did not want a cookie-cutter approach and hired this company based on their innovative plan to look at Carleton Place in a different light and create a plan that best reflects the needs of our community. They will also be working with the BIA who presented to Council in June their paper 'Towards a Vibrant Downtown Core'. The Doyletech report is due by the end of this calendar year.

How have all these decisions been made? Much of the preliminary work in getting us to where we are now has been brought forward by either Council or Staff or a combination of both. As part of our Community Plan, we recognized the need to re-establish a Community Economic Development Advisory Board comprised of business owners and residents to help put a new community economic development plan and strategy in place. To that end, we have created a Community Development Committee which is an umbrella committee for a number of subcommittees each charged with making decisions – including financial decisions – about various aspects of economic development. The subcommittees are Industrial Initiatives, Downtown Initiatives, Tourism Initiatives, Community Programming Initiatives ( we recently hired a new community programmer), Community Enrichment Grants, and the Town Hall Auditorium Committee. These committees include members of Council, residents, and business people, including members of the Chamber of Commerce and the BIA; I am pleased to report that we have qualified, experienced, and dedicated people who stepped forward to serve the community when the request went out and I am pleased with how we have moved forward already, especially in the areas of setting tasks and budgets for each subcommittee.

There is no question that in the past 10 months we have seen new industries arrive in Carleton Place – Eastway Emergency Vehicles, several small industries in the Scandia Industries development, expansion of Norcan Hydraulic Turbine, several new small businesses on Bridge Street, and the announcement that Sam Bat will be moving to town soon – to name only a few. And I would like to celebrate with Rose Integration their recent announcement of receiving a certification that will assist its growth as a world class defence and aerospace supplier. Along with individual members of Council over the past 8 months, I have visited over a dozen businesses in the community, met with the owners or managers, and discussed topics around economic development from their points of view; I want to continue and expand these industrial visits. As a business community, we will all benefit from the studies that we have commissioned, from the lands we have annexed, from the voices of the residents who have responded to be part of the decision making process, and we will definitely benefit from the new Economic Development Officer who will bring all these interests together and work with the Eastern Ontario

Development Corporation, the County and all levels of government to make a stronger, united effort to prospect for new business and light industry for Carleton Place.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I have saved for last what I deem to be the most important issue that we have to work on in the immediate future. This issue is absolutely vital to our community's economic health. Your Council has ramped up efforts – from a political perspective - to secure a new hospital for Carleton Place and District. It is, ladies and gentlemen, our #1 community priority. This is absolutely essential to attracting new businesses and industry to relocate here. Further, it will encourage high-paying jobs to come to Carleton Place. I cannot emphasize enough the fact that we cannot be complacent about this issue. During the recent provincial election campaign, the two Councils of Carleton Place and Beckwith put candidates on notice that this is our #1 priority and we expected them to adopt it as theirs. Community members rallied around the cause as they responded to our newspaper ads, button and scarf campaign, lawn signs, banners, and speaking at every opportunity we could to engage the public. We succeeded in making hospital redevelopment a priority during the election but that is only a very small first step as we now put politics into the bigger equation to obtaining our new hospital which we NEED, WANT, and DESERVE – to quote the line we have used during this campaign. We are working diligently with members of the Hospital Board to position Carleton Place to be placed on the Ministry's 5 year plan - you will be hearing more about our efforts soon and I hope that we can count on your support (and I'm not asking for financial support – I am asking for vocal support) as we move forward on this critical issue.

And finally, ladies and gentlemen, I want to leave you with the quotation ...**Small business is big business**. Your mayor and council firmly believe this statement. You and your businesses are essential to our community's present and future success. We recognize, respect and value the role you play in Carleton Place and have taken the steps that I have just outlined to ensure that we support and nurture you ... and not simply during Salute to Small Business Month. By working with you we all gain. Thank you for what you give to our community and stay tuned for more announcements as the Town moves forward in giving you the increased and improved support you need and deserve. Thank you.