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## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Launch of first Counties-wide Business Retention + Expansion program

#### “Strong Business, Strong Community”

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville is launching the largest multi-level Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E) program the region has seen.

The Counties and the Townships of Augusta, Merrickville-Wolford and Rideau Lakes have partnered in a project that will see staff and volunteers directly connect with over 300 businesses in the region. The goal is to build relationships and assist them in becoming more competitive. As part of the Counties economic strategic focus for 2018, the Economic Development Office will lead this program.

“Businesses in Leeds Grenville are already heavily invested in their communities,” says Ann Weir, Counties Economic Development Manager. “It is recognized that 76-90% of new jobs come from existing businesses and we need to ensure we sustain these jobs and support businesses as they explore new opportunities that could result in more jobs in the region.”

The project coordinator is Krista George, Business Retention Officer for Leeds Grenville. Krista will work with the Municipal Partner Coordinators to provide information, organization and guidance.

“Helping businesses become more competitive increases the chances of those businesses staying in the community,” says Krista. “Existing businesses can be ambassadors in our communities.”

Augusta, Merrickville-Wolford and Rideau Lakes will launch their municipal projects over the next several weeks. Municipal Coordinators are: Krista Weidenaar, Augusta, Alison Merkley, Rideau Lakes and Cheri Kemp-Long from Merrickville-Wolford.

The BR+E program is a structured Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) action-oriented approach to business and economic development.

where **lifestyle**  
**grows good business**

synonyme de **qualité de vie**  
et de **réussite en affaires**

The main objective of the BR+E project is to assist existing businesses within the region/community to become self-aware of its strengths and opportunities, to become more competitive, and to identify its economic and community development priorities.

For more information about the program, volunteering or participating as a business please contact Krista George at 613-342-3840 ext. 5368, [krista.george@uclg.on.ca](mailto:krista.george@uclg.on.ca) .

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