

# United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 19, 2009

Here are the highlights from the regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council meeting held Feb. 19.

**Budget Discussions Proceeding:** Council has received first drafts of budgets for all departments and will be scrutinizing details over the next few weeks. A consolidated budget review is scheduled for March 5 and a meeting has been added on March 10 to give councillors a further opportunity to review the document. Final approval is expected by the end of March or early April. Budget meetings are open to the public. For more information, contact Nigel White, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2332.

**Infrastructure Funds Announced:** Warden Mel Campbell congratulated staff and local councils for their significant effort and success in securing funds from the Building Canada Fund. The program sees federal, provincial and municipal partnerships with each contributing one third of funds for projects. The provincial share of the matching funds, as follows, was recently announced. For local road infrastructure the counties received \$200,417 and Rideau Lakes received \$133,333. Edwardsburgh/Cardinal garnered almost \$11.6 million for short sea shipping infrastructure (Port of Prescott). For wastewater infrastructure Leeds & the Thousand Islands received \$775,556 and Merrickville-Wolford collected almost \$2.5 million, while Westport received \$66,667 for water infrastructure. For more information, contact Les Shepherd, Director of Public Works, Planning Services and Asset Management, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2412.

**Broadband Project Endorsed:** Rather than submitting its own application for phase II of the provincial Rural Connections program to improve rural broadband internet access, council endorsed a proposal by the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus under the Building Canada Fund. The EOWC, which is an incorporated entity made up of representatives from eastern Ontario municipalities, brings regional issues to provincial and federal governments. The caucus is expecting to hear in May about approval of its application to build a network superhighway in eastern Ontario, which it sees as the number one regional economic development priority. At a recent governance and finance meeting, councillors agreed it was premature to support a counties application for the second phase of the Rural Connections program. There will be a further opportunity in phase III of the four-year, \$30 million provincial program. For more information, contact Steven Silver, Counties CAO, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

**Councillors Meeting with Ministers:** Local politicians will meet with provincial ministers at the Ontario Good Roads Association/Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in Toronto, Feb. 22 to 25. A counties delegation is scheduled to meet with Community and Social Services Minister Madeleine Meilleur to discuss concerns about the proposed communication portion of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Local council delegations will be meeting with other ministers on such matters as increased OPP costs, payment for fire services responding on 400 series highways, the closure of service stations on Hwy. 401 and waste management issues. The Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus will be meeting with various ministers as well. For more information, contact Lorraine Crotty, Clerk, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2307.

**Freezing Councillor Salaries:** At its governance and finance committee meeting on March 5, councillors will consider a suggestion by Westport Mayor Bill Thake to freeze councillor remuneration at 2008 levels. Mr. Thake made the proposal "to show concern for the economic state of our country." Several councillors indicated they had adopted similar motions at their own councils. For more information, contact Steven Silver, Counties CAO, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

**Upcoming Meetings** – Joint Services Sub-committee, March 3; Public Works, March 4; Governance and Finance, March 5; Special Budget, March 10; Joint Services Committee, March 18; Counties Council, March 19. All meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the council chambers, 25 Central Ave. W., Brockville, unless otherwise noted. *Please note: Non-emergency delegations are heard at committee meetings.* For more information contact 613-342-3840, ext. 2307.

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