

# The Independent

Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton

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## GOING HOME



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Protesters who had blocked Highway 402 at the Forest Road exit since Feb. 9 drove off the highway Monday around 3 pm. The group was part of a nation-wide protest organized by Canada Unity. The group was protesting COVID-19 mandates, but Canada Unity's stated goal was also to oust the Liberal government and join forces with the Senate and the Governor General to form the new government. The people manning the 25 vehicles which blocked the highway used a farmer's field just off the highway as a campsite while the equipment was parked on the highway. Supporters were invited to come hang out and at times fireworks and music could be heard. See more below.

## White wants protesters ‘held accountable to the full extent of the law’

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Warwick councillors are denouncing a protest which blocked Highway 402 and turned the township's roads into a transport route.

This as their mayor voiced support for the protest and is getting credit for bringing the 402 blockade to an end.

About 25 farm vehicles - everything from tractors to heavy equipment and pickup trucks - had been parked on the westbound side near the 402 since Feb. 9. They were using a farmer's field as a campsite, inviting supporters to come by each night. By Monday only 16 vehicles remained.

While the protest was peaceful, Lambton County Warden Kevin

Marriott says people living along the emergency route, where thousands of trucks off the 402 came right past their front door, were angry.

Some complained about the volume of traffic, particularly as children got on the school buses in the morning. Others, Marriott says, were watching their roads break apart from the constant use of the heavy trucks.

"There is major damage to both county roads and lower municipality roads," he says noting both London Line and Zion Line in Warwick are showing noticeable signs of damage. "It's really happening quickly now apparently because of the traffic; the roads just aren't built like the 402 to handle weight and truck after truck after truck."

The traffic was particularly heavy when Windsor's Ambassador Bridge was closed because of a similar protest. It was reopened late Sunday after seven days.

Rombouts supported the protests which calls for the end to all COVID-19 mandates. The protests are organized by Canada Unity, a group calling for the removal of the present government without an election.

Marriott says Rombouts made calls to the protest leaders which led to the tractors leaving the highway around 3 pm yesterday surrounded by about 10 OPP cars.

Rombouts declined an interview but in a text said "I believe that if the provincial and federal governments would take the time to listen to the people, instead of calling them names and saying

they hold unacceptable views, all of this could have been avoided."

In an online post, one of the organizers, David Buurma of Petrolia, said there were a number of factors to leaving the highway including that people in the area were concerned about the amount of truck traffic.

Buurma also cited his own personal schedule as one of the reasons the protest shutdown.

"I hope to be in USA again here in a few days. And again, what's happening in America is that they're wide open. Farm shows are going on. ...no masks, no vaccine passports, no nothing. Why is that? Because the vaccine, the passport is a joke. COVID is a joke. It's gone. It's moved on."

And while the trucks are no longer on the highway, Buurma

said "the party" in the bush beside the highway will continue. Protesters had been using a sympathetic farmer's field as a campsite at the exit. Supporters were invited to come hang out and at times, fireworks and music could be heard.

Buurma added "about 50" tractors and farm vehicles were parked in a field near the highway on Forest Road, should they ever need to step up and support the protesters in Ottawa again.

While Warwick's mayor was credited for getting protesters to move on, Rombouts was alone in her support of the 402 protest as Warwick councillors roundly denounced the protest at a council meeting just three hours after the tractors went home.

**SEE WARWICK PG 2**



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# Full capacity for restaurants Thursday

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Some of the COVID-19 restrictions in Ontario are easing, but a bid by the Conservatives to get federal mandates dropped has failed.

Premier Doug Ford says vaccine passports will end March 1 but masking will stay in place “a little bit longer.”

Politicians have been facing pressure to ease COVID-19 restrictions after protests across the country crippled borders and led to the occupation of Ottawa since Jan. 28. Last Thursday, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kerian Moore, said the situation in Ontario is improving with the number of people in Ontario hospitals and ICUs falling. He said that would lead to less restrictions. Monday, the premier moved up the reopening plan by a week. That allows restaurants and bars to operate at full capacity starting Thursday. Only large sports centres will have capacity restricted to 50 per cent.

The new rules mean indoor weddings, funerals and religious services are only limited to the number of people who can maintain two meters of distance. Shopping malls, retail

and grocery stores also have the same restriction.

Ford says “we’re making this announcement because it is safe to do so, not because of what is happening in Ottawa or Windsor; it’s happening in spite of it.”

One of the restrictions staying in place is masks. Ford says they’ll be required “a little bit longer” with Moore hinting students will be wearing masks until the end of the school year.

Meantime, in Ottawa, the federal Conservatives who first supported what they called the “peaceful” protest and then told the people in Ottawa to go home, wanted the federal government to come up with a plan by Feb. 28 to end all COVID-19 restrictions. Leader Candice Bergen made the motion saying provinces are reducing restrictions and Canada’s Chief Medical Office said we need to learn to “live with” the virus.

The motion failed. Local MP’s Lianne Rood (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex) and Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia-Lambton) voted with their party. Gladu called on the Prime Minister to make a “deal to get rid of all these mandates.” She added in a video posted online “I hope you’re standing with me... Freedom Baby!”

going to get stuck with the bill for the protest. “Is this going to cost us as a taxpayer, as a township? ... Or is this spread across the province? There must have been a lot of overtime pay.”

Treasurer Trevor Jarrett says some of the bill will likely come back to the municipality. “It’s going to be allocated based on region and it will be spread amongst other municipalities in our region. So yes, it’s going to cost,” he said adding it will be some time before he knows exactly how much.

Rombouts, spoke publicly about her support for the protesters Saturday. (see page 3) That left councillors to remind residents the mayor was not speaking for all of council.

“I apologize if anything that I have done in the last week has impacted our council or staff or municipality,” Rombouts said at council Monday suggesting her views helped resolve the crisis.

“I do believe that I would not have even gotten my phone call answered had I not been understanding and empathetic to what’s happening around our country,” Rombouts said.

“And I believe that we need to work really hard to try to find a bridge to this divide in our community, in our families, and in our homes. So, we’re all going to work together. I know this council has always worked well together. We’re going to move forward from here.

“We all have our own ways of leading and we’re doing the best we can.”

Councillor White added; “I just think it is poor when politicians try to use it for their own political gain.”

Officials with OPP say no charges were laid before the people left the area. The OPP had not laid charges in protest by the same group who parked 150 farm vehicles at the Bluewater Bridge Feb. 6

OPP Const. Jill Johnson says the investigation is continuing.

## Warwick worries about cost of 402 protest

CON'T FROM PG 1

All said they had heard from large numbers of residents frustrated by the protest, the congestion it created, the damage it did to the roads in the community and concerned about the mayor backing the protesters.

“I want to say as a councillor, I denounce all occupations in Ottawa, at all of our border crossings and our own portal, too,” said Councillor Todd White.

“I do commend our local law enforcement for keeping it safe, keeping our border open and not allowing the occupation to snarled traffic and to allow trade to continue. And I do want to shout out to the real heroes that are still working out there - health care workers that are still battling COVID.

“I don’t understand why people don’t see that it is still a concern.

“And I hope that those involved in those occupations are held accountable to the full extent of the law,” White said.

Councillor Colin Mitchell suggested the protesters did not speak for the community. “Civil disobedience in our community has a place but it also has consequences. Having all of those points brought forward I think is important. You know, our community deserves to feel safe and feel represented on all accounts.”

Deputy Mayor Jerry Westgate says if the protesters disrupt traffic in the community again, council should be meeting to deal with the issue. “I didn’t mind one day, but when it goes in to the weeks and the amount of money that was spent, that’s way too long to be breaking the law,” he says.

“Parking a tractor on the highway is breaking the law. It’s okay to make a point but not to break the law for so long, because it costs you so much money.”

Councillor Wayne Morris has heard from taxpayers concerned they’re



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## THE END OF AN ERA



FROM THE ONTARIO POWER GENERATION VIDEO

A piece of Lambton County tumbled into the history books as Ontario Power Generation imploded what was left of the Lambton Generating Station. In 2013, the coal-fired plant shutdown - part of the Ontario Liberals plan to green the economy and improve air quality. Workers remained at the Courtright site until 2016 while OPG tried to find an alternative use. But that failed and the long process to bring down the massive complex began. JMX Contracting began demolition in 2018 but the work stopped in April 2020 when the company went bankrupt. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed plans further. Work began in earnest again in April 2021 when OPG hired Delsan-A.I.M. to finish the job. OPG spokesperson Neal Kelly says the company made plans to implode the giant stacks in the month of February and they've been keeping their eyes open for the perfect weather conditions. At 6 am Saturday, officials determined the conditions were right and by 8 am, the plant which once employed 900 people, was reduced to a pile of rubble. Roads around the site were closed off but neighbours remained mostly in their home with some watching the giant stacks disappearing from the skyline as they drank their morning coffee. The best view of the implosion was across the St. Clair River. Video posted on social media shows the building coming down as the person behind the camera says she felt the explosions in her chest. From the first explosion at the base of the boiler units until the last of the three stacks fell took only 56 seconds. By 8:30 am, Kelly relayed "Successful implosion. Stacks and boilers are on the ground. All went as planned." Delsan-A.I.M. will likely take until the summer to clear up the debris.

## ‘The best Christmas gift ever’

Heather Wright  
The Independent

It was likely the best Christmas present a Petrolia family received.

Tim Williams, the public fire prevention officer at the Petrolia/North Enniskillen Fire Department, says a mom and her three young children were able to get out of their Petrolia home Monday when their dryer caught fire.

Williams says two of the family’s five children had already headed to school and there were clothes in the dryer when the mother smelled something. She opened the door to the laundry room and the smoke detector

went off. They called the fire department and got out of the house safely.

Williams says the family had just received the smoke detector in December, one of 385 families who received new smoke/C02 detectors with their Christmas for Everyone boxes. Williams says the department teamed up with the organization to distribute the alarms purchased with the help of Shell Canada, Lambton Mutual Insurance and Hydro One.

He added it was good see that the family had appreciated and installed the detectors and that it did what it was supposed to do.

“It may have been the best Christmas gift ever,” he said.

## Four nods for provincial awards

The Independent

*The Independent* has once again been named one of the best small newspapers in Ontario.

It’s the paper’s fourth nomination in the General Excellence category of the Ontario Community Newspaper Awards since it opened in 2013. *The Independent* has been named best newspaper with a circulation of 1,999 or less twice.

The Petrolia based newspaper is nominated in the category alongside its sister paper, *The Herald* serving Thamesville, *Dresden* and *Bothwell* and the *Haliburton Echo*.

*The Independent’s* Alex Kurial and Heather Wright also have been recognized for coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

*The Alymer Express* and *The Barrie*


*Advance* have also been nominated in the category.

Wright is also nominated for Columnist of the Year in the 2021 awards submitting three columns about life and politics.

Columnists from *The Cambridge Times* (Loraine Centeno) and *The Uxbridge Cosmos* (Ted Barris) are also in the running for the award.

*The Independent* is also nominated for the Best Feature Photo for newspapers with circulation 9,999 and less. Wright is in competition with Darren Lum of *The Minden Times* and Lisa Hagen of *The Wilmot Post*.

The OCNA will announce the winners of the 2021 awards in a virtual ceremony April 29. It’s the third year the awards gala will be held online because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



LAMBTON MUTUAL  
INSURANCE COMPANY

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF LAMBTON MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY

TAKE NOTICE that the Annual and Special General Meeting of the Members of LAMBTON MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY will be held by way of a virtual meeting on

**Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.**

TO:

1. Receive, consider and approve the Annual Statements and Auditors’ Report for the year ended December 31, 2021.
2. Consider and if thought fit, to adopt, with such amendments as may be made at the Meeting, the amendment to By-Law No. 1A of the Company passed by the Board of Directors on January 25, 2022, which deletes Article 55 of the By-law and replaces it with the following: “The Directors may, subject to the applicable legislation, declare a refund at the end of a fiscal year upon such terms and subject to such conditions as the Directors may determine.”
3. Elect two directors for a 3-year term in accordance with Company By-laws.
4. Appoint auditors.
5. Transact such further business as may rightly come before the meeting.

Please email [watford@lambtonmutual.com](mailto:watford@lambtonmutual.com) if you wish to attend and request your link to the virtual meeting.

NOTE: The Annual Statements for the Company for the year ending December 31, 2021 may be viewed on the Company’s website at [www.lambtonmutual.com](http://www.lambtonmutual.com). A Member may obtain a copy of the Annual Statements by sending a written notice to the Company’s head office at least 14 days before the Meeting.



# Editorial

## Reclaiming the flag

It is disappointing Canada’s flag has been dragged in to the political protest in Ottawa.

The people opposed to vaccine mandates - who also want to remove the current government - have co-opted the flag as a symbol of their “freedom fight” to have COVID-19 restrictions removed. People wrapping themselves in the flag while camping out at the seat of democracy because they’re not getting their way telegraphs to the country that they are ‘true’ Canadians.

It would follow then that the large majority, who are either angry the protest has gone on so long or confused by the cause, are not.

And it makes it hard to look at those who would weaponize our Canadian flag in protest.

It’s not unusual that controversy would surround a flag. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson thought it was critical for Canada to have its own flag to define it as a unified, independent country. The very thought of that was divisive. Canadians soldiers carried the Union Jack and the Canadian Red Ensign into two world wars; for them, changing the flag was unthinkable. But Pearson persisted.

For six weeks in 1964, the nation had ‘The Great Flag Debate’ trying to decide between three designs, including Pearson’s favourite which included blue stripes instead of our now iconic red. The design of George Stanley, the Dean of Arts at the Royal Military College, was championed by MP John Matheson. He said the red maple leaf “was the handiwork of many loving hands extended over a long period of Canada’s history.”

It eventually won the day and when the red and white was lifted over the Parliament Buildings Feb. 15 at the stroke of noon, Pearson’s words were filled with hope and determination. “May the land over which this new flag flies remain united in freedom and justice... sensitive, tolerant and compassionate towards all.”

As we navigate this modern day crisis, we would all do well to remember Pearson and Matheson’s words. Canada may suffer some cuts and abrasions in the search for freedom and justice, but we’re confident we will remain “sensitive, tolerant and compassionate towards all.” And this saga, too, will become part of the handiwork which builds this nation over the course of Canada’s history.

## Letters to the Editor

*The Independent* welcomes Letters to the Editor.

Our preferred methods to receive letters are via email to [news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca) (please use Letter in the subject line) or through our website [www.petrolialambtonindependent.ca](http://www.petrolialambtonindependent.ca)

You can also deliver letters to *The Independent* at 4156 Petrolia Line, Petrolia or drop them in the mail at *The Independent*, Petrolia, ON, N0N 1R0.

*The Independent* reserves the right to edit letters for brevity and clarity.

All letters need to be signed and must have a phone number for verification.

## Our Story



FROM THE DAVE BURWELL POSTCARD COLLECTION

Petrolia’s downtown was all decked out for Old Boy Days in Aug. 1908. Some of the downtown’s familiar buildings, including the library, can be seen.

## Politics is really only about politics anymore

There have been a lot of earnest looking politicians standing up at microphones to mourn the “great divide” in our country - politicians of every stripe.

A group of people bent on deposing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for his various faults - including being named Trudeau - latched on to the concerns some people have about the federal government mandating essential workers be vaccinated against COVID-19 and decided to go for a drive to Ottawa to overthrow the government. They collected lots of supporters, seemingly unaware of their Memorandum of Understanding which the white nationalist leaders had drafted to install themselves as the new government.

Canada Unity and their friends parked in downtown Ottawa Jan.

28 and have been there ever since.

There have been countless complaints everything from the noise, the diesel fumes, the overt racism (Nazi flags and symbols in the hands of some of the protestors) and the dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Despite all we know about this protest, Conservative politicians are falling all over themselves to take up their cause, mostly because it makes Trudeau look bad, which is the Conservatives’ goal as well. On the other side, Liberals and NDP stick to their guns, knowing 84 per cent of Canadians are vaccinated and likely have little sympathy for the protesters.

The Bloc, knowing Quebecers are civil libertarians, sided with the Conservatives.

The lines the politicians have drawn

have little to do with science or civil liberties, it has to do with votes and who is most likely to cast them in their direction the next time around.

It would be nice if our leaders could see that some of the COVID-19 measures could be changed AND agree we shouldn’t be negotiating with people bent on upending democracy. It seems even in a crisis, politics is really only about politics anymore.



Heather Wright

**The Independent**  
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Publisher / Editor: Heather Wright  
[news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca)

Sales Associates: [sales@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:sales@petrolialambtonindependent.ca)

Classifieds / Graphics: Connie McFadden  
[office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca](mailto:office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca)

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# Opinion

## Few leaders have taken the time to listen: reader

**EDITOR:**  
It's time to listen.  
For two years small business owners and blue collar workers have been the hardest hit by the restrictions and mandates handed down by all levels of government.  
As time wore on and savings evaporated honest, hard working Canadians have slowly felt backed into a corner.  
Recent events at local restaurants, border crossings and our capital city are the consequence of not listening. So much of this tension could easily be

defused by listening.  
Regardless of what color sign you put on your lawn at election time you can't simply dismiss the struggles or beliefs of your neighbor just because you have happened to experience the pandemic differently.  
Leaders at all levels have repeated the phrase "we have heard you" but few have actually taken the time to go out and listen.  
What harm could possibly come from sitting down and having a large double-double with a few concerned citizens?

I applaud anyone who will take the time or put in the miles to go speak and act for what they believe in even when there cause or opinions do not align with my own.  
After all, these protestors are Canadians and when this is all over they will still be Canadians.  
If you are a public official or elected leader we have heard you talk every day for two years. Now is time for you to listen.

**Gregory Hilliard**  
Alvinston,ON

## Giving in would mean more protesters with more demands

**EDITOR:**  
I can understand why people protest for what they believe in, but this has gone on much too long.  
Even if the government wanted to give these protesters what they are requesting, they would not.  
What would happen with the group

standing in line behind the truckers? Government would have to give into their requests and the same for the next group and so on.  
There would be no end to protesters and their requests.  
You gave it your best shot and I applaud you. Not for being a nuisance

**Nancy Jones**  
Petrolia, ON

## Concern after Warwick’s mayor visits Ottawa protest

**Heather Wright**  
The Independent

Some Warwick Township councillors are voicing concern after Mayor Jackie Rombouts visited protestors in downtown Ottawa.  
Rombouts was with John Lammers of Petrolia, a deacon in the Catholic Church, who drove to Ottawa in a transport from LaSalle Agri for the Jan. 28 protest called the Freedom Convoy. Lammers has been there ever since.  
A photo, dated Feb. 11, shows Rombouts with Lammers and his wife, Teresa, holding a blanket saying "God Keep Our Land, Glorious and Free."  
"John Lammers, his and his wife, Teresa are friends of ours and I wanted to see (the protest) for myself," Rombouts told *The Independent*.  
"There's been a lot of a lot of information going around about what's happening there. So, I wanted to see for myself what's actually happening."  
The demonstration has been widely criticized. It was organized by a group called Canada Unity. It's express goal heading out across Canada was to remove the current Liberal government and form a coalition with the senate and governor general – a move that is not constitutional – in order to remove all COVID-19 measures including vaccine mandates and masks.  
Protestors have been seen with Nazi and Confederate flags on the hill. Ottawa Police said Friday over 400 hate crime complaints have been registered related to the demonstrations.  
There is also video of a protestor dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and dressing up a statue of Terry Fox, both actions which were widely condemned including by the Royal Canadian Legion and the Terry Fox Foundation.  
But Rombouts says "the mainstream radio, media has been lying about (the

demonstration) from the start.  
"I saw firsthand that there's no violence. There's no racism happening there.  
"I think that there's a large portion of our community and of the society as a whole, that is very, very concerned about what's happening in our country. And I think that they have a right to be heard. And they've tried many different options over the past year to be heard; writing letters, making phone calls, doing local rallies, and they feel like it's falling on deaf ears. And I just wish we had leadership in Parliament that was willing to sit down and listen to Canadians."  
Rombouts has stood against vaccine mandates since the Ford government implemented them. She said at the time she would not support businesses who turned unvaccinated people away, sparking an intense online debate. But the attention also attracted people who threatened her life. Rombouts says the police have been unable to do anything because the threats are anonymous social media trolls.  
Rombouts frustration with the mandates stems from concern for her teenaged children. One has a heart condition and Rombouts says two doctors have told her not to have him vaccinated. However, no one can write an exemption letter for her child since the guidelines for exemptions only have had a severe vaccine reaction. The mayor says she fully supports anyone who wants to be vaccinated and has volunteered at vaccine clinics to make sure people could be vaccinated. But, she says, the mandates are cutting people, like her children, off from society and it causes mental health issues.  
"All I'm saying is that there are mandates in place that are not right. That there are people out there that can't get an exemption and they're being discriminated against. Those



Warwick Mayor Jackie Rombout at the Ottawa protest with friends John and Teresa Lammers of Petrolia.  
people's lives have been ruined... young people have mental health issues now because of these mandates.  
"There's pain and heartache happening on both sides of this issue," she said adding the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, is not helping.  
"Leadership is not standing up and saying that 'I am better than you and I know better than you what is right for your life. And you're all a bunch of fringe minority idiot people with unacceptable views' – that is not leadership. That is a totalitarian society that I don't want to live in."  
Several Warwick Township councillors *The Independent* talked to said they had heard from constituents concerned about Rombouts visit to the Ottawa protest.  
The councillors said the mayor has a right to her opinion, however they're concerned that because she is the mayor of the municipality, it might give the wrong impression that the whole of council agrees with the protest and the reasons behind it.  
"I would prefer that people realize that Jackie's point of view is not the whole council's point of view or Warwick Township's point of view," said Deputy Mayor Jerry Westgate.  
He added he expects council will continue to work together, despite disagreement on the issue.

- **Emery Huszka**  
Dealer - Florence ON,  
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- **Julie Maw**  
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Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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# Vacant buildings face fees, fines in Petrolia

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Petrolia Councillor Joel Field hopes a new vacant building policy is the “next step for our downtown.”

Council approved the multi-pronged program which encourages businesses to set up shop downtown.

One of the key pieces is the Vacant and Under Utilized Building program. Owners of vacant buildings are required to register with the town and pay a \$750 yearly fee. They’re expected to keep up minimum standards including making sure paint isn’t peeling and windows and doors are in good repair. If they don’t, a panel of experts, which would include bylaw enforcement officers, could issue orders for the problems to be fixed. If they don’t comply, they could be fined \$500. There are also \$500 per month fines for owners who do not register their buildings.

“With less than five per cent vacancy in our downtown this has recently come to light as a key issue in a couple of buildings in our downtown: entrepreneurs would like to locate to Petrolia but the many of the vacant buildings are not ready to be rented,” says Laurissa Ellsworth, director of marketing, arts and communications for the town in a report to council.

She adds, “the downtown plan speaks directly to vacant buildings or those with ongoing maintenance concerns, “eye-sore” features, disrepair and more. This program will provide clear guidelines for acceptable appearances and maintenance standards for storefronts so that they are rent ready.

“This is not intended to penalize building owners for small concerns, but it is more to prevent future blight, and spur maintenance and work on currently empty and non-rentable buildings.”

The policy also has a number of programs entrepreneurs can take advantage of including opportunity for pop-up shops and micro grants to improve businesses.

Ellsworth first suggested the program in 2016, however council of the day didn’t act on it concerned about the reaction of local businesses.

This time, Ellsworth and town staff held a number of meetings with merchants in the downtown to talk about the program and to make it workable.

Field hopes the policy will help improve some of the buildings including one he believes has been empty for decades.

“I am totally convinced one has been vacant for 25 to 30 years on the main street ... that’s not somebody that wants to rent,” he told council Monday as it approved the document.

“An open storefront on our main street isn’t a good thing...I think businesses really want to do this.

“I like to see it move forward to the next steps. I think that they’ve spent a lot of time and I think this is our next step for downtown.”

**Saturday, Feb 19**

**STREAM AT HOME\*** Starting at 3:00pm for 24 hours!



**HERITAGE DAY PETROLIA DISCOVERY**  
Open for Self Guided Tours  
Saturday, February 19  
10:00am - 2:00pm  
Learn about the specific challenges of operating an 1870's historic oil field in winter.  
**SPECIAL GIVEAWAYS**  
Both entrances will be open, follow signage to parking. Entrances and parking locations are weather dependent. Follow us on Facebook for a special series of winter photos and updates.



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Specialty Coffees, Hot Chocolate and Cookies served in Watson's Mill.

**\*DRIVE-THRU THE PETROLIA FARMERS' MARKET AND PICK UP YOUR... FAMILY FUN PACK**  
396 Fletcher Street  
Saturday, February 19  
10:00am - 2:00pm  
Family Fun Packs include log in code for movie Tom & Jerry, take out coupon and more! Available to the first 400 families.

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**Sunday, Feb 20**

**PUBLIC SKATING**  
Greenwood Arena  
4065 Dufferin Ave  
1:50pm-2:50pm  
Participants permitted based on Provincial limits and vaccine requirements.

SPONSORED BY



**Monday, Feb 21**

**FREE • All Are Welcome DRIVE THRU BREAKFAST**  
New Life Assembly Church  
421 Oozloffsky St.  
9:00am-10:00am

NEW LIFE ASSEMBLY



**PUBLIC SKATING**  
Greenwood Arena  
4065 Dufferin Ave  
10:00am-11:30am  
12:00pm-1:30pm  
2:00pm-3:30 pm  
Participants permitted based on Provincial limits and vaccine requirements.

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**FEBRUARY 19-21, 2022**

**Petrolia Family Fun Days!**



Send us some photos of how your family celebrates Family Day!  
We would love to see them!

**Town of PETROLIA**

411 Greenfield Street, Petrolia  
519-882-2350  
town.petrolia.on.ca

Send us your pictures 

Take pictures and send them to  
twagner@petrolia.ca  
by Monday, Feb 21 at 4pm

Annual **TOWN OF PETROLIA SNOW SCULPTURE CONTEST**

WEATHER PERMITTING

**FEBRUARY 1 TO 21**

**SOME SIMPLE RULES**  
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**THEME: SILLY, SCARY, GOOFY SNOW MONSTERS**

**WIN GREAT PRIZES**

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**EVENT SPONSOR**



Community Employment Services



# Hydro use in SW Ontario to triple

Heather Brouwer  
The Independent

Hydro One is planning on building new infrastructure in St. Clair Township. The electricity company is hoping to construct a new double-circuit 230 kilovolt transmission line between its Lambton Transmission Station and its Chatham Switching Station to help meet increasing demand in the region.

“As you know, southwestern Ontario is growing. It’s growing rapidly,” said Alexandra Moskalyk, manager of special projects for Hydro One, at a presentation at a Feb. 7 council meeting.

“Between 2018 and 2026, electricity usage is forecasted to triple.”

The expected growth in demand would be equivalent to adding a city as big as Ottawa to the electrical grid, she added.

Moskalyk presented five route options for the line, noting that four would require upgrading or looping existing infrastructure, while only one option would be a completely new build.

“We’re very hopeful that we can stay

within the confines of our existing infrastructure and not have to go greenfield,” she said.

“That is certainly an option, we just have to go out, talk to stakeholders and assess these options before we can confirm any of them.”

The project is still in its early stages and will need to go through an environmental assessment process, engage in dialogue with the community, and receive approval from the Ontario Energy Board before construction begins.

“We are looking to work with the municipality and the community and our neighbours to try to collect as much information as we can at this time to determine what is the best route.”

Virtual tours of the project will begin Feb. 25, and live virtual discussions will be held March 9 and 10. Registration information can be found on the company’s website.

Hydro One is hoping to begin construction on the line in the spring of 2027, with the goal for the new line to be in service in 2028.

# Half of Lambton’s COVID cases in three months

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Since Omicron hit Lambton County there have been 5,115 confirmed cases of COVID-19. That’s 54 per cent of the total cases in this pandemic in three months.

And that’s despite the fact that the province limited PCR testing for the virus to only those in health care, long term care and congregate care settings in late December.

And it appears Omicron is now the dominant strain of the virus in Lambton - at least what we can tell with the limited testing.

In the 649 cases so far in February, all of the identified cases have been the Omicron variant. Only 14 cases had been lab tested to be the fast-spreading variant.

In January, Omicron was also the dominant strain of identified of 3,010 cases however there were still some cases of the Delta virus which appeared. Delta was the dominant identified strain in December with about 4.5 per cent of all 1,456 being positively identified as Delta, and just over one percent identified as Omicron. That was the first month the variant was identified in Lambton.

While you can see a trend in the numbers of identified variants, the vast majority of

cases are not identified. For example in January only 3.3 per cent of the 3,010 cases of COVID-19 were positively identified as a particular strain of the virus.

This week, there were four outbreaks in Lambton. Twenty-three residents and five staff at Fiddick’s Nursing Home have become ill with COVID-19 since the home went into outbreak Feb. 3. Fiddicks is one of two long term care homes in outbreak right now. At North Lambton Lodge in Forest fewer than five staff and five residents have tested positive for the virus.

Throughout the pandemic, there have been 652 cases of COVID-19 in Lambton’s long term care and retirement homes. Lambton Public Health says 35 people in those homes have died.

The seven other outbreaks which occurred in institutions were at Bluewater Health.

There is also a workplace outbreak with 15 staff members ill and an outbreak at Huron House Boys Home.

Over the last week, another five people have died including a young person under 19 according Lambton Public Health said Tuesday. In all, 121 people have died of COVID-19 during the pandemic in Lambton County. In Ontario, 12,101 people have died an average of 38 people per day this week.

# FOND MEMORIES OF FRANK



PHOTO CREDIT

One of downtown Petrolia’s most familiar faces has passed away. Frank Feenstra, who spent many years with his bucket, pole and squeegee cleaning the windows of local storefronts, passed away on the weekend. Feenstra operated Frank’s Window Cleaning and Janitorial Services for 65 years. He often spent time with shop owners - supervising Toni Aarts and Nancy Keys cleaning windows for Sharon McKinley for a fun photo. In his obituary, family members said “Many will remember that he always met them with a good or sometimes not so good joke.” They added Feenstra was particularly proud of being named a recipient of the Mayor’s Community Appreciation Award in 2020 by Plympton-Wyoming Mayor Lonny Napper.

# London woman charged in Warwick impaired

The Independent

Lambton OPP have charged a London resident after finding a car in a ditch in Warwick.

Police were called to Zion Line early Feb.

4 to find the car in the ditch. After speaking with the driver, the OPP did a roadside screening for drinking and driving.

The driver was arrested and faces two impaired driving charges.

# Church DIRECTORY

**Christ Anglican Church**  
414 Oil Street, Petrolia

**In-Person Services will resume**  
**Sunday, February 20 @ 11:15 a.m.**

Rev. Michelle Collins-Wongkee  
Church Office 519-882-1430  
christchurchpetrolia@gmail.com

**St. Paul’s United Church**  
4169 Petrolia Line at Centre Street

**In-Person Services will resume**  
**Sunday, February 20 @ 10:30 a.m.**

Rev. Carol Ferguson  
Church Office: 519-882-1390  
www.stpaulsunitedpetrolia.net

**First Baptist Church**  
418 Greenfield Street, Petrolia

**IN PERSON CHURCH SERVICE**  
**Sunday Mornings @10:30 a.m.**

Pastor: Alex Craig  
Church Office 519-882-2480  
email: fbcpetrolia@gmail.com  
www.firstbaptistpetrolia.ca

Find us on Facebook!  
www.facebook.com/First-Baptist-Church-Petrolia

**Wyoming United Church**  
730 Second Street, Wyoming

*In-person services suspended at this time. Please contact our office at wyoming\_united@outlook.com to be sent the Zoom link to join us for our 10am live service.*

Rev. Steven Longmoore  
Church Office 519-845-3963  
FIND US ON FACEBOOK

**St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church**  
416 Queen Street, Petrolia (Behind the Post Office)

**In Person Service now back Sundays @ 10:00 a.m.**

Services also available online:  
www.standrews-petrolia.ca

Pastor Katherine Hawley



# Sports

## Squires playoff action Saturday

Barry Wright  
The Independent

After an extraordinarily long layoff, the Petrolia Squires begin their Western Ontario Athletic Association Senior A semi-final this Saturday at Greenwood. Petrolia will host Milverton at 8:30 pm.

Game two is on the road Sunday afternoon at 3 pm.. With a combination of the Christmas break, an extended COVID-19 shutdown and a first-round playoff bye, the Squires haven't played in more than two months. Their last game was Dec. 17. Milverton advanced beating

Creemore in a best-of-three qualifying series. The Squires and Four-Wheel Drives split two games during the abbreviated regular season, both in Perth East. Milverton won 6-3 in late October while Petrolia recorded a season-high in goals with an 8-6 triumph in late November.

## SQUEEZE PLAY



PETROLIA FLYER/ KAREN MCLEAN PHOTO  
Josh Jamieson puts the squeeze play on a Mooretown Flag player during the Friday night tilt. The Flyers skated with the Flags until the third when Mooretown pulled away to an 8-4 victory.

## Habs back in town for action with Flyers

The Independent

For the second time in recent weeks, the division-leading Lakeshore Canadiens come to Petrolia for a matchup with the Flyers on Thursday. Game time at Greenwood is 7:30. Petrolia visits the Blades in Blenheim on Sunday night. The Flyers were scheduled

to play Amherstburg in a rare Tuesday night home game this week but the score was not available prior to our weekly press time. It was Minor Hockey Night with players from Petrolia, East Lambton and the Lambton Attacks minor programs admitted free when wearing their team jerseys.

Last week, the Flyers stayed with the Mooretown Flags into third period before the visitors pulled away for an 8-4 triumph. Tanner Hull had a goal and an assist for Petrolia with Dylan Riddell, Josh Jamieson and Noah Harse adding the others. Tyler Richardson made 49 stops in the Petrolia cage.

## Busy stretch continues for Mooretown Flags

The Independent

A stretch of 11 games in 21 days in February continues Friday for the Mooretown Flags as they skate up against the Junior Kings in Dresden. The Flags are at home to Amherstburg on Saturday. Both games are scheduled to start at 7:30.

Mooretown was in Essex on Tuesday for a game that could have gone a long way to determine who will finish second in the Stobbs Division but the score was not available prior to our weekly press time. Following an 8-4 win at Petrolia last Thursday, uncharacteristically, the Flags surrendered 21 goals in

weekend losses to Lakeshore and Wheatley. Mooretown has only given up 61 goals in its previous 22 games. Quinton Johnston had his first career junior hat trick in the loss to the Canadiens. Logan Gardner scored three goals in the loss to the Sharks, and Jake Vince tallied three times verses Petrolia.

## PW's Harper earns first OHL point with win in Soo

Austin Harper has added his name to the list of local players who have registered points in the Ontario Hockey League. The Plympton-Wyoming player and graduate of the Lambton Jr. Sting AAA

program drew a second period assist in Sarnia's 3-0 win over the Greyhounds in Sault Ste. Marie last Friday night. Strong wall play in the offensive zone played an integral part in a goal by Ethan Ritchie.

The 18 year-old has played eight games with the String this season. He also has eight goals and 23 assists for 31 points in 28 games this season with the GOJHL's Sarnia Legionnaires.

## Killer Bees lose to Fighting Irish in Alvinston

The Alvinston Killer Bees were on the wrong end of a 5-2 score with the Stratford Fighting Irish in Western Ontario Super Hockey League action last weekend in east Lambton. Sebastian Nogueira and Grant

Spence scored their fifth and 11th goal of the season for the Bees. Christian Moccia earned two assists. Dane Gubbels made 27 saves between the pipes for Alvinston. The same two teams play

on Saturday afternoon in the Festival city. After a trip to Strathroy on Friday, Feb. 25, the Bees are scheduled to play their final regular season home game against the Jets on Saturday, Feb. 26 at 6:30 pm.

## Lancers fall to McGregor

The John McGregor Panthers and LCCVI Lancers now share first place in the LKSSAA senior girls "AA" volleyball standings after the Panthers beat the Lancers in four sets Monday in Petrolia. After splitting the opening two sets, the visitors won the final two close sets, 27-25 and 25-23. Both teams are now 3-1 on the season. In junior play, John McGregor improved to 4-0 with a 25-14, 26-24, 25-20 victory on LCCVI. The junior Lancers are now 1-3 on the campaign. The season continues Wednesday (Feb. 16) with the Lancers taking on the Tartans in Wallaceburg in a junior-seniors doubleheader. The regular season wraps up next Wednesday with the two Lancer squads hosting Great Lakes.

### STAY STANDING THIS Winter!

Slippery sidewalks, driveways and icy parking lots can be risk factors for falls in winter. Avoid a bad fall with these top tips!

#### WALK LIKE A PENGUIN


The penguin waddle helps you keep a centre of gravity over the front leg as you step, instead of split between the legs. Short strides also help keep your centre of gravity, which help avoid falls. Don't keep your hands in your pockets! Walk slowly, with short strides and try to land your steps with a flat foot.

#### KEEP WALKWAYS CLEAR


Shovel snow and scrape ice as soon as possible. Liberally sprinkle ice melt product or sand onto walkways to provide foot traction and to make sure surfaces don't turn to ice. This is not only protects you and your family, but also postal carries and others when they're walking around your property. Where possible install or use handrails for extra support.


#### TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONS

Be extra cautious walking after a storm. Tap your foot on partially icy areas to see if it is slippery. Hold a railing while walking on icy steps. Stay steady by wearing proper winter footwear. lightweight boots with a thick, non-slip tread sole will provide good traction on ice. If a sidewalk is icy down the missile, walk on the snow beside it to avoid slips.

**Lambton Chiropractic Centre**

431 King Street, Petrolia | 519-882-1880

**Dr. Derek Martyniuk**

**Dr. Kevin Storozuk**

[www.lambtonchiropractic.ca](http://www.lambtonchiropractic.ca)



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Monday @ 12 noon

Classifieds



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4156 Petrolia Line – Call 226-738-0728  
or email: office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

Real Estate

In Memory

Obituary



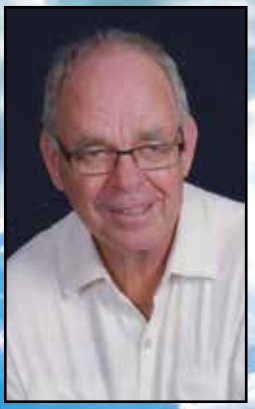
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In loving memory of a wonderful Dad, Grandpa & Great Grandpa  
**ARNOLD JOHNSON**  
who passed away nine years ago, February 18, 2013  
*Those we love don't go away,  
They walk beside us every day,  
Unseen, unheard, but always near,  
Still loved, still missed and very dear.  
For death leaves a heartache,  
No one can heal,  
And love leaves a memory  
No one can steal.*  
Forever loved and missed  
Elaine, Len, Kathy,  
Linda and Larry  
and families

**SINGLETON**  
Irene Winnifred  
  
**Irene Winnifred Annie Singleton (née Muggeridge) of Birr** -- Wife, Mum, Mother-in-law, Nana, Sister, "My Auntie Rene", second-mother to a select few, faithful friend to many, "The older one is the better cooker", baker, wedding cake decorator, knitter, seamstress, needle worker, gardener, flower arranger, water colour artist, hostess with an open door and heart, wonderful quirky sense of humour, chorister, world traveler, whilst being curious, intelligent, compassionate, and courageous with a strong heart both in body and character. Born in Banstead, Surrey, England on July 9, 1927 and passed peacefully in Birr, Ontario on February 1, 2022. Rene married Derek Singleton in Banstead, on May 26, 1945, after which both returned to Service a few days later. In 1957, they immigrated to Canada with David, 10, John, 4. They built a life in Petrolia, Ontario and Karen joined the family in 1965. They remained in Petrolia until retirement to Dyers Bay in 1990. They had enjoyed 51 years of wedded adventure until Derek passed on July 6, 1996. Rene is missed by her family; children David (2021) (Laurena), John (Charlotte), Karen (Peter), and her grandchildren Laura (Ron), Michael (Ruby Anne), Sarah (Dan); Dawn (Scott), Darcy (Anne); Mattias, Micah; and great grandchildren Emily, Nicholas and Taylor. **A memorial service will be held on July 9, 2022, Renes' 95th birthday. Details will be available at [www.haskettfh.com](http://www.haskettfh.com) in the coming weeks.** Haskett Funeral Home, Lucan entrusted with arrangements. Donations can be made in memory of Rene to the Anglican Church of Canada's, Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. In keeping with Rene's love for gardening, consider planting a rose bush in your own garden.

**Wanted: Farmland**  
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**Coming Events**  
**ONTARIO ANCESTORS / SCOTLAND RESEARCH** - Lambton Country Branch OGS will be hosting a Zoom meeting that is free on **Tuesday, March 8, 2022 @ 7pm.** Featuring Christine Woodcock - Scottish SIG Ontario Ancestors, to get a link to Zoom email [lambton@ogs.on.ca](mailto:lambton@ogs.on.ca)



**Owen Dobbyn**  
July 20, 1940 - Feb. 19, 2021  
*Always in our hearts*  
IN LOVING  
memory  
*Remembered with love,  
Your wife Jessie and family.*

In Loving Memory of  
**Eugene "Gene" Smith**  
who passed away  
one year ago on February 17, 2021.  
*Thank you for the stories and the memories  
Loved and remembered by many*  
*Always in our hearts,  
Linda, Patrick, Tearza, Taryn,  
Owen, Hunter, Jim & family*

  
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**For more information contact:**  
**Tim Williams 519-339-6866**  
or send resume to  
[tim.and.stacy.williams@plantpioneer.com](mailto:tim.and.stacy.williams@plantpioneer.com)  
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Notices

**Lambton County Science Fair**  
Open to students  
Grades 3-12  
Projects ready for judging April 4  
For information and to register  
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Register by March 25.

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9	6	8	5	2	7	3	1	4
5	4	1	8	3	6	7	9	2
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Community Calendar



SPREADING THE LOVE

Members of the IODE Margaret Stokes Chapter delivered valentines to residents of Albany, Meadowview and Fiddick's today to spread some love and cheer. Pictured here are (left to right) Gloria Saunders, Janet Hext, Susan Maniuk, Wendy Loosley and Helen Danby. Susan is from Albany, the rest are all members of IODE Margaret Stokes Chapter. Some happy times amongst all the protesting going on.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

**early deadline**  
for next week's issue  
February 24 2022

**18**  
**February 18**  
Friday @



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# Drugs in a car ‘worst decision of my life’

**Blake Ellis**  
Local Journalism Initiative

A Warwick man who passed out in his car after taking fentanyl says “it probably was the worst decision of my life so far.”

Tanner Ridley pled guilty to impaired driving in Sarnia Court Feb. 9.

Police were called to London

Line in Warwick Township Sept. 28. The 28-year-old was stopped in a live lane of traffic, with the vehicle running and in drive. He was passed out in the driver’s seat and burnt tinfoil was on the seat beside him after taking fentanyl.

Ridley says he’s abused drugs seven years but he has been sober since the incident. And he has been attending a methadone

clinic. “That was the lowest of lows,” he told Judge Krista Leszczynski.

Ridley was sentenced to one year probation and a \$1,500 fine. Part of his probation is to participate in counselling for his substance abuse. He will also not be allowed to drive for one year.

- THE INDEPENDENT

# Relapse led to drunken St. Clair car crash says lawyer

**Blake Ellis**  
Local Journalism Initiative

“I am terribly embarrassed and very sorry.”

Those words from a a 64 year-old Sarnia man in court, Feb. 9.

“I am just trying to get back to where I was before and continue on with my sobriety.”

Robert Hyde pled guilty to impaired driving after he crashed his vehicle July 16 along Smith Line in St. Clair Township near Sombra.

A resident called police after he was seen falling down while

he walked along the road. Once he was arrested and paramedics arrived, he was yelling, swearing and making threats.

At one point, he told police, “I guarantee when I get out of these cuffs, you will be nothing.”

Hyde did not remember what had occurred once he was sober. He was shocked and embarrassed about his behaviour. After being released, he returned to the police station and apologized to the officer he had yelled at during his drunken rage.

Hyde - a long time alcoholic - lapsed during the pandemic. Defence lawyer Damon Hardy said the combination of anxiety, depression and COVID-19 restrictions resulted in some of his worst drinking.

“He couldn’t drink enough of it and he couldn’t drink it fast enough,” Hardy told the court.

Judge Krista Leszczynski called his case troubling because the blood alcohol readings were three times the legal limit. Hyde was given a \$2,500 fine and his drivers’ license was suspended for a

# Some LCCVI students part of province-wide protest

The Independent

Some LCCVI students joined a protest billed as a province-wide walkout Friday.

The Ontario Walk-Out

information was circulated on social media saying the students would be asking for an end to mask mandates. In Petrolia, some students jumped the gun and walked out at noon. At 2

pm, about 50 students stood in front of LCCVI, with one of the teens holding a sign asking for the end to mandates.

Some of the students remained in class.

# Brooke-Alvinston OKs 2.1 per cent hike

**Heather Wright**  
The Independent

Brooke-Alvinston taxpayers will see a 2.1 per cent bump in their municipal tax bill.

Council finalized the \$4.4 million operating and \$1.4 million capital budgets Feb. 10.

Councillors opted to spend slightly less on some capital repair projects, such as upgrades to the former Ministry of Transportation dome on Nauvoo Road. Councillor Wayne Deans suggested spending about half of the suggested \$20,000 but instead of removing \$10,000 from the project, that money go back into reserve funds.

And as council discussed a new pumper truck at the Brooke Fire Service, Councillor Frank Nemcek made it clear whatever rebate the municipality received for the HST on the pumper should also go back into reserves.

The moves to increase the savings council has comes after years of using the accounts to help offset rising taxes. The municipality has faced over a million dollars in funding cuts from the province since 2013.

Asked what he thought of the final budget, Treasurer Stephen Ikert readily admitted, “I’m not happy that we’ve been taking from reserves like we have been, but I don’t see us having a lot of leeway.”

In the last two years, the budget

shows the municipality has used \$1.33 million from the reserves, which now have about \$2.12 million in them.

“We don’t want to increase taxes ridiculously but when our funding sources get cut, I think you’re doing a good thing by passing it at that level,” says the treasurer.

Ikert adds the increased tax rate of 4.25 per cent is being offset by increased building in the municipality meaning there are more people to pay the bill.

“The actual tax rate is only going to go up 2.11 per cent, so if you haven’t built anything new, that’s all you’ll pay is 2.11 per cent.


The budget, he adds, tries to be fiscally responsible while maintaining the levels of service residents have come to expect. It also invests in the community’s infrastructure.

Meantime, water and sewer rates are also on the way up. Council passed increase of four per cent on the water rate and 1.8 per cent on the sewage rates.

Officials with the Ontario Clean Water Agency which looks after the plants says that’s a reasonable increase considering some municipalities face 10 per cent increases each year.

Brooke-Alvinston’s taxes are the fourth highest tax rate in Lambton County behind Sarnia, Petrolia and Oil Springs which has the highest tax rate.





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