

### **The Rideau Canal: Looking Ahead**

#### **Mark Brus | Manager of Operations, Rideau Canal National Historic Site, Parks Canada**



Mark has worked for Parks Canada since 1996 when he joined the Rideau Canal team as a summer student at Jones Falls. Mark spent the first 10 years of his career at Parks Canada in frontline operations on the Rideau Canal working at numerous lock stations up and down the historic 202km waterway while completing his business degree from the University of Ottawa. For the last 20 years, Mark has worked in a variety of middle and senior management roles in field operations including project management for Rideau 175, Southern Sector Manager of the Rideau Canal, Chief of Staff for the Ontario Waterways Infrastructure Investment Program, Associate Director for Ontario Waterways and a handful of other interesting assignments along the way. Mark has been the Manager of Operations for the Rideau Canal since 2020

### **Envisioning Eastern Ontario's Electricity Future**

#### **Kennan Ip | Senior Manager, Transmission Integration, Independent Electricity System Operator**



Kennan leads the planning of the transmission system in Ontario to ensure it is reliable, resilient and cost effective in the years ahead. His responsibilities include assessing the security of the transmission system, identifying system needs, and developing plans to accommodate the system needs.

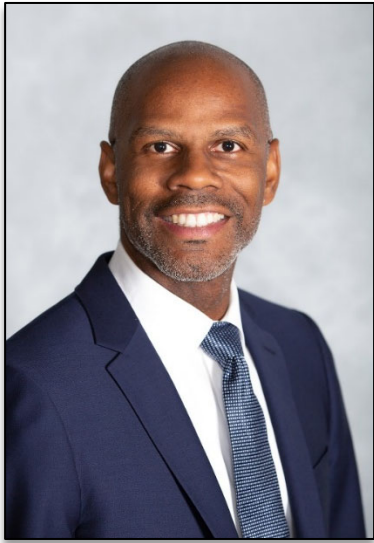
Prior to his current position, Kennan held the role of Senior Transmission Planner for Eastern Ontario, where he had the opportunity to work with several municipalities while developing transmission plans for the regions of Peterborough to Kingston, Greater Ottawa, and Renfrew. These plans resulted in several transmission reinforcements across Eastern Ontario, that help

improve the reliability of supply, enable economic development, and support the energy transition. His career began with Hydro One where he held a variety of roles where he got the chance to work in areas such as asset management, customer, and project delivery.

Kennan is a graduate of McMaster University where he studied Electrical Engineering and Management.

## **Brian Gordon | Senior Manager, Regional & Community Engagement, Independent Electricity System Operator**

---



Brian is a seasoned stakeholder relations professional with over 15 years of experience, primarily dedicated to supporting municipal stakeholders. As a Senior Manager at the IESO within the Regional and Community Engagement Department, Brian is responsible for developing and executing the IESO's municipal stakeholder engagement strategy. In this role, he fosters strong relationships and facilitates collaboration between the IESO, municipalities and the community. Beyond his IESO responsibilities, Brian shares his expertise as an instructor at George Brown College. He is passionate about empowering stakeholders with a deeper understanding of the IESO's initiatives and their impact on local communities. This passion for working with stakeholders is the driving force behind his efforts to ensure effective and transparent communication from an IESO perspective. His approach is both strategic and hands-on, reflecting a commitment to building trust and achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

## **Keynote - Protecting Ontario's Small Businesses, Jobs, and Economy**

### **Hon. Nina Tangri | Ontario's Associate Minister of Small Business**

---



The Honourable Nina Tangri was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 2018 as the Member of Provincial Parliament representing the riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. Nina Tangri is the Associate Minister of Small Business.

In March 2023, she was the Associate Minister of Housing, and in 2021, she served as the Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. In June 2019, Nina was appointed Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade.

She has also chaired the Standing Committee on Social Policy and served as a member of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Professionally, Nina is an entrepreneur and small business owner with over 35 years of experience in insurance and finance. Until her election to Ontario's 42nd Parliament, she was the CEO and President of her insurance company and insurance brokerage. She also has served as the Vice Chair for Credit Valley Hospital.

Nina Tangri is passionate about bringing communities together and working with individuals, businesses, and organizations to learn how the government can continue to make Ontario the best place to live, work, start a business, and raise a family.

## Bottle & Barrel Adventures – Behind the Brews

### Carol Hardy | Small Business Development Officer, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

---



Carol Hardy is the Small Business Development Officer for Leeds Grenville. She supports aspiring entrepreneurs and existing business owners by providing guidance, resources, and programming to help them start and grow their business.

Carol brings over 20 years of small business experience to the team, ranging from operating several home-based businesses, mentoring home business operators and working as a partner in a local IT company. She is passionate about helping entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses to success. Carol is a lifelong learner and actively pursues opportunities to increase her skillset, business knowledge and personal development.

### Sean Lucey | President, Windmill Brewery

---



Sean Lucey is the founder and owner of Windmill Brewery in Johnstown, Ontario. Sean is originally from Cardinal, Ontario and has a bachelor's in industrial engineering from Dalhousie University. He has worked across Canada and the United States putting his engineering skills to use in the food and hospitality sectors.

### Jocelyn Major | Co-Founder / CEO, Kemptville Brewing Company

---



Jocelyn's journey into brewing began with a Father's Day gift from his wife: a simple home brew kit. What started as a weekend experiment quickly grew into a true passion, turning a hobby into a profession. With a background in technology, Jocelyn spent years in industry, but he found himself craving something more creative and personal. Brewing provided that perfect balance of science and craftsmanship, while hospitality offered a chance to connect with people in meaningful ways.

Making the leap from tech to brewing was more than just a career shift; it was the opportunity to embrace creativity, community, and conversation. Jocelyn discovered that the same curiosity that once drove him to solve problems in technology could now be poured into creating recipes, perfecting flavors, and

building a welcoming environment for guests. Today, Jocelyn is one of four partners at the brewery, working alongside a dedicated team that shares the same passion for craft beer and hospitality.

## Matthew Shapton | Co-Owner and Head Cider Brewer, Hall's Apple Market

---



Matthew is the Operations Manager and part Owner of Hall's Apple Market in Elizabethtown-Kitley. Growing up in Brockville, Matthew's family often shopped at Hall's, and as a teen he began working at the orchard, holding various positions with the business. After leaving the community to pursue his education, Matthew returned to Brockville to work full-time managing the wholesaling business and busy farmers markets for Hall's. Today, Hall's Apple Market maintains 40 acres of apple and pear trees, attends 11 weekly farmers markets, as well as a thriving wholesale business. In addition to apple picking in the fall, Hall's is home to a year-round on-farm store that showcases a variety of freshly baked goods and apple products, including their newest line of hard ciders, as well as many local and niche products.

## Keynote - Steady Hands: Adapting to Economic Change

### Brock Dickinson, MA, Ec. D. (F) | Stonebridge Solutions LP

---



Brock is one of North America's leading economic development professionals. He started his career with the United Nations, working on development projects in more than 30 countries before returning to Canada to lead economic development and tourism agencies in both Nova Scotia and Ontario.

In 2007, he founded MDB Insight (now part of Deloitte), where he worked with some 300 communities across North America to identify and pursue economic development, investment attraction, and job creation opportunities. In September of 2010, the company was named to *Profit Magazine's* "Hot 50" list of Canada's fastest growing young companies, and it eventually became

the largest specialist economic development consulting firm in Canada. In 2017, he joined the University of Waterloo, serving as their Entrepreneur-in-Residence and later as the Director of the University's Economic Development Program.

Today, Brock serves as the Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of Invest Ontario, as an Executive-in-Residence with Innovate Niagara, and as a partner in Stonebridge Solutions, a U.S.-based private sector investment group focused on the financing of economic development projects around the world.

A widely published writer and popular public speaker, Brock has a BA from the University of North Carolina and a Master's degree in International Relations from Brock University, where his research focused on global economic development best practices. He has also studied at Queen's University, the University of Waterloo, and the French-language Université Sainte-Anne.

## **Cross-Border Customs Update: Tariffs, De-minimis, and What It Means to You**

**Jesse Mitchell, CCS | Director of Business Development, Strader-Ferris International**



Jesse is the Director of Business Development at Strader Ferris International (SFI). With nearly 20 years in the customs and supply-chain sector, Jesse has built a reputation for helping North American shippers simplify the most complex aspects of U.S.–Canada trade, e-commerce fulfillment, and tariff strategy. He’s known for translating regulatory nuance—USMCA, Section 301, and duty-drawback programs—into clear, profitable pathways for manufacturers and online sellers on both sides of the border.

Jesse’s insights on the evolving customs landscape and cross-border e-commerce have been featured in leading media and trade outlets including CBC, the National Post, The Globe and Mail, Global News, and Reuters, where he has provided commentary on tariff reform, de minimis rules, and cross-border logistics.

## **Leeds Grenville / 1000 Islands Rideau Canal Waterways**

**Ann Weir | Economic Development Manager, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville**



Ann has been the Economic Development Manager for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville for the past 17 years and has recently completed the AMCTO Executive Diploma in Municipal Management. In 2017, she won the Eastern Ontario’s Economic Developer of the Year award.

Ann manages economic development through a collaborative environment with ten municipalities and four partner communities to positively influence the growth and well-being of the Counties and its communities. Ann has worked collaboratively across the region to bring new funding and investments to the region. She has spearheaded many programs including the Business Support Working Group, the Regional Tourism Destination Strategy and the Counties Business Retention and Expansion program.

Ann has an extraordinarily strong belief in the importance of relationships, networks, and partnerships. She is visionary, committed, and enthusiastic in continuing to develop the region’s attributes.