



Volunteer economic development efforts earn Glenn Allen new Bill Thake Award

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Submitted - Above, the group of nominees for the Bill Thake Economic Development Leadership Award. From left: nominees Ian Johnston and Sandra Lawn, winner Glenn Allen, nominees Karen Buker, Amy Neuman and Dermid O'Farrell. Not shown are nominees Alison Wilson and Bernice Telik Moore.

EMC News - It was a night to recognize the efforts made by many of the region's leaders and residents who have worked to expand and develop the economy of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

The first-ever Warden's Award for Economic Development Leadership was handed out at the Roebuck Hall last Thursday night, but before the winner was announced, there was an important announcement about the award itself.

Leeds-Grenville Warden Mel Campbell, also reeve of Augusta Township, revealed that the award would henceforth be known as the Bill Thake Award for Economic Development Leadership.

A long-time municipal leader, Thake has served as the mayor of Westport for a remarkable 41 consecutive years, and has also been named counties warden four times, making him the ideal choice to lend his name to the award.

Once the new award was christened in Thake's honour, it was time to announce its inaugural winner.

Of the eight nominees, which included Nancy Buker of the Township of Augusta, Ian Johnston of the Township of Rideau Lakes, Sandra Lawn for her work in the Township of Edwardsburgh-Cardinal, Bernice Telik Moore for her work in the Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley, Amy Neuman and Alison Wilson from the Township of Front of Yonge and Dermid O'Farrell from the Municipality of North Grenville, it was Glenn Allen who was named the winner for his support of and tireless volunteer efforts in the Village of Westport.

Allen is a strong supporter of local business and an advocate for the preservation of the area's rich heritage.

All of the nominees have distinguished themselves in their own communities, making innovative and worthwhile changes to their towns, villages or hamlets to make them more economically vibrant.

"All of the nominees have something in common," said MPP Steve Clark. "They all have a desire to step forward when it counts and rally people to their side."

Many of them work directly on economic development programs through local municipal economic development boards, community development corporations, chambers of commerce or industry associations.

"This is an impressive list of nominees," said Campbell.

Throughout the evening, everyone who stepped behind the mic emphasized the importance of economic development and of finding ways to increase the economic vitality of small communities.

"It is simply amazing how much activity is going on in Leeds-Grenville," said Ann Weir, manager of the Leeds-Grenville Economic Development Department.

In highlighting some of the important developments in the 10 municipalities that make up the United Counties, Weir noted the \$30,000 improvements made to the Westport Visitor's Center and the village's harbour facilities, the continuing work on the Coach House heritage site in Mallorytown, the expansion of the Port of Prescott in Edwardsburgh-Cardinal and the two new businesses - Pharmasave and Ace Hardware - in Athens.

Weir then turned the stage over to the evening's keynote speaker.

Kathy Wood, the CEO of Natural Capital Resources Inc., has a great deal of experience in promoting economic and environmental sustainability. She brought with her a sample of the copious amounts of demographic, labour and economic data that has been collected and made available about all of Eastern Ontario, and she highlighted some of the numbers relating to Leeds-Grenville in particular.

She concluded her presentation with her assessment of the figures and suggested the numbers bear out the potential present in the United Counties.

"You've got some great assets here," she said. "The data shows that you've got something you can really build on."