

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2009

Leeds and Grenville Adopts Fiscally Responsible Budget

Leeds and Grenville counties council has worked hard to keep tax increases to a minimum during tough economic times with its 2009 budget passed on Thursday.

Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer Nigel White describes it as a 2 per cent increase over a revenue-neutral tax rate. "Although the overall tax rate increase for 2009 was 2 per cent, after we account for the new assessment and real growth the tax rate is actually 4.11 per cent lower than 2008."

This means if a residential home was assessed at \$100,000 in 2008 and experienced no assessment increase in 2009, the counties' portion of the tax bill drops by 4.11 per cent.

"As long as a home's increase in value is less than 4 per cent, the taxpayer will see no increase in the counties' portion. If their assessment decreased over last year, there will be an even greater drop," Mr. White said.

"We are pleased to be able to present this fiscally responsible budget to the people of Leeds and Grenville," said Warden Mel Campbell. "Both staff and council did their due diligence and worked hard to keep the budget and expenditures in line in recognition of tough economic times throughout the area."

Public meetings regarding the budget have been held over the last couple of months. UCLG will collect \$27.7 million from property taxpayers in 2009, up from \$26.7 million last year. The budget is balanced, with expenditures and revenues at \$83.2 million, up from \$81.8 million in 2008.

Mr. White outlined some budgetary pressures over the coming years. In particular he expressed concern about the decrease in Ontario Municipal Partnership Funding, which is used for provincially downloaded programs such as social assistance and ambulance services. "Our OMPF monies received have been decreased by more than \$1.3 million from 2008, and if this trend continues there will be repercussions next year."

Federal and provincial funding has helped to offset road and bridge capital projects. "The roads capital projects are using more than \$6.6 million in gas tax and Investing in Ontario Fund allocations," Mr. White said. "The majority of the stimulus package over the next two years is earmarked for roads and bridges infrastructure projects."

Large road and bridge projects slated for 2009 include the Pine Hill roundabout project on Cty. Rd. 43; rehabilitation on Cty. Rds. 10 or 42, 15, 22 and 32; resurfacing on Cty. Rds. 2, 3, 18, 23 and 44; micro-surfacing on Cty. Rds. 2, 27 and 29; slurry seal on Cty. Rds. 8 and 16; chip seal on Cty. Rds. 13 and 21; work on two bridges on Cty. Rd. 11 at Jones Falls; Outlet Bridge on Cty. Rd. 3; Irish Creek Bridge on Cty. Rd. 16; Merrickville Bridge on Cty. Rd. 23 and Gananoque River Bridge on Cty. Rd. 32.

Counties CAO Steven Silver noted the economic development budget sees a large increase this year, from just over \$82,000 in 2008 to almost \$366,000. "This is due to the increased emphasis being placed on the new and increased role of the economic development office," he explained.

Mr. White emphasized taxpayers should be aware the counties' portion represents only one-third of their total tax bill. Overall increases and decreases will depend on final figures from local municipal and education portions.

-30-

For more information:

Mel Campbell
Warden
613-925-4231

Steven Silver
Chief Administrative Officer
613-342-3840, ext. 2301

Nigel White
Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer
613-342-3840, ext. 2332