

# Big city living with village charm

## WESTERN SUBURB

### The past ten years has seen big changes for Stittsville

Jen Traplin

One of the Ottawa region's best kept secrets is the small, western suburb of Stittsville, which offers all of the luxuries of big city living while still holding onto its historic village charm.

In the past decade, the population of Stittsville has exploded as the area has undergone a massive transformation.

"There are a lot of new businesses coming in and there are a ton of new people. We're over 30,000 people in Stittsville," says Glen Gower, vice president of the Stittsville Village Association. "It's really changed in the last five years."

During that time, there has been a steady stream of new residential builds and several big box stores — like Michaels, Winners and Lowe's — have moved into new retail locations along the now widened Hazeldean Road.

"On one hand, you're getting these really big businesses and chain stores and, at the same time, we're getting a lot of really interesting, locally owned small businesses as well," Gower says.

"I'm thinking of places like Covered Bridge Brewing, a craft brewer on Iber Road, or Quitters Coffee, owned by Kathleen Edwards, and a lot of other small businesses like the food trucks coming in."

Of course, at the heart of Stittsville's draw is its village charm. Many of the buildings along Stittsville Main Street are designated heritage status. While some have been



Ottawa-born musician Kathleen Edwards opened Quitters Coffee in Stittsville. CONTRIBUTED

preserved, others have been neglected, creating a bit of a turning point, in terms of Stittsville's identity.

"I think Stittsville is still figuring out

what kind of community it really is. Is it a little bit outside of Ottawa -- that idea that it's a bit beyond the fringe? Or is it a modern suburb? I don't know," admits Gower.

"I think the next 10 years, how Stittsville Main Street does or doesn't develop will really shape how the community looks in the future."

# Kanata North tech sector booming



Employment in Kanata North has grown steadily — more than 21,000 people are employed by companies there today. CONTRIBUTED

While Kanata has long been known for its rich and prosperous tech sector, a recent study has proven the Kanata North Business Park is, in fact, the largest research and technology park in Canada.

Since 1991, employment in Kanata North has grown steadily and, today, more than 21,000 people are employed by companies there.

"We're incredibly proud of what's happening here," professes Jenna Sudds, Executive Director of the Kanata North BIA.

Earlier this year, the BIA commissioned an in-depth study to explore the exact economic impact of Kanata North's renowned business community. The study, released in February, concludes the area's business activities "contribute mightily to the Ottawa, Ontario, and Canadian economies."

While the business park is well known for its association with big names like Mitel, Cisco and Alcatel-Lucent (there are also rampant rumours about Apple setting up shop in the area), the majority of the tech firms in Kanata North are actually small organizations.

"We are certainly the home to many large multinationals and large employers but, when you drill down into it, you realize a

## + KANATA NORTH

- Over 21,000 employees
- 500+ companies contributing over \$7.8 billion to Canada's GDP
- 75% of Kanata North's tech firms have less than 50 employees
- 64% of the tech sector is Canadian owned
- Over 50% of the employees live within 5 km of work

clear majority — actually 75 per cent — are those smaller firms with less than 50 employees that really are doing some incredible, innovative things. I think it's very telling of what's happening here," says Sudds.

Most of the companies in Kanata North are also Canadian owned which Sudds believes speaks to the talent and innovation that is here.

"I think there's this perception that Kanata is very much the land of big companies and big employers and they're fabulous to have, of course, but we do want those homegrown success stories and the fact that 64 per cent of the companies here are Canadian companies is remarkable," she says. **JEN TRAPLIN**