

**Mayor Nelson Santos**  
**Mayors' Breakfast– Leamington & District Chamber of Commerce**  
**February 5th, 2008**  
**Pelee Days Inn**  
**Leamington, Ontario**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, friends, neighbours, and fellow Council members. Like many of you here today, I am one of the fortunate ones who have made our communities of Kingsville and Leamington, the place we call home. And whether you call it home for business, or home for family, it is our HOME in the heart of Canada's true south.

Today's breakfast event represents a first for the Leamington Chamber of Commerce, whose leadership recognizes the tremendous strength that both our municipalities play in the economic and social fabric here in South Essex. There are so many commonalities, commodities and many more examples of how our two communities have worked and continue to work together on so many fronts, yet the Chamber of Commerce, I predict, represents the 'next one' in terms of bringing our business community together.

So today, I do say thank you to the Chamber for bringing us together to learn more about what 2008 has in store for us, and to allow us an opportunity to discover and share who we are with one another. It can be so easy for us to overlook and take our communities for granted, but only when we come together like this, can we truly offer some important insight and recognition of who we are, and how much we truly have in common. I recognize that the Chamber has set its sights high, as they are geared towards a greater engagement of the businesses in our communities. As such, we have to give credit for any effort that seeks to strengthen the bond between our neighbourhoods. I am a strong believer that in reaching out, and that in seeking out, the business leaders and owners, it does in fact strengthen the voice of our community as a whole. In today's challenging economic times, it is this kind of exchange of opportunities that, at the end of the day, can make the difference in achieving the successes we need.

There is something about having our voices of business, those who open their doors to the every day world, be it commerce or service, having these groups commit to 'visioning' for our future success, does offer some important insight into what we as community leaders need to know and learn, so that we can be effective in our roles. These messages will help guide us in making important decisions that include investing in key infrastructure and programs with our minds set on establishing an environment that will grow success; that will grow investment; that will grow our region. And all of us in this room today, know that there is no other place in Canada that is best suited for growing. They don't call Leamington the Tomato Capital without reason. And there's no secret as to why the Kingsville and Leamington area boast the largest concentration of greenhouses across North America. AND...(AND), in recent times, there is no other

wine region in Ontario that can share in the impressive growth and increased recognition and respect that our Lake Erie North Shore wineries have been garnering year after year.

And this encompasses the main points of my message today.

To truly set a course for success we need to understand who we are and how we as neighbours can better achieve success together, utilizing the strengths that are truly unique to us. When I talk about our two communities, it would be inappropriate to suggest that today represents a “Tale of Two Towns” alone.

Because this would imply that we each have our own direction, our own initiatives as well as an independent focus that does not include a vision beyond our own borders. As a person who looks to heritage and our own history for greater insight, I can say with confidence that the tale of our two towns have often blurred those boundaries for the betterment of our residents. Now that isn't to say that we have never challenged each other, because our history does include great rivalries in sport and schools, but there are also tremendous success stories that were collectively borne, and still today represent an important fact of life for us all.

I can stand up here all day and tell each of you all that has made Kingsville the success today, just as my friend and fellow Mayor Adams could tell you about the great pride that lives in the Municipality of Leamington. We all know Kingsville is a great place to work, to live, to shop, to dine, play and stay and yes, we soon we will be Hockeyville! But all these treasures are ones we share with Leamington without exception! And for the record, we will be happy to, and very much hope to, share our Hockeyville experience with you as well. (And boy will that be a story Kingsville and Leamington will be talking about forever, but I digress.)

As elected representatives of our communities, our end goal is geared towards an effort that seeks to meet expectations. Now, there are many great expectations that all of us have, and in my more than 10 years of political life, I have seen some impressive changes, and more importantly for all of us, we have seen our communities grow and we have seen municipalities become a stronger government with a greater level of respect, and responsibility.

And with this greater level of responsibility has come an increased level of accountability that is not only expected from our adoring public, but is mandated by our Provincial leaders, through a much greater form of reporting and auditing. I believe our elected leaders have responded accordingly as I note the commitment and focus of many of our priorities are quite similar. We are all pushing ahead to renew our infrastructure in a way that is and will lead to strengthening our economy, as well as make our communities attractive for new investments as well as assist in retaining those who have always called this their home.

As we look ahead, there are many programs and services that we continue to focus on and seek to build upon. Jointly with Leamington, and great community partners such as the SECC, we offer supports for the Erie Shores Transit Service, we share Animal Control services, we are joined at the hip in Physician Recruitment initiatives; we

have partnered with the Hospital in developing a Family Health Team; we share in ownership and management of a truly regional water plant;

we share in an economically important ferry service with the harbours in Leamington, Pelee Island and Kingsville; we've collectively shared and benefited from joint studies from Business Retention and expansion initiatives to partnerships in tourism efforts. Kingsville remains proud of being neighbours to Canada's Best Place to Live and that recognition certainly offered unique benefits to all of us in South Essex. And still there is so much that our two towns have to boast about and I trust we will continue to work on these and other partnerships in the future.

Today is also a time to offer an insight into what is happening in Kingsville. Having been given two solid mandates from the voters in the Town of Kingsville, and to have the honour of serving as my hometown Mayor, our municipality, guided by a strong and community-minded council, has made three key commitments to our residents. The commitments themselves are a testament to the value we collectively support in continuing to invest in our communities: From Cottam to Ruthven; from Arner to Albuna, from Little Essex to Bulgetown, and right through the heart of downtown Kingsville, we are making investments that not only recognize who we were prior to amalgamation, but to who we are today in 2008. We're investing in roads that improve our urban and rural connections.

In 2008, we are dedicating nearly \$700,000 to our existing corridors and another \$1 million towards our rejuvenated and long-term sewer separation plan. We're seeking to establish a stronger commitment to Active Transportation focusing on getting people moving, whether it is on expanding trails or establishing a new blueprint that brings into play new dedicated bicycle lanes. In the interim, the message will be one of greater awareness of those who share our roadways; and about being and making our roadways safer.

At the end of the day, it is the overarching theme of accountability at work, because the reality is that we cannot afford to just sit back in a traditional comfort zone. We can't say nothing more needs to be done, especially not in the face of the significant challenges that we live in today.

We have all been approached, I'm sure, by business, by media, or by our own residents asking what are we doing to improve the economic environment we live in? With as much confidence as I can muster, my answer is that our communities are doing a lot as we are maintaining a focus on greater investment within our region.

In Kingsville, our proposed investments carry on into greater and enhanced efforts for physician recruitment and retention. Simultaneously, we are looking to much needed affordable housing projects and opportunities to meet the identified needs within our community and within our region. We are also cast with the fiscal responsibility of tightening our belts on the budget numbers and keeping property taxes within reason. Today, Kingsville enjoys the second lowest municipal property tax in the region and when you combine the water and sewer surcharge rates, our municipality leads the region

in affordability. Our council is also very conscious of the development community and the pressures facing them in this economy. That's why our review of the development charges bylaw reflects the 'reality' and identifies only the "most important" priorities that we need to ensure is covered and funded by growth over the next five years. It is by no means a free ticket for our developers, but it is a reflection of the position our municipality is currently in because of timely investments in the past that secured key capacities in water and sewer areas.

Finally, all of this proclaims without hesitation that we've set a course with all of these priorities focused on making improvements to our vital infrastructure, and all this is being done to help us remember who we are and where we are.

We are Canada's 'deep south.' Shoulder to shoulder we stand on the Northern Shores of the great Lake Erie, with a splendid view of our own Pelee Island and of course, a view of the most impressive sunsets Canada has to offer. By air, by land or by the lake, it is no surprise that our southern hospitality and communities enjoy a quality of life few others can match. Recreational opportunities abound, with Pelee Island, Point Pelee National Park, and Essex Region Conservation areas providing sandy beaches, that are uniquely ours. And be it commercial fishing, sport fishing or birding sites extraordinaire, all these point to Kingsville and Leamington as the place to be. And speaking of sport, let's not forget how we together can serve notice upon all other communities, that we are indeed "Hockeyville Nation" and together we can bring the "Hockeyville" title home to where it belongs, here in the heart of South Essex.

And how else could I conclude, but with a toast. Now it is too early for wine, but it is breakfast so we can literally toast our ideal climate, which has fostered a burgeoning wine industry, and award winning wines from Pelee Island Winery, Mastronardi Estate, and Aleksander Estate. With these and all 13 local wineries, we can now identify Essex County as one of the premier wine producing areas in Ontario.

This is who we are and this is why we should all be proud of our Sun Parlour. Thank you friends, for your time and dedication to our communities. Thank you for this opportunity to show you how Leamington and Kingsville have so much to offer, and how we have so much to share. Let our history of working together, continue to lead us into the future, together.