



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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New Year's Message from the Mayor to the Citizens of Prince Edward County:

The Council of the County of Prince Edward is entering its second year of this first four year term. 2007 was a challenging year with a significant number of new Councillors and many complex matters before us. I am pleased with the progress made by this Council and very appreciative of the efforts made by each Councillor to contribute their time, ideas and knowledge to the betterment of our way of life here in the County. We have a Council which is rich in experience and commitment. Those attributes have contributed to many accomplishments in this first year.

We made significant strides in long term planning and strategy and put in place programs for some of our most vulnerable citizens, our young, our disabled and our elderly. We have taken steps to improve our communications and interaction with the public. We have addressed the need for better accountability and financial management and we have commenced some important infrastructure projects. Our successful partnerships with the business community have received national and provincial recognition. We have strengthened our cultural and architectural heritage through the activities of our committed citizen advisory committees.

A strong local government and a healthy democracy depends on creating and sustaining relationships between decision makers (elected and non-elected) and citizens. We value input from all of our constituents, be it formally through deputations at Council or informally through a phone call or visit, and we provide equal weight to all. We will continue to develop new ways and methods to engage our citizens in meaningful and fruitful dialogue in an environment of mutual respect.

We still have challenges ahead for the next three years, but with the momentum this Council has achieved, I am confident that the next three years will be productive as we work together to accomplish our goals.

The following is a synopsis of Council's 2007 activities. More information on these initiatives is available on the County website www.pecounty.on.ca.

- Building on our previous terms "Conversations with Council", this new Council started early in the year working on the development of a high level strategy to set priorities and guide decision making throughout the term of Council. The Strategic Plan was finalized in late 2007 and our staff is working on action plans for implementation. The top five priorities are:
 1. Complete the assessment of options for housing the County's administration;
 2. Develop a strategy that will promote and encourage new low energy recreation infrastructure with community groups, partners and volunteers, that will serve all ages and physical abilities with an emphasis on minimizing costs and environmental impacts;
 3. Develop a comprehensive long-term financial plan;
 4. Proceed with the update of the County Official Plan and secondary plans for Picton-Hallowell, Rossmore and Wellington, and prepare a new secondary plan for Bloomfield; and
 5. Develop a communications strategy.
- An audit committee has been formed to promote an environment for effective management of public funds.
- The County and our community partners received important recognition, both provincially and nationally, by winning the Lieutenant Governor's Award of Excellence for economic development and 2007 Marketing Canada Awards.

- We partnered with Canadian Tire to promote physical activity for children and youth in the JumpStart program, which supports local children who may not be able to participate in sports and recreational programs for financial reasons. Through this program, 36 children were able to participate in a variety of activities including baseball, softball, hockey, soccer and swimming.
- The County's first specialized transit service has been implemented for our disabled and elderly population.
- Our Street Smarts Committee worked with us to develop Design Guidelines for Picton Main Street and our Heritage Committee has identified priorities in the County for historic designations.
- In conjunction with other Eastern Ontario municipalities we launched an advertising campaign prior to the provincial election to raise awareness of the need for sustainable funding for municipalities.
- Our new website provides a fresh look with easy navigation and up-to-date, accurate municipal information.
- After nearly four years of study and analysis we received Ministry of the Environment approval to proceed with the new Picton Wastewater Treatment Plant with tendering to take place within the first quarter of 2008. The new Plant will serve the County well for many years into the future.
- We are considering implementing Development Charges as a means of managing the costs associated with growth.
- Council has made significant changes to its meeting procedures to improve access to government and promote dialogue between the citizens and Council.
- Late in the year we received a facility review report on the Wellington Arena/Community Centre and are now awaiting public input.

On behalf of the Council and staff of the County of Prince Edward, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our citizens joy, health and prosperity in 2008.

More information on these initiatives is available on our website and at Shire Hall.



**Leo P. Finnegan, Mayor
County of Prince Edward**