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MAYOR AND STAFF PROMOTE WELLAND ON GLOBAL STAGE

Welland, ON - Key members of the City of Welland's Development Team joined fellow members of the Ontario Economic Alliance at the recent Marché International des Professionnels d'Immobilier (MIPIM) in Cannes, France. Mayor Frank Campion, Director of Economic Development and Co-Chair of the Alliance Dan Degazio, and CFO Steve Zorbas leveraged their association with these significant organizations to attract foreign investment to Ontario and particularly to Niagara and Welland. MIPIM brings more than 26,000 people from over 100 countries to one place. Attendees are the most influential players from all sectors of the international property industry.

The Welland team participated in more than 11 pre-arranged meetings and several on-location impromptu meetings with investors who indicated that they were interested in investing in Ontario. A great deal of interest was expressed in a proposed waterfront development on the Northern Reach part of Welland's Recreational Canal. The city is currently preparing an analysis of the property and an RFP for development. Many individuals the team met with were intrigued by Welland's incentive programs and its "shovel ready" employment lands. Through the city's partnerships and considerable financial support from other levels of government, a cost-effective target-marketing-approach resulted in the creation of direct business relationships with companies wishing to pursue the possibility of investing in Welland and Niagara. Visits from some of these foreign investors to Niagara and Welland's development office are expected over the next several months.

As well as promoting in-bound investment, the team attended relevant programming/seminars, and presentations on topics such as Urban Logistics, Liveable Cities, Mixed Use Development, and Hotels with an urban view.

"There were amazing concepts presented that can be utilized and adapted for use in Welland," said Welland Mayor Campion. "Info sessions on APP Development, structure design, noise and light implications and solutions provided insight into how we can develop and ensure our community can provide a better living environment for residents. I found we don't need to re-invent the wheel...we need to associate ourselves with and learn from the people who continually re-invent the wheel when it comes to "liveable city" planning and development, and urban design."

Mayor Campion, who was invited and hosted by conference organizers as a VIP Guest, participated in the Mayor's Think Tank Session, which was a discussion amongst presenters and Mayor's from around the world. The discussion focused on how to identify, measure and chart data related to urban impacts and how to use the information to design better communities.

The real work has already begun to convert the network of contacts realized through the meetings to investors in our community. Dialogue will begin between Welland's development team and the new prospects, and follow up meetings will be arranged.

"One common theme that emerged during meetings was that there are investors from many countries throughout the world that want to move money to countries like Canada and to areas with close proximity to the U.S. border," said Dan Degazio, Director of Economic Development. "Our objective is to leverage Welland's attributes to ensure some of that investment lands here and where our partners are in Toronto, Hamilton, Niagara, and other communities".

“MIPIM provided direct access to a tremendous number of investors and billions of dollars in investment money,” said Steve Zorbass, the city’s Chief Financial Officer and G.M. of Corporate Services. “Our association with our Alliance partners and our ability to participate with them on the global stage solidified and reinforced Welland as an important player among provincial and municipal partners, and in the international marketplace”.

While in France, Mayor Campion visited with the City of Cannes Director of International Relations. He outlined the significant francophone population of Welland and the recent initiatives that strengthen the French language & culture in the city. It was agreed that the two cities would discuss bilateral economic and tourism initiatives.

Photo: Left is Mayor Frank Campion and Toronto Councillor Michael Thompson attending MIPIM



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