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Prince Edward County Council,
Shire Hall,
Picton, Ontario.

Re Investing in our future through the Economic Development Office

Dear County Council;

I am writing to you about the Economic Development Office. I want to congratulate you for your wisdom and forethought in having made, arguably the best investment any municipality in Canada could have made. I suppose that sounds a bit extreme, however from what I understand, ours is one of the fastest if not the fastest growing (per capita) municipality in Canada, and one of very few to have escaped unscathed from the recent, brutal economic downturn. Strangely enough you would hardly notice the County's success because it wasn't done with strip malls, discount outlets or 'dirty' industries. Barns have been polished up, where once fields lay fallow grapes now flourish. Small villages like Bloomfield look as they must have during the Barley Days with brightly lit shops and many small, vibrant, creative businesses. While other areas have seen the demise of value added farming, we have 5th Town cheese, lavender farms and the attention of almost every other municipality in the province if Wayne Caldwell, one of the chief architects of the Provincial Policy Statement, is to be believed. Where once the Niagara Region lead rural use planning, the County is now poised to lead the charge with smart changes that are breathing new life into a near stagnant (in other parts of the province) rural landscape. Renfrew County, desperate to find a way to bring vitality to its largely rural landscape, is coming to tour our County in April, Durham Region had Mr. Taylor speak recently on the same podium with very highly regarded intellectual Richard Florida - the founder of the Creative Economy concept the very concept our Economic Development office has embraced with such great success.

Our land values are increasing, if our own farm is an example, we have seen a three fold increase in our assessment. Better than raising taxes, through your choice to fund the most successful economic development office perhaps in the entire country, you have found a sophisticated way of raising more money through increased property values at a time when North America is reeling under the weight of a near stagnant economy and plummeting property values. I believe these developments are directly attributable to your decision to invest in the Economic Development office.

I respectfully submit that we should encourage more investment in our Economic Development office. Perhaps with the rationale spelt out to all of us, who sometimes wonder why things happen as they do at County Council. Collectively we need to hear that this is one of the best investments our County could make in the future - for what we all hold so dear - keeping our County as a place where our children can afford to live, work and raise the next generation.

Sincerely


Mark Henry