

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 20, 2010

Here are the highlights from the regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council meeting held May 20.

Province Urged to Review LHIN Decision: Council is asking the premier and health minister to review the decision made by the Champlain Local Health Integration Network to stop funding the Collaborative Champlain LHIN Aging at Home Program, which is offered in partnership with Leeds, North Lanark and North Grenville. The cuts affect services that help seniors stay in their homes longer, such as day programs, respite care, mobile primary health care and seniors exercise classes and wellness clinics. The services are particularly vital in rural areas. The resolution states this affects vulnerable senior residents in the region and places an additional burden on caregivers. Ruth Kitson, executive director of Community Primary Health Care, said she is in contact with numerous caregivers seeking action. The resolution notes the decision also creates an inequitable service delivery model, as the programs are available in neighbouring LHINs, which effectively creates two-tier health care. The resolution was also circulated to MPPs, affected local municipal councils, area LHINs and the Kemptville General Hospital. For more information, contact Steve Silver, CAO, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

Seeking Action on Rail Lines: Council approved two resolutions regarding the future of area rail lines. The first refers to Canadian Pacific's plans to close and sell rail lines between Smiths Falls and Petawawa and from Petawawa to Mattawa, and to find an operator for the line between Temiscaming and Sudbury only. It calls rail service a "vital transportation link required for the maintenance and development of sustainable and vibrant communities throughout rural Ontario" and notes their loss represents a "devastating economic impact" in an area already affected by the recession. Noting railways were "established to serve all Canadians with substantial investments by Canadian taxpayers," council is calling upon the federal and provincial governments to protect short-line infrastructure by establishing a funding program to permit their economic viability. The second resolution asks the provincial and federal governments to consider reactivating discontinued rail lines. North Grenville Mayor Bill Gooch noted the deactivated link between Kemptville and Ottawa, for example, could become an effective transportation link. Both resolutions were circulated to the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, MPs, MPPs, provincial and federal transportation ministers, and transportation and CP executives. For more information, contact Steve Silver, CAO, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

Highway Upgrades Planned: Public information sessions are planned to review proposed improvements to Hwy. 15 within Leeds and Grenville. Angelo Renon, an engineer with Genivar Engineering and Consulting Services representing the transportation ministry, recently provided an overview of upgrades to driving lanes and shoulders, as well as new passing lanes, tapers and guide rails. The design is slated for completion this summer, with the contract to be finished this fall if time allows. A public information session is planned on May 26 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Morton Community Hall, with a second session to be held in July. For more information, contact Leslie Shepherd, Director of Works, Planning Services and Asset Management, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2412.

Awareness of Wild Parsnip Raised: UCLG plans to work with the local health unit on a public information campaign about health risks associated with wild parsnip. A detailed report by Larry Suds, counties weed inspector, indicated this poisonous invasive species has spread quickly in eastern Ontario. When cut, the sap in the plant can burn the skin, causing large, painful blisters and leaving scars. The counties has taken steps to protect the health and safety of its workers and contractors and to control the plant on its properties to minimize risks and try to reduce its spread. Mr. Suds has been authorized to spray where the plant is an immediate threat to homeowners and children. 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, June 1; Public Works, June 2; Governance and Finance, June 3; Joint Services Committee, June 24; Counties Council, June 24 (following Joint Services). 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 Lesley Todd, Clerk, at 613-342-3840, ext. 2304.