

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JAN 21, 2010

Here are the highlights from the regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council meeting held Jan. 21.

Warden Elected Vice-Chair: Warden Bill Thake was elected vice-chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Inc. during the organization's annual review and priority-setting session held in Kingston last week. "Our January session is when new wardens are welcomed as members of the caucus," he said. "As well, the incoming and outgoing wardens look forward to the year ahead and set the direction for the caucus in terms of the key issues that we will be promoting to both the federal and provincial governments." Three priorities identified for 2010 include economic development, the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (broadband Internet) and mitigating the loss of the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund. Other ongoing projects include lobbying the province to improve the land ambulance dispatch system; developing relationships with First Nations communities; and researching and advocating regarding long-term care funding and regulatory issues. The caucus also makes recommendation to the federal and provincial governments through their respective pre-budget submission processes. For more information, contact Steve Silver, Counties CAO, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

Update on County Road 43 Project: At their public works committee meeting, councillors received an overview of work done last year regarding the preliminary design for the plan to widen Cty. Rd. 43. The project would expand the road from two to four lanes between Hwy. 416 and Somerville Road to accommodate increasing traffic in the area. Separate bicycle and pedestrian paths are proposed on each side. Guy Laporte, a manager with AECOM's Kingston office, discussed the new two-lane bridge over Kemptville Creek, which would be built south of the existing bridge and take significant species' habitat into consideration. There was also discussion on the merits of roundabouts versus traffic signals in Kemptville. Traffic specialist Steve Sergeant said research shows crosswalks in roundabouts are safe as long as appropriate design features are in place, such as special features for the visually impaired, situating crossings in low-speed areas and setting up two-stage crossings. The project will be discussed at North Grenville council on Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. at the North Grenville Municipal Complex, and a public meeting is scheduled there on Feb. 11 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. MPPs Bob Runciman and Gord Brown have been invited to attend. For more information, contact Leslie Shepherd, Director of Works, Planning Services and Asset Management, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2412.

Feedback from MTO Received: Councillors received a report from Donna Bickerstaffe of the provincial transportation ministry (MTO) in response to concerns raised last fall about service centre closures along Hwy. 401. Many questions remain, however, and Front of Yonge Reeve Roger Haley noted many former employees will soon run out of employment insurance benefits. Staff were asked to check with MTO to confirm if the dates to reopen the Mallorytown service centres (north and south) are still set for spring and summer 2011. A public information session has been scheduled by MTO for Jan. 28 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Mallorytown Community Centre. For more information, contact Leslie Shepherd, Director of Works, Planning Services and Asset Management, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2412.

Installing GPS Units: The counties is installing GPS devices in 36 public works vehicles, 21 of them in snow plows and the remainder in service and patrol vehicles. The move is an effort to enhance communication with workers on the road as well as to help isolate public works issues, improve customer service and diffuse potential liabilities. The devices record the exact time the vehicles are on specific roads and the data will be stored. For more information, contact Leslie Shepherd, Director of Works, Planning Services and Asset Management, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2412.

Upcoming Meetings – Joint Services Sub-committee, Feb 2; Public Works, Feb. 3; Governance and Finance, Feb. 4; Joint Services Committee, Feb. 17; Counties Council, Feb. 18. 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. 2304.