



COUNTY CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER FOR COUNTY OF LANARK EMPLOYEES

DECEMBER 2004

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PICTURES!

County Connections is always looking for PHOTOS for the next issue. Send digital images at ANY TIME to the contacts listed on Page 6.



SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN: The County's United Way campaign began with a flag raising ceremony featuring (from left) United Way President Janet Brennan, Mississippi Mills Mayor Al Lunney, County Warden Gary Doyle and United Way Executive Director Brenda Hurrle.

A Message from the CAO

County surpasses United Way target!

By Peter Wagland

Congratulations and thank you on behalf of the Lanark County United Way, its member agencies and its recipients. The County was asked to try to raise \$4,000. We exceeded this challenge by raising \$4,620.01.

It is amazing what a group can do in support of those less

fortunate. Your achievements represent the largest contribution County employees have ever made to the United Way. We have also seen contributions from every segment of our organization.

Here is a summary of the money raised through your efforts:

- Laneway toll \$207.16
- 50/50 draws 200.50
- Cash contributions 284.85
- Hershey Kisses Contest 96.00
- Payroll Deduction 3,831.50
- TOTAL \$4,620.01

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A Message from the CAO, Cont'd

Continued from Page 1

As you will recall, each employee who contributed through payroll deduction had the opportunity to win a variety of prizes through a draw.

The following is a list of the winners in each category:

50/50 Draws:

Draw #1, Nov. 5 – Susan Warwick, \$99

Draw #2, Nov. 19 – Marilyn Moore, \$101.50

Hershey Kisses Draw:

Suzanne Geoffrion guessed 508 – Actual 509

Facility Specific Draws:

Administration/Engineering Buildings	
Steve Tennant	Vacation Day
Cathy Ritchie	Vacation Day
Janet Sproule	Reserved Parking Space
Jane Cunningham	Reserved Parking Space
Tara Langford	CAO for the Day
Public Works Yards	
Brian Echlin	\$50 Gift Certificate
Gerry Cole	Vacation Day
Lanark Lodge	
Adele Harding	Vacation Day
Marg Bisson	Vacation Day
Ron Moore	\$50 Gift Certificate
Carol Cordick	\$50 Gift Certificate
Aileen Conboy	CAO Slave for the Day
Lanark County Housing Corporation	
All participants	Friday Office Dress Down Day
Cheryl Hough	Vacation Day
Candace Moss	Lunch with Executive Director

Once again, as a Board Member of the Lanark County United Way, I wish to express my personal thank you for your participation and contributions to this fundraising effort. It helps to support many good causes within the county.

On a personal note, I would like to thank each and every member of the County staff team for your continued commitment and dedication to the people of Lanark County whom we serve. I hope you and your families have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



CAO FOR A DAY: Tara Langford (far right) takes part in the County Council inaugural meeting Dec. 14 as part of her "CAO for the Day" prize in the United Way facility draws. Tara joined (from right) CAO Peter Wagland, 2004 Warden Gary Doyle, Clerk Cynthia Moyle and Committee Secretariat Amanda Strickland for the proceedings.



FINANCE

FINANCE FROLICS

As the year end approaches, it is important to reflect on the past year's challenges and achievements.

Of particular note, the County of Lanark received the **Award of Overall Excellence** from Diamond Software for the implementation of the new Financial/HR system, Microsoft Great Plains. This is the top award for Ontario and we are very proud of this recognition. A trophy is proudly displayed in the Finance department for anyone wishing to view it.

Much work is still to be done. Of particular interest to employees, the first pay advice slip in January will show your banked vacation entitlements and your sick leave benefits. We are confident this will be of use to employees. In 2005,



WINNING TEAM!: County of Lanark Finance, Human Resources, Public Works and Information Technology staff were the proud recipients of the Diamond Software Overall Excellence Award recently.

employees will also be notified by e-mail when their travel claims have been transmitted to their bank accounts.

Finance is preparing for year end and the 2005 budget process, which will take place over the first quarter. Stay

tuned for developments.

The staff in the finance department would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We are looking forward to 2005 and all the opportunities a new year brings.

A Message from the Warden

Thanks for an outstanding year

By Gary Doyle

Where has the year gone? It seems like only yesterday I was sworn in at the beginning of my term, and now it's over. This has been, in my opinion, a very successful year. Council and staff have worked extremely well together conducting County business. More importantly, we are seeing progress with a number of new initiatives.

The Community Vision and

Corporate Strategic Plan are in the final stages of refinement before being presented to Council for approval. We have been through a two-year process in which we had face-to-face dialogue with the public, asking for their perspective on County operations and priorities. This consultation has provided tremendous insight for Council.

Fairview Manor was

transferred to the Almonte General Hospital on October 1. To the employees of Fairview Manor, I wish to thank you for your continued service during this transition period. I trust the working relationship with AGH will be as successful as it was with Lanark County.

We have seen the successful completion of our new financial

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SOCIAL SERVICES

STAFF CHANGES

Since the last submission, the Social Services department has had numerous changes in staffing. Jacy McKittrick and Sharlyn Lowry are enjoying parental leave with their new family members, while Shelley Wright-Olney returned from parental leave on Dec. 6. Cheryl Shore left a part-time contract position in Ontario Works for permanent full-time employment in the Clerk's department. The following contract staff have come on board:

- Nicole Murray, APS Worker
- Sarah Pitts, Social Housing Clerk
- Kathy Thayer, Ontario Works Clerk

Another new face in the Lanark County Administration Building is Erin Monker, a Domestic Violence Community Coordinator. This two-year, part-time position was created to complete a county-wide needs assessment, update police protocol and organize a Community Conference. Erin started the end of October and is working in the County of Lanark Administration Building under the auspices of Open Doors.

REDEPLOYING COMPUTERS

Currently, Ontario Works is awaiting the arrival of cleaned hard drives from the province to re-install in the old computers to be redeployed to non-profit agencies in the community.

HEARTSAVER TRAINING

On Nov. 17, many Social Services staff took part in "Heartsaver" training in accordance with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. Jeff Ward, a certified instructor with St. John Ambulance, provided the training.

STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Social Services will be working together with Algonquin College in Perth providing placement opportunities for students enrolled in the Social Worker Program. This is the first year the program has been offered in Perth.

EMERGENCY TRAINING

Two successful three-day sessions for Basic Emergency Management Training were conducted this fall. Thirty people, including all

County senior management, were trained by Leslie Lendrum, the County's Community Emergency Management Coordinator, and Sandy Grey, the alternate CEMC. County Council passed the Emergency Plan Bylaw in November. The emergency plan process is to be reviewed annually, and more training is planned for 2005.

TOURISM

PLAN AHEAD!

As you ponder your 2005 vacations, make sure to check out the Lanark County Tourism website to ensure you are not caught out of town on a weekend when there is a major event in Lanark County.

We currently have most of the dates for the 2005 events, but continue to check as the new dates are set.

HOSTING A PARTY? CHECK THIS OUT

At first glance, most parties look the same, but when it comes to planning there is no comparing a Smart Party and an Ultimate Disaster.

Know your potential liability as a party host. More than ever, courts are placing legal responsibility on people who serve alcohol or host events where people are drinking. You are responsible for your guests until they are sober, not just until they leave your party.

Being a good host means keeping guests, yourself and others safe while having a good time! Here are some tips:

1. Stay sober.
2. Avoid an open bar - ask a sober friend you trust to bartend.
3. Plan ahead for rides home and be prepared for overnight guests.
4. Stop serving alcohol a few hours before the party is over.
5. Make sure food is always available.
6. Have non-alcoholic drinks in a visible area.
7. If outdoor activities are planned, serve alcohol only after activities are finished.

Check www.mocktails.com for great non-alcoholic beverages. (Source: Greater Kingston Area Safe & Sober Community Alliance.)

PUBLIC WORKS

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The annual Christmas Party of the Association of Lanark County Road Employees was held on Saturday, Oct. 16 – a little earlier in the season than previous years to allow the equipment operators to attend the party rather than being out plowing snow. One hundred and thirty-seven employees and contractors attended Farrell Hall for the buffet dinner, lots of door prizes and dancing to the Red Rose Express Band.

TRAINING

This fall, lots of training took place in the department. Emergency First Aid and Adult CPR training was provided to employees by Jeff Ward, a certified instructor with St. John Ambulance. Employees at both Almonte and Perth Patrols took an afternoon training session on the safe handling of propane by the Municipal Health & Safety Association. All the Supervisors in the Public Works Department (Steve Allan, Walter Warwick, Tom Guindon, Gerry Cole and Janet Tysick) attended the

three-day Basic Emergency Management Training, as well as the two-day Management Workshop provided by the County. Tom Guindon and Gerry Cole attended a two-day workshop by the Ontario Good

been hired to assist with winter road maintenance. Brian Syme, Kevin Boychuk and Wayne Porteous have joined the crew at the Almonte Patrol, along with Todd Huckstep, who is returning for a second season.



NEW HEAVY EQUIPMENT: A new International 7600 Tandem Truck and a new Case Tractor Loader (left) were purchased for the road maintenance operations Almonte Patrol. A new John Deere Backhoe Loader (below) has been purchased for the Perth Patrol.

Steven HERNs, Graham Patterson, Jason Varcoe and Lyle McDougall have joined the Perth Patrol, along with Chris Culyer, who is returning this season. Steven HERNs is presently filling a temporary full-time Equipment Operator 2 position at the Perth Patrol. We welcome each one in assisting

with this season's road maintenance operations.

WINTER OPERATIONS SALT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The County of Lanark has retained Ecoplans Inc. to develop a plan to help us reduce the amount of road salt that we are using. The recommendations will include changes to procedures, equipment and facilities.

Roads Association in Mississauga regarding winter maintenance of snow and ice. Tom and Gerry are presently doing computer based training to learn the Road Weather Information System and anti-icing techniques for improving winter maintenance.

NEW PERSONNEL

Nine part-time on-call Equipment Operators have

EMPLOYEE SERVICES AND PAYROLL SERVICES

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Lanark County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has been up and running since 2000 and has been well utilized by staff.

This confidential, professional counselling and referral service is provided by Warren Shepell Consultants Corporation. There is unlimited access for **ALL** employees and their immediate family members.

The counsellors are highly trained and experienced across a broad range of personal and work-related problem areas, such as marital and family, stress, alcohol and drug, vocational and emotional. The service is available at no cost to you or your family member. If longer-term or specialized counselling is required, the counsellor may make a referral to an appropriate professional in the community, at which point fees for services become the responsibility of the employee or family member. Some fees may be covered by your provincial health plan or extended benefits.

The EAP is available, off site, on a 24-hour basis by calling 1-800-3874765 (English) or 1-800-361-5676 (French).

A LOW-STRESS HOLIDAY SEASON

Even with enthusiasm and a positive spirit, it's easy to be stressed during the holidays. Keep the following tips in mind for future holidays, and remember your EAP is available 24 hours a day to connect you to counselling and other



FAIRVIEW CELEBRATED: A special staff recognition evening was held Oct. 21 to mark the successful transfer of Fairview Manor from the County to the Almonte General Hospital. The transfer itself occurred Oct. 1 during a ceremony at the Manor. Congratulations to all those involved with bringing the transfer to fruition, and we extend our best wishes to Fairview staff as the redevelopment project continues.

services that can make a positive difference.

• Don't do everything yourself. Share tasks, ask for help.

• Limit your spending. Draw names, set limits, make gifts.

• Don't overindulge in food/drink. Keep balance, health, moderation in mind.

• Help others. Give your time, attention or donations.

• Accentuate the positive.

• Be realistic. What do you expect from the season?

• Be gentle with others and yourself.

COUNTY CONNECTIONS

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Submit articles about awards, achievements, announcements, etc. at any time to:

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E-mail: llarmon@county.lanark.on.ca

Telephone: (613) 267-4200, ext. 143

Stephanie Gray:

E-mail: i.gray@sympatico.ca

Telephone: (613) 264-0447

Fax: (613) 264-0409

Striving to build unity through communication.

HEALTH & SAFETY

By Sally Volk,

Occupational Health & Safety Specialist

The Occupational Health and Safety Committee members would like to take this opportunity to review for you our evolution, role and membership.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act came into being October 1, 1979 to protect workers against hazards on the job. From this act the Internal Responsibility System evolved, which mandated workers and employers to share the responsibility for health and safety since they are in the best position to identify problems and to develop solutions.

Several provisions of the act are aimed at fostering this system, one being the health and safety committees.

OPSEU HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

By Denis Myers (Management Rep) and Diane Pearen (Worker Rep)

The OPSEU Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) is comprised of three worker members and three managers, in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The worker representatives include Tara Langford (Social Services), Diane Pearen (Social Services) and Kevin Cooke (Public Works). The management representatives are Steve Allan (Public Works), Tammy Wolters (Finance) and Denis Myers (Social Services).

The JHSC must be visible and accessible to every person in the workplace, including workers, supervisors, managers and elected officials. In addition, all JHSC members must be trained to ensure the committee's effectiveness.

The JHSC is responsible for:

- ensuring all health and safety concerns are brought forward and discussed, not ignored or put aside, whether they arise from workers or from management;
- bringing people of different skills and experience together to recommend solutions to workplace health and safety problems;
- emphasizing the importance of health and safety in the workplace by meeting regularly, dealing with concerns and making recommendations;
- providing assistance with total accident

prevention programming;

- providing a mechanism for regular workplace inspections;
- providing an opportunity for involvement in accident/incident investigations and a mechanism to review the completed investigation reports;
- providing an opportunity for regular dialogue between management and workers, and to improve communications in the workplace; and
- ensuring that matters of concern will be communicated and followed up.

WORKERS' RIGHTS UNDER THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ACT

By Ron Armstrong

Worker Rep, Lanark Lodge

1. The Right to Participate. Workers have the right to be part of identifying and resolving workplace health and safety concerns. This right is expressed through worker membership on the joint health and safety committees.

2. The Right to Know. Workers have the right to know about potential hazards to which they have been exposed. This means the right to be trained and informed about machinery, equipment, working conditions, processes and hazardous substances.

3. The Right to Refuse Work. Workers have the right to refuse work they believe is dangerous to their own health and safety or that of another worker without management reprisal.

If employees have a concern, they should first discuss it with their manager or supervisor. If they feel the problem has not been dealt with, they should then contact their Health and Safety Representative, who will take the concern to the committee. Communication is key and our safety committees can only be successful if they have well-established and consistent ways of ensuring regular two-way communication with workers, supervisors and managers.

The committee members for Lanark Lodge are Audrey Baker (Management), Paul Hannah (CUPE), Marg Cope (Management), Janet Allan (ONA), Lorelei Generoux (OPSEU).

Through the cooperative commitment of workers and management we would like the County of Lanark to be the safest workplace in Ontario.

LONG-TERM CARE

RECREATION/LEISURE DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS OF 2004

STAFFING

Long-time employee Muriel Dickson retired from the Restorative Care department and was replaced in September by Judy Donnelly.

With the continued growth and expansion of Lanark Lodge's volunteer program, the new position of Life Enrichment Team Leader was introduced. Dale Smith has accepted this new position to coordinate facility-wide volunteer programs and special events. Dale's former position as Recreation Level 1 has been filled by Ruth Carson.

PROGRAMS

Programs changed and evolved throughout the year.

A hand chime program was developed by volunteer Ann McMahon and Music Therapist Nicola Oddy.

The Wish Upon A Star program was introduced in June. The program gives residents the opportunity to make a wish. Every three months a minimum of one wish will be granted to residents. The following is a letter the Recreation/Leisure department received from a resident who had her wish fulfilled:

A wish granted, from a resident's perspective

Early this fall the Recreation department at Lanark Lodge asked if I had a wish I would like to make. It could be something I had really wanted to do for a while and not been able to. They called it "Wishing on a Star," and maybe if we were lucky our wish might be granted.

I was very anxious to go to Mill Bay Court Senior Citizens Apartment in Portland, where I had been a resident for five years before coming here. This is the wish I submitted.

My wish was granted and on a beautiful fall day a volunteer from Lanark Lodge and myself were driven by taxi to Portland. About 25 residents gathered in the common room and we had a great time reminiscing and catching up on everything they had been doing. A couple of hours went very quickly. After the ladies had served tea and cookies it was time for us to leave.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to see my old friends again, including one of my former Grade 4 teachers. Now I really believe when you "Wish Upon A Star" your wish may come true.

*By Myrtena McVean,
Resident of Lanark Lodge*

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Events at Lanark Lodge in the last year were Casino Night, St. Patrick's Party, Family Day, Grandparents' Brunch, Volunteer Appreciation Supper, Pastoral Care Appreciation Tea, Halloween Party, Bazaar, Christmas Party, Santa Claus Parade, New Year's Eve Party.

STUDENT TRAINING

Throughout the year co-op placements are offered to secondary and post-secondary students. This is a letter received from one of these students:

Lanark Lodge, from a student's perspective

Lanark Lodge has opened my eyes and shown me there are sooo...many other colours to the rainbow of life! I have to admit my first thoughts of doing my co-op placement at a nursing home were not the greatest; though, once I had the opportunity to experience "life on the inside" and what it's really all about, all the beautiful and radiant colours of joy, happiness and love started to reveal themselves! I've learned the outer shell of Lanark Lodge serves so many other purposes than comfy blankets, that keeps all the life within it warm, happy, safe and, last but not least...loved!

I am so very grateful for having had the opportunity to be welcomed into Lanark Lodge. My life will truly never be the same!

*Yours Truly,
Angela Lyttle*

FAMILY COUNCIL

A family council was established at Lanark Lodge in April 2004. Family members Lynn Jenkins and Laura Hale are co-chairing the council. Meetings are held the last Thursday of every month at 6:30 in the Auditorium. All families are invited to attend. Family council members have established a liaison with the Resident Councils and are actively looking to develop an information brochure for families.

LANARK COUNTY IN PICTURES!



Festive lunch

County administration building staff enjoyed the

annual Christmas luncheon Dec. 8. Clockwise, from top left: the Spirit Committee (which organized the event), from left, Terry McCann, Amanda Strickland, Joanne Burke, Santa (Lorne Hollywood), Marilyn Moore, Anne Emery, Dale Halladay and Cynthia Burgess; Sue Young, Denis Myers and Jane Cunningham; Peter Wagland and Santa; Susan Truelove and Joyce Box.



Appreciation BBQ

Staff were treated to an appreciation BBQ in October, with munchies cooked up by managers. Top left, Lisa Crosbie-Larmon in chef garb; below, public works staff dig in; bottom left, Gerry Cole and Marilyn Moore take a break.



LANARK COUNTY HOUSING CORPORATION

LANARK COUNTY HOUSING CORPORATION PROFILE

The Lanark County Housing Corporation has a head office in Smiths Falls. The corporation has served the community of Lanark County since the early 1970s by providing rent-geared-to-income housing in Smiths Falls, Perth, Carleton Place and Almonte.

On Jan. 1, 2001, the local housing authorities went through "devolution." In other words, responsibility for the local housing authorities was downloaded from the province to the municipalities and the housing authorities became housing corporations.

The housing corporation has a board of directors consisting of six members. The Local Housing Corporation Board is responsible for the overall management and supervision of the corporation.

The corporation manages 484 units throughout the county, consisting of two-, three-, four- and five-bedroom family units and one-bedroom units in our adult buildings.

We also subsidize, under the Rent Supplement Program, approximately 73 units in the private market.

We have 13 staff who work in maintenance, property management and finance, as well as our office staff.

The corporation maintains the Coordinated Access Waitlist for the county. All non-profit housing providers contact our office when a vacancy occurs in their project.



LANARK COUNTY HOUSING CORPORATION STAFF: The organization's staff look after maintenance, property, management, finance and office administration. Pictured, from left, are Nancy Horne, Connie Kingston, Nancy Edwards, Lynn Lyonnais, Candace Moss, Jack McIntosh, Scott McGregor, Steve Hannah, Norm Osadka, Doug Langdon, Lorne Vandusen and Randy Smith.

The mission statement for the Lanark County Housing Corporation is to offer affordable

rental housing for our tenants in a clean, safe and healthy environment.



HOUSING OFFICES: The Lanark County Housing Corporation office is located at 52 Abbott St. N., Unit 4, in Smiths Falls (not far from the swing bridge.)

The Lanark County Housing Corporation is owned by Lanark County and operated by a board of directors appointed by County Council and the Town of Smiths Falls. Gerry Haughian, Director of Social Services, has this portfolio as one of his responsibilities.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

TECHNOLOGY TRICKS – THE COUNTY GOES WIRELESS!

The IT department has been busy this year. The addition of two new staff, Gord Hanna and Peter McLaren, along with the continued dedication of our IT fixit man, Ken Stewart, has led to some major changes and achievements.

A major initiative this year was the transition of the County Wide Area Network (WAN) from old wireline technology to wireless technology with RipNet Limited from Brockville, hence the installation of a new tower at the Lanark County Administration Building! The local municipalities on the County network also have gone wireless. This will provide County and municipal employees with much faster Internet speeds, as well as improved virus protection, content filtering and SPAM control.

Other major projects started in 2004 that will continue into 2005 include the installation of new

servers with the view to improving system performance, a redesigned website and intranet, the transition to electronic agendas and minutes for councillors, an IT helpdesk and the Geographic Information System (GIS). We are very excited about these projects and the opportunities they will bring.

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING E-MAIL BACKGROUNDS

It has been observed that some staff have put backgrounds on their e-mails. As nice as these backgrounds look, they do take up space on the servers and slow down performance. The IT department asks that you remove these ASAP to speed up the delivery and viewing of e-mails.

The IT department wishes all employees and their families a safe and happy holiday season.

ADMINISTRATION/CLERK

WELCOME!

The Clerk's Department welcomes Cheryl Shore to the team! Cheryl is employed as Clerical Assistant.

FIRE SAFETY CALENDAR RELEASED

Lanark County's fire services have collaborated to produce a fire safety calendar, which was distributed to households in the EMC in mid December and is also available at municipal offices. The County contributed to the effort,

which features fire safety messages and highlights special event days for various local fire departments. This unique calendar is a great joint effort by the county's fire departments.

SPACE STUDY CONTINUES

The Children's Aid Society will be moving into a new facility in mid 2005, creating the opportunity for the County to reconfigure office spaces in both the Administration and Public Works buildings.

The County of Lanark is planning to proceed with a Space Needs Study in February. More information will be available to staff as we proceed with this project.

CAS has been a long-term tenant in the Administration Building and we will miss seeing the staff on a regular basis. Best wishes go to CAS staff as they continue their work in their new location on Herriott Street.



CALENDAR RELEASED: A special event to unveil the fire safety calendar was held in Lanark County Council Chambers on Dec. 3, with representatives from participating fire departments, local politicians and staff on hand.

WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY...

...TO THE EMPLOYEE SERVICES DEPARTMENT ABOUT THE LONG-SERVICE AWARDS LUNCHEON IN JUNE:

"The fellowship, food and luncheon facility was fabulous and delightful. I appreciated the attitude and concern for County staff along with words of congratulations and encouragement from CAO Peter Wagland and Warden Gary Doyle. It was a treat to be participating in this celebration with other County staff and County supervisors. The extra touches of corsages, ribbons and gifts really gave a festive touch to the 2004 Service Awards Luncheon....The history flashback was such a nice way to recall beginnings, to reflect on how far we have come and to look to the future with great

enthusiasm....For me, the 2004 Service Award Luncheon will be forever appreciated and fondly remembered."

Sue Young

"Thanks for the wonderful afternoon. It makes one very proud to work for the County when there are people like you taking care of important events such as today. It's a lot of work and we appreciate all your efforts."

Audrey Baker

"To everyone in Employee Services – you did an excellent job with the awards luncheon."

Denis Myers

A Message from the Warden, Cont'd

Continued from Page 2

and public works costing systems, which resulted in all of those involved winning an Overall Excellence Award from Diamond Solutions. I commend and congratulate you for this team effort. Technology, which plays a large role in improving our efficiency and effectiveness, has been upgraded significantly. Councillors can now communicate electronically with high-speed service from their homes. The Council Chambers are nearing "state of the art" for conducting County business. Throughout the offices, you now have common hardware with current applications installed and operating. Finally, technology support has improved tremendously with the addition of two staff members in that department.

We will see a competition in 2005 for a proposed County Geographic Information System, which will provide mapping opportunities for all departments. Our goal is to have a live system by the fall.

To my Council colleagues, I wish to thank you for your confidence in appointing me as your representative, and for your support in making my job run smoothly. The job of Warden is far more than a ceremonial role. Provincial announcements, consultation and delegations, as well as representation on the Warden's Caucus, take up considerable time. The Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus, to which all the counties within

Eastern Ontario belong, has become a leader in influencing provincial policy and has had the opportunity to communicate with and influence federal ministers, MPs and even the prime minister. This representation is through direct contact with the provincial and federal legislators, their appointees and the AMO Board. I encourage you to rise to the challenge of the Warden's position, or that of Standing Committee Chair. Although it requires additional work, it does provide more insight into corporate operations. It also gives you the opportunity to work more closely with our Senior Staff and come to appreciate their technical skills, personal commitment, and professional demeanour.

On behalf of Council, I would like to express my appreciation to each and every member of staff for their continued loyalty and desire to provide outstanding service to our various client groups. Many of you work in very difficult situations which can take an emotional toll on you and your family. Christmas is a family time, a time for reflection, a time for renewal, a time for celebration and a time for each of us to reaffirm our beliefs. Make sure you take the time to be with your families, and to enjoy their interaction. They, too, need your attention as a priority.

To each and every member of the Lanark County Team, may you and your family have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.