

THE WELLINGTON ADVERTISER

Volume 49 Issue 28

www.wellingtonadvertiser.com

Friday, July 8, 2016

Communities across county celebrate Canada Day in style



Celebrate - Many communities across Wellington County celebrated Canada Day with children's activities, face painting, entertainment and fireworks. LEFT: Rose Kerry smiles during the festivities at McMillan Park in Erin on July 1. ABOVE: Spider-Man, aka Landyn Heyden, pets an African spurred tortoise during the kids activities on July 3 at the Arthur Canada Day celebrations held over the long weekend. **More Canada Day photos on pages 22, 23 and 26.** photos by Olivia Rutt

Fire chiefs issue county-wide ban on open air burning

by Patrick Raftis

WELLINGTON COUNTY - The county is now under a complete outdoor fire ban.

Wellington County's fire chiefs decided on July 5 to prohibit all open air burning within the county under the authority of the Ontario Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

The ban is now in effect until further notice.

Open air burn is defined as any fire outside of a building. The ban includes bonfires, campfires, burn barrels, outdoor fireplaces/chimineas or any other fires set in open air.

Fines are in place for violations and the ban also applies to Open Burn Permit holders.

The outdoor open air fire ban has been imposed due to the "extreme dryness of all vegetation in Wellington County," states a press release from the Wellington County Fire Chiefs Association. Provincial forest and wild land fire indicators are all at extreme levels, the release notes.

"If you discover a fire in the open, it is very important that you report fires immediately to 911," the release states.

Centre Wellington Fire Chief Brad Patton, the county's fire coordinator, said while unusual, the fire chiefs have gone to the extent of implementing a fire ban across the entire county in the past.

A ban was previously issued in July of 2012, he pointed out. A nine-day burning ban was also implemented across the county in July of

2011.

While bans have generally been issued on a municipality-by-municipality basis in the past, Patton said local fire departments are attempting to take a more coordinated approach.

"We have done that in the past ... You may get a lot of rain in Erin and not so much in Minto, but it seems to be lately that the conditions are a little more predominant across the county," he said.

"The Wellington County Fire Chiefs Association meets regularly and we're trying to be more in step with one another so there's no confusion across the county ... We're trying to be a little more cohesive," he added.

Citizens are asked to direct any questions regarding this order to their local fire department.

Patton said any decision to lift the ban would be made jointly by the county fire chiefs and citizens should monitor their local municipal websites and social media for updates.

Patton cautioned it will require significant rainfall to convince the group to lift the ban.

"We need a substantial rain over a couple of days. It is so dry out there that a couple of hours of rain is not going to get us out of our drought conditions."

The ban comes on the heels of a June 29 call from the Grand River Conservation Authority for a 10 per cent reduction in water consumption across the watershed due to the unusually dry conditions.

Guelph-Eramosa opts out of OMB quarry fight, gives CRC \$70,000

by Jaime Myslik

BRUCEDALE - Guelph-Eramosa Township is giving the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) \$70,000 to fight a proposed quarry near Rockwood at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing this fall.

However, council also decided the township itself is not going to be a party at the OMB hearing.

Instead, the municipality is sending its lawyer to file an exhibit at the hearing - in the form of a resolution stating the township's objection to the quarry and asking the OMB to reject James Dick Construction Ltd.'s (JDCL) rezoning application and Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) license application.

"I think one of the obvious questions people are going to ask is 'if the township's opposed to the hidden quarry why aren't they going to fight it at the hearing?'" councillor Mark Bouwmeester said at a special meeting on June 27.

"In order to be at the hearing we would be required to provide evidence that would argue against what our peer review team, which is a group of respected professionals that work for us, has just said is okay."

Bouwmeester explained that would mean firing the township's consultants and finding contrary evidence to support council's decision.

"Firing consultants until you find one that agrees with you would be inappropriate and irresponsible," he said. "As well the applicant has already formally advised us the last

time they were here at council that they would likely call our own peer review team as witnesses at the hearing to argue against the municipality.

"Even if we did find new consultants and tried to find new expert witnesses it would cost the township several hundreds of thousands of dollars before the hearing even took place."

The decision on the zoning bylaw amendment was taken out of the municipality's hands when JDCL filed an appeal to the OMB in June 2015.

The quarry process began in December of 2012 when JDCL applied for a rezoning amendment for lands southeast of Rockwood - from agriculture and hazard land to extractive industrial - to make way for a quarry.

In October council made a unanimous decision to advise the OMB

that it opposed the hidden quarry application as it stood at the time, despite a report from township planning consultant Elizabeth Howson of Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd. recommending council advise the OMB to approve the quarry application in-principle, subject to specific conditions being met.

At the June 27 special meeting, council came out of a closed session with a resolution restating its objection to the quarry but also including caveats suggesting what should be done if the quarry is approved, including:

- approval of the township's zoning bylaw amendment as drafted by the township solicitor and consultants;
- approval of the township's conditions of development; and

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CANADA DAY PHOTOS
 PAGES 22, 23 AND 26
**we cover the county!*

Arthur celebrates Canada Day with kids activities, softball games



Four-day celebration - The Arthur Optimist's Canada Day celebrations started June 29 and continued throughout the weekend. Three-pitch games ran throughout the event, including tournaments for men, mixed and family teams. On Sunday, the kids took centre stage with a treasure hunt for \$50 worth of loonies in the sand pit and a petting zoo provided by Tiger Paw Exotics. LEFT: Norah Wilson bravely touches a ball python. TOP RIGHT: It's out of here. Men's three-pitch games dominated most of Saturday. ABOVE RIGHT: Emma Duffield feeds kangaroo "Joey," held by Hans Eschlboeck. *photos by Olivia Rutt*

Erin residents sport red and white for Canada Day celebrations



Canada Day - It was all about red and white at the Canada Day event at McMillan Park in Erin. The event, hosted by AAA Events, had many activities for children as well as food and live entertainment all day. TOP LEFT: Town crier Andrew Welch opens the ceremonies. ABOVE LEFT: Rowen Visagie and Patrick Armstrong become hoe-operators at the Snow Brothers Contracting booth. RIGHT: From left, volunteer firefighter Rick Scott, Peter Bezemer and volunteer firefighter Cody Jones pose with Elyze and Annika Bezemer. *photos by Olivia Rutt*

Residents aglow with Canadian pride in Centre Wellington



Canadian pride - Hundreds of people came out to Fergus and Elora to celebrate Canada Day despite the wild weather. Both communities held activities and entertainment throughout the day on July 1. While the Elora soap box derby was cancelled due to the weather, the breakfast, duck race and other events continued. In Fergus, children could partake in bubble soccer and enjoy pony rides and a midway. Kids could even get knee-deep in inflatable guts with the "Zoo Guts" interactive display. TOP LEFT: Canada Day clowns lead the Dominion Day parade in Elora. MIDDLE LEFT: Jake and Spencer Thompson show off their Canadian pride at the Elora Firefighters' Association pancake breakfast. BOTTOM LEFT: The Young family, consisting of grandparents Jim and Violet, Takoda, left, and Tanner braved the pouring rain to enjoy the pancake breakfast. ABOVE: Mikenna O'Sullivan dances during Canada Day celebrations at the Centre Wellington Community Sportsplex in Fergus. BELOW: Emma Cowie makes a perfect landing in an inflatable obstacle course at the Canada Day celebrations in Fergus. *photos by Olivia Rutt*



Flotilla - The threat of rain and thunderstorms didn't stop Belwood cottagers from heading out on the lake to celebrate the 7th annual Canada Day Flotilla. Held by the Belwood Lake Cottagers Association, participants dress up their boats and themselves in their best Canada Day garb.

photo by Olivia Rutt

