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NEWS RELEASE

Creative Rural Economy Poised for an Exciting Expansion

Picton, ON - The Headland New Media Development Organization, an exciting new creative enterprise space, is set to open in Picton, Prince Edward County this spring. The collaborative space, will be dedicated to the creation and presentation of broadcast television, new media, and digital audio recording. Over time it plans to be the largest center for creative industries and creative occupations in Rural Eastern Ontario.

David and Stacey Hatch, Owners and Executive Producers of Whistlestop Productions, have been confirmed as the lead tenant at The Headland. The Hatches are co-founders of The Headland initiative and they are eager to launch this new venture.

“We recognized several years ago that there was a need to create a shared space for the digital creative industries here in Prince Edward County,” said Stacey Hatch. “Not only will The Headland give us the opportunity to grow our business, but it will also help Prince Edward County grow its creative rural economy. We are really looking forward to having others join us in this exciting initiative.”

For nearly two decades, Whistlestop has been one of Canada’s leading independent television producers, and were recently awarded a 3-year multi programming contract from Toronto-based and internationally distributed High Fidelity HDTV Media Inc. Whistlestop needs to immediately expand its facilities in order to fulfill this multi-million dollar contract and The Headland will be the outlet which will give them the room to do so.

“When it comes to the creation of The Headland, the timing could not be better,” said David Hatch. “Our company has enjoyed 11 solid years of doing business here in Prince Edward County. But a lack of office space with new technology-based features has recently become a barrier to us growing our business. The Headland will provide us with the space we need, and the partnerships we develop with other tenants will help to keep us competitive on an international level.”

The Headland is an exciting opportunity for other businesses to join the shared space, whether they are looking to expand their current business or starting a new business.

Whistlestop will also establish an internship program in partnership with the Loyalist College School of Television and New Media Productions.

Prince Edward/Lennox & Addington Community Futures Development Corporation (PELA CFDC) and the Economic Development Office of the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward have formed a partnership to fund and support \$49,000 towards the digital media space.

John Licharson, Chairman of PELA CFDC, is pleased to help bring such an innovative enterprise to the County. "This project will open a new dimension of economic activity in our area," said Licharson. "And in doing so, it will provide scope for a whole range of non-traditional, challenging and satisfying professional work opportunities for our young people."

Dan Taylor, the County Economic Development Officer, is thrilled to have worked with PELA CFDC and The Headland's plans to create more jobs over the next decade, including 9 construction jobs over the next three months, 4-8 digital media jobs within the next year and potentially 25-40 jobs over the next 5-10 years.

"Creative Occupations make up over 30% of Prince Edward County's labour force, 46% of local income and approximately 60% of disposable income. This sector is expected to grow by 40% over the next decade," said Taylor. "This collaborative space where other creative talent can rent space and share ideas is exactly the kind of thing we need to kick it up a notch in our Creative Rural Economy."

Mayor Finnegan concludes, "This will certainly give potential investors the incentive to come to Prince Edward County and develop their creative businesses, as well as add to the growth of our local economy. I see an exciting future for the creative rural economy in Prince Edward County."

The facility will be located in a soon to be confirmed location within the Downtown Picton core, and is expected to be up and running by March/April 2010.

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For more information on available space in The Headland facilities, contact David & Stacey Hatch, The Headland Co-founders, at 613-393-5357.

For more information on Economic Development news, contact Dan Taylor, Economic Development Officer, at 613-476-2148 ext. 346.

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