



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Building Bridges To A Better Opportunity: Ritchie Hosts Leaders From Canada and U.S. To Discuss Opportunities For Working Together

PATTY RITCHIE August 25, 2017



More than 30 leaders from both sides of the upper St. Lawrence River joined State Senator Patty Ritchie to discuss ways the United States and Canada can work together to improve trade, tourism and relations between the two nations at a special event held at the Frederic Remington Art Museum in Ogdensburg.

“Building Bridges to Better Opportunity” provided attendees—which included mayors, councilors, tourism officials, economic development leaders and town supervisors, among others from throughout the North Country and Ontario—with a chance to discuss tourism, trade, job creation and more.

“With our region’s close proximity to Canada, there are endless opportunities to work with our neighbors across the St. Lawrence River on everything from tourism to trade,” said State Senator Patty Ritchie.

“I was pleased that so many leaders from both sides of the border were able to attend Thursday night’s event and begin a discussion on how we can collaborate to boost both of our nations, as well as celebrate the unique and special bond we share.”

Also during the event, Senator Ritchie honored longtime Ontario Senator Robert Runciman (Thousand Islands-Rideau Lakes), who she worked alongside with to ease boating restrictions for American and Canadian boaters before he retired earlier this month. Senator Ritchie presented an official New York State Senate proclamation to Senator Runciman for his many years of public service and dedication to resolving issues between the United States and Canada.

“Improving the relationship between Canada and the United States is so incredibly important to the future development and advancement of our economies,” said Senator Runciman. “I would like to sincerely thank Senator Ritchie for hosting this gathering and for always being a tireless advocate for bettering the Thousand Islands Region on both sides of the border.”

The two senators worked together since 2011 after an American angler was seized by Canadian Customs agents while boating near Gananoque on the St. Lawrence River.

Earlier this year, Senator Ritchie made a trip to Ottawa and delivered historic testimony in support of a new law that eliminates the need for American boaters to report to Canadian customs when passing through Canadian waters, so long as they do not disembark, anchor, moor, make contact with another vessel or import goods. The measure also exempts Canadian boaters from reporting to Customs when they return from American to Canadian waters, as long as they meet these same conditions.

After the incident, the Senators Ritchie and Runciman formed the “International Border Caucus,” which is made up of legislators from both sides of the border. The Caucus meets to look at ways to work together to strengthen ties, improve communication, solve common problems, boost tourism and help grow shoreline economies.

(Attn. photo editors: Senator Ritchie is pictured in the above photo presenting retired Canadian Senator Bob Runciman with a Senate Proclamation in recognition of his lifetime of public service)