



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Joins More Than 40 Canadian and U.S. Officials in Prescott to 'Build Bridges to Better Opportunity'

BRIAN DWYER January 12, 2018

| ISSUE: **TOURISM, RECREATION AND TOURISM, FREE TRADE**



State Senator Patty Ritchie made the trip to Prescott, Ontario, Canada Thursday to join nearly 40 leaders from both sides of the New York-Canadian border to discuss ways the United States and Canada can work together to improve trade, tourism and relations between the two nations.

Thursday's meeting—which included former Ontario Senator Bob Runciman, Prescott Mayor Brett Todd, Member of Provincial Parliament Steve Clark and mayors, supervisors, city and town officials from NY border communities including Watertown, Ogdensburg, Morristown and Alexandria, and Canadian leaders from Prescott, Kingston, Aurora, Cornwall and Brockville, among others—provided attendees with a chance to network and talk with one another about ways to improve cross-border tourism, trade, job creation and more. One by one, the leaders rose and pledged to work together to find opportunities to build stronger bonds between border communities, and cooperate to fix problems.

“On both sides of the border community leaders share the same goals, boosting businesses, creating jobs and increasing tourism, among other things,” said Senator Patty Ritchie.

“These are goals that we can help each other more easily achieve, if we work together. I am pleased that we are continuing to come together to share ideas, and even more pleased that we have seen an increase in the number of communities represented from both the U.S. and Canada since our last meeting. I am looking forward to continuing to foster the great relationship that exists between our communities, and our nations.”

“There are endless, untapped opportunities for working with our neighbors across the border to strengthen our communities,” said Prescott Mayor Brett Todd. “I applaud Senator Ritchie for kick starting the effort to bring us together and thank her, as well as the other leaders in attendance Thursday for making the trip to Prescott.”

“Bringing mayors, town supervisors and other leaders from both sides of the river together provides community leaders with opportunities to build stronger relationships,” said Steve Clark, MPP Leeds-Grenville. “I want to thank Senator Ritchie for helping to organize this event which is helping towns strengthen friendships and foster better international relations between our two great nations.”

“Senator Ritchie and I have worked together for many years to help improve relations between the U.S. and Canada,” said former Ontario Senator Bob Runciman (Leeds-Grenville and the Thousand Islands). “Bringing community leaders together can help us strengthen the bonds of friendship that have made the St. Lawrence Valley such a unique place.”

The meeting represents Senator Ritchie’s most recent effort to strengthen the relationship between Canada and the United States, and specifically communities along both sides of the St. Lawrence River.

In addition to hosting a similar ‘Building Bridges to Better Opportunity’ event in Ogdensburg last year, Senator Ritchie also 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.

Senator Ritchie, MPP Steve Clark and former Senator Runciman also teamed up to form 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.

*(In the main photo, Senator Ritchie is pictured with 19 river community leaders who attended Thursday’s meeting, including former Ontario Senator Bob Runicman, Member of Provincial Parliament Steve Clark, Prescott Mayor Brett Todd and others; In the second photo, Senator Ritchie is pictured talking with Member of Provincial Parliament Steve Clark.)*