

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 19, 2009

RE: CITY OF OTTAWA EXPANDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Citing tough economic times, Ottawa Mayor Bob Eschbach has proposed the Ottawa City Council move to increase Ottawa's efforts to create new jobs and promote economic growth by hiring Reed Wilson as Director of Economic Development for the City of Ottawa. The new position would be funded – not from general fund dollars – but rather by TIF funds and enterprise zone funds generated by the development of new wind farms in the Ottawa area. The City Council recently decided to set aside these funds for the general purpose of economic development.

"When times are tough," said Eschbach, "extra steps have to be taken in order to keep the employment we already have while effectively pursuing economic development opportunities and new jobs. And I am particularly excited that we have been able to acquire the talents of Reed Wilson who knows this area and has worked with local communities on a host of economic development initiatives.

Eschbach pointed out that Wilson has worked in the Ottawa area for 22 years as a senior member of the congressional staffs of Congressman Tom Corcoran (of Ottawa) and Congressman Jerry Weller. Serving as District Director for each Congressman, Wilson has played a major role in the development of many local projects. Some of these include the building of the levee which protects Ottawa Township High School from flooding; the funding of the Illinois Valley Anti-Drug Coalition; the creation of the Veterans Outpatient Clinic in LaSalle; the initial funding of the Ottawa Riverwalk along the Illinois and Fox Rivers and the re-authorization of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. Eschbach noted Wilson also assisted the City in obtaining USEPA brownfield cleanup funds as well as funding for the Illinois Valley Commuter Rail study. Wilson has also worked with the City in dealings with the U.S. Economic Development Administration on local development projects.

Wilson's primary responsibilities will include working directly with Ottawa's economic development team; handling government relations activities including federal and state grant opportunities and working to implement the gardening and botanical arts destination brand in downtown Ottawa as developed in Destination Development, Inc. study done last year. Eschbach noted that program's great potential to significantly increase retail activity in downtown Ottawa while providing new entrepreneurial opportunities for Ottawa citizens and increasing downtown property values –all while enhancing the natural beauty of Ottawa.