

SILVER STICK CHAMPIONS



JOHN WRIGHT PHOTO

Roen Douglas and Goalie Ryder Stokes celebrate with their Petrolia Oiler teammates Monday after defeating Lambton Shores 3-2 to claim the U18B Silver Stick title at the Petrolia tournament. You can see more details of the game on page 11.

Lambton has highest unemployment rate in southwest Ontario

Cathy Dobson
The Independent

Local labour analysts are choosing their words carefully as they describe a challenging employment picture for Sarnia-Lambton. "It's not dismal. It could be worse," said John Pilat, general manager of the Sarnia Construction Association. "We are doing considerably better than in (the) 2008 (recession), which was an extremely slow year."

Sarnia-Lambton's latest unemployment rate is 8.3 per cent, the highest in the southwestern Ontario region and nearly three per cent higher than a year earlier.

"There are fewer jobs posted, fewer folks working and a slower job market," said Mikelle Bryson-Campbell of the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board.

Her group analyzes Statistics Canada figures which have one unemployment rate for the region.

The Workforce

Development Board is able to extrapolate an unemployment rate that applies to Sarnia-Lambton only.

The latest numbers reflect the employment scenario in October and suggest Sarnia-Lambton is showing signs of "recession-like conditions," Bryson-Campbell said.

"We've been hearing lots of talk about recession. I'm not saying we are necessarily in one but we are experiencing a higher unemployment rate than anywhere else across the economic region," she said.

The retail sector is among the hardest hit, said Bryson-Campbell. Even as the holiday season approached, fewer employers looked for casual or part-time workers this year.

"I'm not certain why but there are fewer jobs being posted on our job boards," said Bryson-Campbell. A survey of 32 online job boards shows about 700 new job openings in Sarnia-Lambton in early fall. That fell to 500 by October.

SEE RECESSION PG 2

Bluewater Health diverted some general surgeries due to surgeon shortage

Heather Wright
The Independent

The sudden retirement and resignation of three general surgeons at Bluewater Health is causing some headaches.

Officials said in a news release Boxing Day general surgery services at the hospital will be closed until Jan. 2 because of a shortage of general surgeons. Dr. Michel Haddad, Bluewater Health's Chief of Staff says it is a

first for the hospital.

"We've always had five (general surgeons) and because we had enough people, we would back up the ER for any emergency issues all the time, 100 per cent.

"In September, October, November, we had three of our five surgeons decide to either retire or move; one moved to GTA and one moved closer to London ... which put a lot of pressure on our other two (general surgeons) to handle the service. They're doing

their best to cover aside from their own patients.

"We knew about this for the last two, three months, and we've been covering the schedule... by bringing in locums from elsewhere; Christmas was covered by a general surgeon from Sudbury, for example," Haddad says.

"It just happened that over New Years, this week we had no locum, no coverage. Nobody was able to come." Up until Boxing Day,

the public wasn't aware of the shortage, he added.

For a week, people who needed urgent abdominal surgeries, such as appendectomies could have been transferred to another hospital.

"If you're sick, come to the ER and we'll decide if we can treat you locally, great, if we have to send you out, don't be shocked," Haddad said Boxing Day.

Meantime, Haddad says the hospital is working hard to attract

new physicians. "We're in contact with all the training programs in Canada, East West and into the US as well. And we're in discussion with many surgeons who are sort of looking at our city and say, 'oh, you know, maybe we'll go to Sarnia.' And we're actually discussing with about five of them, but no one has committed yet to move here. So it's an ongoing process.

"It just (attracting) three at the same time, it's very difficult."

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Hawaii trip won't get separate investigation

Heather Wright
The Independent

A \$32,000 conference in Hawaii by three educators from the Lambton-Kent District School will not be subject to a separate investigation.

That from the Ministry of Education after announcing another trip by a Brantford-area school board was being examined by a government appointed investigator.

Last January three Lambton-Kent educators travelled to Hawaii for a conference. A Freedom of Information request, originally reported by *CBC News*, found about \$32,000 was spent on everything from the conference fees to air fare and hotel rooms and car rentals. In a statement at the time, the Lambton-Kent District School Board said “we maintain the quality of our staff by investing in them.”

Trustee Jane Bryce, who is part of the Indigenous Liaison Committee which approved the conference spending along with senior administration, defended the expense.

“All professional development is appropriate. I see nothing wrong,” she said at the time.

“The government allocates so many dollars for Indigenous education... those dollars were for professional development and workshops and what-

ever. We have four First Nations(as) part of our board; we're working on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on bringing healing through education to our First Nations peoples in this area, and we're acting appropriately.”

Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey told *The Independent* at the time Education Minister Jill Dunlop had staffers look into the conference. “It's her understanding...that the training could have been available here in Canada.”

It wasn't the first time travel costs of publicly funded school boards were questioned.

The London public school board came under fire for a three day jaunt for 18 officials at the Toronto Blue Jays Hotel. It had a price tag of \$38,000.

And six trustees from a Brantford area Catholic Board went on a \$146,000 art buying trip to Italy.

Dec. 19, the province announced an investigator would be looking into Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's expenses, and its conflict of interest and accountability policies

The Independent reached out to the Ministry of Education to see if an investigator had also been named in Lambton.

“We will be auditing discretionary

expenses at the Lambton-Kent District School Board,” said Edyta McKay, spokesperson for Minister Dunlop in an email.

That audit will be part of a bi-annual disclosure all publicly funded school boards must make under the The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act - not a separate probe officials confirm.

“We expect every school board to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars that prioritizes student achievement,” McKay added.

Meantime, some members of Lambton-Kent's Indigenous Liaison Committee are not pleased with the way the conference was handled. Minutes from the committee meeting record the Education Director of Eelūnaapëewii Lahkëewiit (Delaware Nation), Jolene Whiteye, “voiced dissatisfaction” with the way the issue was handled.

Whiteye says she supported the professional development saying “it offered valuable insights for attendees to share with both the First Nations and school communities.”

The minutes go on to record; “A discussion was held regarding the conference and it was suggested that future issues should be discussed at the Indigenous Liaison Committee meeting as opposed to discussing at a meeting held in a public forum.”

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'Recession-like conditions' in Lambton say officials

CON'T FROM PG 1

“So we're seeing jobs getting filled, but not more jobs being posted,” Bryson-Campbell said.

Sarnia-Lambton's 8.3 per cent unemployment in October compares with a 7.7 per cent rate in Chatham-Kent and a 7.5 per cent rate in Windsor-Essex.

Since construction of the NOVA Chemicals plant in St. Clair Township wrapped up in 2023, there have been no big construction projects announced locally, said Pilat whose organization represents about 6,000 local tradespeople.

The recent “pausing” of construction of a much-anticipated Crown Royal Diageo plant in St. Clair has created more uncertainty on the local job front.

The number of trades currently working parallels the number working prior to the NOVA construction, Pilat said.

About 2,000 tradespeople are working in the region on typical maintenance jobs, he said. Another 1,400 are working at shutdowns, while a large unspecified number are finding work out-of-town in places that include Windsor, Ottawa, the Bruce nuclear plant, and Toronto.

“There was a lot more local shutdown activity last year,” Pilat said. It won't be until the fall of 2026 when more shutdowns are expected to boost employment numbers, he added.

“There's just not a lot of industrial investment at this time and no construction news in particular.”

And the local industrial sector will also shrink in 2025. INEOS Styrolutions announced last year it would mothball its plant in Sarnia after a series of benzene releases which made some residents of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation sick. About 80 people will lose their jobs.

Davidson appointed as full-time fire chief

Heather Wright
The Independent

Wyoming resident Will Davidson is the new Plympton-Wyoming fire chief.

Davidson has been acting chief since August when Erik Campbell left the department.

Davidson has been a firefighter in Wyoming for 22 years and was the fire chief in North Middlesex from 2015 to 2019.

When he returned to the Plympton-Wyoming department he served as the training officer and became a professor at Lambton College's fire school.

Davidson is not the first in his family to lead the department. His father, Bill, was the Wyoming chief for 40 years.

“My family has deep roots here and it is certainly nice to be doing what I love in my own community,” said the new chief in a news release.

Davidson becomes the fourth fire chief in the community in the last seven years. Campbell left in August with the town making no comment on



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Will Davidson, right, seen here presenting a service award to Camlachie Chief Scott Jordan in November, has been named the next Plympton-Wyoming Fire Chief.

why.

He had replaced Darryl Thompson who parted ways with the municipality at the same time as former CAO Carolyn Tripp in 2023.

Thompson took over for Steve Clemens, who was the first chief of the amalgamated fire department, left in 2021 after five years on the job.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that the Town of Plympton-Wyoming 2025 Draft Budget and the Water/Sewer Rates By-law will be considered for adoption at a

Special Budget Council Meeting to be held
Wednesday, January 22nd 2025 at 5 p.m.

If needed, a second date for further consideration will be on
Wednesday, January 29th 2025 at 5 p.m.

Please monitor the Town's Website and Facebook page for updates.

Members of the public are welcome to attend in Council Chambers or watch a live stream of the meeting via the Town's YouTube channel using the following link:

www.youtube.com/@townofplymptonwyoming

Copies of the draft Budget and By-law will be made available upon request after January 17th 2025

For any questions or additional information, please contact:

Erin Kwarciak, Clerk
Town of Plympton-Wyoming
(519) 845-3939
ekwarciak@plympton-wyoming.ca

Warm weather, rain prompt flood watch

The Independent

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority is keeping a close eye on the rising Sydenham River. Over the past two days up to 45 mm of rain has fallen, saturating the ground. The double digit temperatures over the weekend also helped melt the snow pack, particularly in the traditional snow belt area, contributing to the rising river levels.

Water levels are continuing to rise across the region and have exceeded bankfull conditions, spilling into surrounding floodplains and onto roads.

Several roads have already been closed including Stanley Line from Kimball to Waubuno, Pretty Road from Stanley to McCallum and Plowing Match Road from Petrolia Line to Rokeby.

Further flooding is anticipated as the influx of water continues to move through the watershed to the southern reaches of the Sydenham River.

Officials reminded people to avoid watercourses and flooded areas due to dangerous conditions, slippery banks and cold, swift moving water. Children and pets should be kept away from the water.



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Bear Creek was spilling over the banks into Bridgeview Park Tuesday. By lunch hour, the waters were nearly three feet above the banks.

Warwick homeowners pay the least taxes

Heather Wright
The Independent

Warwick Township is still the lowest taxed municipality in Lambton.

That from figures provided by Treasurer Trevor Jarrett recently as he presented the draft 2025 budget.

The municipality is expected to spend close to \$12 million on capital projects, operating expenses and paying down its debt, particularly on the new East Lambton Community Complex in 2025.

Jarrett says a house in Warwick Township valued at \$300,000 will pay about \$1,488 in municipal taxes. That's less than the \$1,503 every Lambton taxpayer shells out for county services each year.

It's also about half of what nearby Oil Springs residents pay. The village with fewer than 700 people requires about \$3,060 from each homeowner, about \$10 more in municipal taxes than the same house in Sarnia.

Petrolia is not far behind. That \$300,000 in the Hard Oil town would lead to a \$2,988 tax bill.

Councillor Jerry Westgate asked how

Warwick compares with neighbouring Middlesex County municipalities for taxes. While Jarrett didn't have those numbers, he said he has been told Warwick's municipal tax rate is about the same as the City of Toronto's.

"They do it through a lot of population, rather than taxes and anything like that. It's density that works in their favor," he told council.

"I've been told unofficially by people who have a wider spectrum of viewing than I do, they can't believe we deliver as much with so little in tax."

Warwick, unlike most municipalities, receives a community benefit payment from Waste Management for hosting the Twin Creeks Landfill. Jarrett's figures show that brings in \$1,083 per resident a year - about \$200 more than each resident would pay in municipal taxes.

The cash from WM is mainly used for capital projects.

The treasurer is proposing a five per cent municipal tax increase in 2025. But even if the township agrees, taxpayers will still enjoy the lowest tax rate in the county, Jarrett says.

Municipality	General Rate (2023)	Rank	Taxes per Household (\$300,000 CVA)
Oil Springs	0.01020118	1	\$3,060.35
Sarnia	0.01016569	2	\$3,049.71
Petrolia	0.00995959	3	\$2,987.88
Brooke-Alvinston	0.00959591	4	\$2,878.77
Dawn-Euphemia	0.00876306	5	\$2,628.92
Enniskillen	0.00763051	6	\$2,289.15
Point Edward	0.00742377	7	\$2,227.13
St. Clair	0.00722843	8	\$2,168.53
Plympton-Wyoming	0.00716982	9	\$2,150.95
Lambton Shores	0.00536829	10	\$1,610.49
County of Lambton	0.00501052	11	\$1,503.16
Warwick	0.00496215	12	\$1,488.65

OPP look for missing Petrolia woman

Lambton OPP are looking for a missing 30 year-old Petrolia woman.

Police says the woman, whom family identify on social media as Tisha Horner, was last seen on Grove Street Dec. 9.

Police are looking for the 5'7",

124 pound woman with medium length straight/strawberry blonde hair and brown eyes. She also has nose piercing and eye jewels.

Police are requesting anyone with information to call the OPP or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.



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EDITORIAL



LOST LAMBTON FOUND/IAN MASON PHOTO

This photo shows west side of Main Street in Brigden around 1900. The large building on the left is the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows with a hardware and harness shop beside it. At the far right of the photo is one of Louis Peshas studios. The photographer, who was the first person to put photos on post cards in the area, had shops in Oil Springs, Inwood, Alvinston and Brigden. In 1901, a massive fire destroyed Peshas Brigden studio. Peshas made the decision to move his business to Marine City, Michigan, and, in 1901, opened the Peshas Art Co. Peshas continued to produce postcard photographs until his tragic death October 2, 1912 in a car accident. He died at the age of 44 and at the height of his career.

2025 could be one of the most unstable years in a generation

We cannot help but feel unease as we begin 2025. It will be a year of massive change for Canadians, not all of it good.

There is a federal election in the offing. The current Prime Minister is the most unpopular politician on the planet. All three major parties in the House say they're ready to pull the plug on the Liberal minority government as soon as possible.

Multiple polls show the Conservative Party of Canada would win a massive majority if the election were called today. While the former Conservative PM Stephen Harper liked to call that a strong, stable, Conservative government,

the stable part of it is far from guaranteed in 2025. The current Conservative leader has lots of slogans, but few hard and fast public plans on what he would do if elected. For example, axing the carbon tax has been his mantra, but many nations now demand climate action programs – ie a carbon tax – from its trading partners. Without it, those countries face extra tariffs. That can only hurt Canada.

That fact has been overshadowed by the incoming US President's threatened tariff of 25 per cent on Canadian goods if we don't do his bidding. While no one can predict what the President Elect will do, at least the current government has a

familiarity with him. The Conservative Leader does not.

And further, the Leader of the Opposition is a career politician without any business experience at all. The incoming US President seems to be purging his government of career politicians, and that might be a problem for the anticipated Conservative Prime Minister.

It's all very unstable. And it is having an effect already. As you can see in our front page story, the number of people without work is growing and the number jobs offered is shrinking.

2025 is shaping up to be one of the most unstable years in a generation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Independent welcomes Letters to the Editor. Our preferred methods to receive letters are via email to news@petrolialambtonindependent.ca (please use Letter in the subject line) or through our website 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.

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OPINION

Group wants to pressure province on biosolid fertilizer

EDITOR: Two petitions with a combined total of over 2,700 manual signatures collected in the riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex were presented to the office of MPP Steve Pinsonneault on Nov. 29.

These petitions resulted from the frustration and disappointment that local residents have felt over the recent ruling by the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) in favour of a proposed site plan for storage and distribution of sewage biosolids in the Municipality of Adelaide-Metcalf. This site plan remains with the OLT due to the Request for Review filed by the township.

It is important to understand that this is an Ontario issue. The final design of this site plan will set the precedent. It will be the first of its kind in Ontario. It will be the template for other such facilities in Ontario, including the one in your backyard.

These petitions from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and other ridings across Ontario were taken to Queen's

Park in Toronto and presented in the House on Dec. 3. These petitions are now being circulated to various provincial government departments for comment.

The first petition asks for a moratorium on the land application of sewage biosolids until the associated risks can be assessed and fully mitigated.

There are states in the US that have done thorough testing to determine the risks of land applying sewage biosolids. The result of this testing has been a full ban or severe restrictions on the use of sewage biosolids. Ontario is not doing the testing.

The second petition asks for a moratorium on the approval and construction of storage and distribution facilities for sewage biosolids until proper guidelines, regulations and requirements can be put in place to fully mitigate the many known issues with the storage of sewage biosolids.

There are currently no guidelines or regulations in Ontario relating to

facilities for the storage of sewage biosolids. There are also no guidelines for the maximum amount of sewage biosolids that could be stored in one location.

Our group, Citizens Concerned about Biosolids, also held a press conference at Queen's Park on Dec. 4. Three members of our group spoke about the concerns with the proposed site plan for storage and distribution of sewage biosolids.

As the petitions are being circulated for comment, we are asking people to email their politicians to educate and inform them of the known issues and concerns with the use and storage of sewage biosolids.

In order to support the Request for Review, we are also asking people to email the Attorney General with their concerns about the proposed site plan and OLT process.

Heather Horning
Citizens Concerned about Biosolids

Reader questions headline about Trudeau walking in the snow

EDITOR: I have just read the newspaper for December 19, 2024.

There is a headline on the editorial page that is distasteful to me. "Time for another Trudeau to go for a walk in the snow"

I really hope that it was not meant

to be this way, however, the paper does realize his brother perished in an avalanche, does it not?

Janet Young
Petrolia, ON

Editor's Note: The headline was a reference to the first Trudeau Prime

Minister, Pierre Elliot, who retired from politics Feb. 29, 1984. He told reporters he'd had a walk in the snow to decide his future and resigned the next day.

The senior Trudeau had been Prime Minister 16 years before retiring at 65.

Corunna senior loses \$8,500 in grandparent scam

Lambton OPP are once again warning seniors to be careful of callers claiming to be grandchildren in trouble.

In early December, police heard from a Corunna resident who lost \$8,500 to scammers.

The victim told police they'd received a call from someone they

thought was their grandchild. They had talked to the grandchild's lawyer and arrangements were made. Someone came to the Corunna home to pickup the cash.

Police say the 'courier' is a man in his 30s about 5' 10" with a dark complexion and wearing a face mask. The 'grandchild' contacted the person

again for another \$8,400 but failed when the bank stepped in.

Police say be on the lookout for urgent requests that require secrecy. And they urge seniors to first check with another family member or trusted friend to verify the information before sending out any cash or giving out credit card information.

TRAINING CASH



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Warwick Township firefighters will have access to new training manuals after a donation from Enbridge Gas. The company provides smoke and CO2 detectors and training manuals to fire departments across Ontario. Recently, the company provided \$5,000 to the township for firefighting training materials through the Safe Community Project Assist. That's a program with the Fire Marshal's Public Safety Council that supplements existing training for firefighters where Enbridge operates. Suzanne Shea, manager, Municipal and Stakeholder Affairs West, Enbridge Gas presented the donation to Watford Chief Rick Sitlington and Warwick Mayor Todd Case.

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DRUMHEAD DONATED



BLAKE ELLIS PHOTO

A drumhead from the Sarnia Legion Pipe Band, which commemorates the 10th anniversary of the end of Canadian involvement in the War in Afghanistan, has been donated to the Plympton-Wyoming Museum. Every year drumheads are created to commemorate a different Act of Remembrance, said Bass Drummer Todd Monaghan. The drum heads are placed on the drums at the beginning of each year and are removed shortly after Remembrance Day. The drumhead features two silver crosses, which remembers the two Lambton County residents who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, Private William Cushley in 2006 and Corporal Brent Poland in 2007. A ribbon to recognize suicide awareness is also on the drumhead, as many came home from Afghanistan battling mental health and post traumatic stress disorder. The drumhead will be a part of the Plympton-Wyoming Museum's military collection.

Service Canada visit Lambton libraries

The Independent

It will be easier for people in rural Lambton to get federal government services.

Lambton County is partnering with Service Canada to provide clinics at libraries in Alvinston, Corunna, Forest, Thedford and Watford in the first week of January and February.

The representatives will be able to help people with applications for benefits such as Employment Insurance, Social Insurance Numbers, personal access codes for My

Service Canada Accounts, CPP, Old Age Security, and the new dental care plan.

The service will be on a first-come, first served basis and you'll need a government photo identification and your SIN number.

The library clinics will be set up Jan. 6 in Alvinston at 1:30 to 2:30 pm and Watford from 3 pm to 4:30 pm. Jan. 8, the clinic will be in Forest from 10:30 to 12:30 pm. Jan. 9, it visits Corunna from 10:30 to 12:30 pm and Wyoming from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Jan. 10, it will be in Thedford from 4 to 6 pm.

Enniskillen plans 2025 road reconstruction

Blake Ellis
The Independent

Enniskillen Township is considering rebuilding about three kilometres of roads in 2025.

That's according to Road Superintendent Darcy Mitchell who brought forward his suggestions for the roads department to be considered during council's budget deliberations in the new year.

Road construction to be considered for 2025 will be Rokeby Line between Fairweather and Mandaumin roads as well as Oil Springs Line from the Oil Springs town limits to Tile Yard Road. Both of these stretches are over 1.5 kilometres.

Two bridge projects scheduled for 2024 will be reconsidered.

Black Creek Bridge on Marthaville Road and the Durham Creek Bridge on Black Ash Road were expected to be repaired this year. There was \$200,000 budgeted for the Black Creek Bridge and \$70,000 for the Durham Creek Bridge.

Mitchell is also looking for new

equipment this year, a light trailer for hauling small loads and a shoulder gravel reclaimer.

While the township has a large trailer which is used to haul the backhoe, he said the roads department doesn't use it that much. In most cases, the backhoe can be driven to most locations without the use of the large trailer. One of the difficulties in the use of the large trailer is township staff need to have an air brakes endorsement on their drivers' licence, said Administrator-Clerk Duncan McTavish.

The gravel reclaimer is hooked to the back of a tractor and is used to push gravel on the shoulder of the road that moves away from the asphalt edge.

It can be used to remove the high berms which hold water on the gravel roads or eliminate drop offs which can cause accidents.

The shoulder gravel reclaimer is in the \$20,000 range while the smaller trailer can be purchased for \$7,000 to \$10,000.

A tractor and a backhoe may be traded in to offset the cost.

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Water plant pushes St. Clair capital to \$70M

Heather Wright
The Independent

St Clair Township’s renovation of the Courtright Water Treatment plant will boost capital spending in 2025 to over \$70 million.

Township council recently reviewed and approved the capital budget, which will be finally approved when the township completes its operational budget in the New Year.

There is \$21,949,164 in capital spending planned for 2025 aside from the \$46,400,000 water treatment plant. The province announced \$33.8 million in funding for the expansion in August.

It’s hoped construction will begin in 2025.

The township will use \$1.58 million from reserves to replace a fire tanker and another \$50,000 to upgrade the township’s fire command unit.

Another \$130,000 has been set aside for a virtual reality training simulator which is being specially made for St. Clair River. Chief Richard Boyes says the simulator will improve training opportunities for the volunteer firefighters.

Another \$150,000 will be spent repaving the Brigden Fire Hall parking lot.

The Parks and Recreation department hopes to spend \$520,000 to refurbish the pool at the Moore Sports Complex. The township has applied for a grant for that project.

There are also plans to remove asbestos from a number of municipal buildings in St. Clair. The

township has set aside \$125,000 for the work and plans to hire someone to oversee the project. That position will need to be approved in the operating budget.

Two bridges are slated for replacement, the bridges spanning Marshy Creek at the St. Clair Parkway and Ward Line. The St. Clair Parkway bridge is expected to cost \$3.5 million while the Ward Line span is \$2.5 million.

The township also plans to spend about \$2.7 million on the relocation of the Tom Street Sewer in 2025.

The capital budget also calls for \$575,000 to be spent on rural road surface treatments and another \$525,000 on asphalt roads in urban areas.

In all, the township plans to spend \$70.8 million in capital projects for municipal buildings, the water treatment plant and at the sewage treatment plan. \$55.1 million of that will be coming from external sources such as government grants. Another \$10.6 million will be drawn from reserves. \$5.19 million will come from local taxpayers. Treasurer George Lozon says there is no increase to taxpayers from 2024.

Administration and council removed over \$3 million in projects from the 2025 capital budget including a \$100,000 upgrade to the pool change rooms, a \$45,000 paving job at the Corunna Library, \$350,000 for new lights at the Courtright Main ball diamond and four projects at local campgrounds including a hydro upgrade at Mooretown which was expected to cost \$390,000.

Centennial sewage project to cost \$2.5M

Blake Ellis
The Independent

The decommissioning of the sewage lagoon at Lambton Centennial Public School will cost \$2.5 million.

Work is continuing on the project which is well into its second phase.

The school board discovered the school’s lagoon was at the end of its life during the 2023-24 school year and a plan was formulated for its decommissioning. The school was unhooked from the lagoon and tanks were placed on site to collect the sewage from the building until a new septic system could be constructed.

The school’s new septic system has been fully installed with the final hook up taking place in October, said Associate Director of Corporate Services Brian McKay of Lambton Kent District

School Board. Now contractors are working on the decommissioning of the lagoon.

The \$1 million construction of the septic system came in on budget, said McKay, but the decommission of the lagoon is expected to cost more than the first phase of the project, with an estimate of \$1.5 million.

The decommissioning of the lagoon is expected to take another five to seven working days before that project is complete. The work is dependant on the weather, said McKay.

Where the sewage from the lagoon is being taken to the Petrolia Sewage Treatment Plant. When the project is complete, the lagoon will be backfilled and many will not even recognize that a lagoon had been previously on the site, says McKay.

The lagoon was constructed in the late 1960s.

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A Year of Celebration

A Look Back at 2024 in Photos

In Petrolia, 2024 was a year of celebrating the 150th anniversary of the town. Jesse and Leah Grandmont and some of the 22 members of the Petrolia 150th organizing committee got the sesquicentennial year started with a bang Jan. 1 during the Opening Gala at Victoria Playhouse Petrolia, top left. Toronto artist Blaze Wiradham of Blazeworks was attracting a lot of attention as he spray painted the first of three outdoor murals in Petrolia's downtown in May. The Hard Oil Music Festival brought in top notch Canadian artists for three days in August, including The Sam Roberts Band, top left. Ross Rundle, top centre, who for decades entertained at town events, donned his clown suit again to ride in the Petrolia 150 parade in August. Behind him, a float with Mayor Brad Loosley and six former mayors - John McCharles, Brian McManaman, Ross O'Hara, Marcel Beaubien, Dave Hewitt and Bob Crawford, who wore a cap with the slogan "The Old Grey Mayor."



Chase Park of Fisherville, Ontario, top centre, takes a tumble during the Saddle Bronc Riding competition at the Alvinston Pro Rodeo in June. Laylah Stokes, 11, left and her sister Tenley, 9, above, were taking in April's solar eclipse on the grass beside the Greenwood Recreation Centre. River Lebert, 3, Sam Giles, 8 and James Jasmin, 6, left, were having a blast racing their zucchini cars at the Petrolia Library in September. Reece McCormick (left) won the scariest pirate award at Captain Kidd Days in Corunna. Oliver Shultz of Rodney, left, climbed into Santa's sleigh at the Alvinston Optimists Christmas Celebration in December before Mr. and Mrs. Claus arrived on River Street. While the five-year-old was there, he spotted Santa in the distance. Paige Loughheed of Watford placed first in the Yearling division during the Beef Show at the Brooke-Alvinston-Watford Fall Fair, left. Fire moved quickly through a 100 year-old barn in Marthaville in November, right, and spread to a nearby garage as high winds whipped up the flames.



Lambton's MPPs set to run in next election

The Independent

It's official; Bob Bailey will be the PC Party's candidate in Sarnia-Lambton in the next provincial election.

Bailey, who told *The Independent* in June he would seek another term, was acclaimed Dec. 17.

The Petrolia resident, retired from NOVA Chemical and was first elected to the provincial legislature in 2007.

He is in his fifth term in the job.

In Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, newly elected MPP Steve Pinsonneault has also been given the nod to run in the coming provincial election.

The former Chatham-Kent Councillor and Thamesville businessman won his seat in May, filling a vacancy left by former cabinet minister Monte McNaughton.

The PC Party still has nearly two years left in its term, however election speculation has been rampant for months, particularly after Premier



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey and Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Steve Pinsonneault will both run in the next provincial election.

Doug Ford announced he'd be sending out \$250 cheques to all Ontarians in the spring.

Honouring Sydney with new scholarship

Cathy Dobson
The Independent

A scholarship focused on accessibility and inclusion is being established to celebrate the legacy of the late Sydney Vrolyk.

Vrolyk was 25 years old when she died Sept. 21 from the complications of a heart transplant she received last May.

Vrolyk lived a full and active life with Down Syndrome, said her mom Helen Van Sligtenhorst.

She volunteered for numerous organizations, was a coach and participant in the Special Olympic and co-founded the Snacks for Summer fundraiser with her sisters.

In December, Sydney was honored by the City of Sarnia's accessibility advisory committee with the Kevin Schenk Legacy Award, recognizing people with exceptionalities who inspire change to make the community more accessible and inclusive.

"Sydney had a wonderful life but she couldn't do what she did without people like her EA (Educational Assistants), and workers who accompanied her to her jobs and her activities," said Van Sligtenhorst.

So, when a board member at the Sarnia Community Foundation (SCF) suggested a scholarship should be established in Sydney's name to assist students pursuing post secondary studies in accessibility and inclusion, Van Sligtenhorst and her husband John Vrolyk were enthusiastic.

The fund has already attracted \$10,000 in donations from friends and

family. Contributions are being solicited now from the entire community hoping to reach \$50,000.

The first \$1,000 scholarship will be presented this coming spring and Van Sligtenhorst would like to see it grow large enough to provide three \$1,000 scholarships every year to students.

"This is a job that doesn't get a lot of applause," said Van Sligtenhorst. "People working with Sydney didn't do it for the money. They did it because they love their clients."

She praised Sydney's worker Madison Linker who accompanied her to part-time jobs at DeGroots Nursery, the library and St. Vincent de Paul, and many other activities.

"I never had to worry if Sydney was engaging with others because Madison was passionate about her job. She made Sydney's life better," said Van Sligtenhorst. Linker has agreed to be on the scholarship selection committee.

The SCF is accepting donations towards the scholarship at its office on Durand Street, online via the SCF website (www.sarniacommunityfoundation.ca) or by calling 519-332-2588.

"A lot of people loved Sydney and asked what they can do. This is something they can do," said Van Sligtenhorst. "It's not just for Sarnia. It's for people who need a worker and



Sydney Vrolyk

it's for people who don't have a voice.

"We need to ensure people are educated and available to give our kids purposeful lives."

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Employee Group	Non-Union
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*This posting is for one (1) current vacancy.	

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- Reconcile and prepare monthly bank reconciliation.
- Reconcile accounts receivable subledger to the general ledger monthly.
- Assist the Manager of Finance | Deputy Treasurer with similar and related duties, as required.
- Coordinate and maintain pre-authorized payments (PAP) with customers and calculate monthly withdrawals. Process annual letters updating monthly withdrawal amounts.
- Record monthly interest and penalties and mail out arrears statements for taxes receivable.
- Prepare, distribute and collect for all tax certificate requests.
- Communicate taxes owing to mortgage providers and record changes to mortgage accounts.
- Reconcile property tax receivable subledger to the general ledger monthly.
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Full Job Description can be requested from Jess Smith at 411 Greenfield Street
Resumes to be submitted in confidence no later than **12:00 pm on Thursday January 9, 2025.**

Resumes clearly marked "Accounts Receivable | Tax Clerk" to be directed to:

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or electronically to: jsmith@petrolia.ca

We appreciate the interest of all those who respond; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Information obtained through this posting is collected for candidate selection only and is protected by the Municipal Freedom of Information Act. The Town of Petrolia is an equal opportunity employer committed to inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection processes and work environments. We will accommodate the needs of applicants under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) throughout all stages of the recruitment and selection process. Please advise the Clerks Department to ensure your accessibility needs are accommodated throughout this process.

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 carriers 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 middle, walk on the snow beside it to avoid slips.

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SPORTS



JOHN WRIGHT PHOTO

Roen Douglas is all smiles after scoring the game winning goal as the U18 Petrolia Oilers claimed the Petrolia Silver Stick championship Monday.

Oilers repeat as Silver Stick champs

The Independent

For the second year in a row, the Petrolia Oilers are Petrolia U18B Silver Stick Champions.

The team beat Lambton Shores 3-2 to claim the title in their home tournament.

Lucas Johnson opened the scoring for the Oilers with Nathan Reidhead scoring the 2-1 go-ahead goal.

Then, after Jack Rombouts of the Predators tied up the game at two, Roen Douglas

scored the game winner for Petrolia with just 3:25 left in the third.

Sean Van Gorp scored Lambton Shores other goal of the tournament.

Petrolia advanced to the finals with a 3-2 win over Mooretown in a raucous game Sunday night.

Reidhead scored the game winner in that matchup. Johnson and Jacksen Manuik also had goals Sunday.

The Petrolia Oilers now head to the Forest Silver Stick Finals Jan. 10.

Killer Bees win 11 straight

Barry Wright
The Independent

Make it 11 straight wins for the Alvinston Killer Bees after a 4-3 win over Strathroy Saturday during Retro Night in Alvinston.

Brennan Feasey scored what proved to be the game-winning goal with just 91 seconds left in the third period. He ended the contest with two goals and an assist. Ethan Lamoureux and Owen McGowan also scored for the Bees. Dane Gubbels made 21 saves to improve his record to 5-0 in the crease this season.

On Dec. 22, the Killer Bees scored three times in less than three-and-a-half minutes late in the third period to beat the Delhi Flames, 6-4.

Jamie Schaafsma led the winners with

three goals and two assists and Lamoureux had three assists. Grant Spence, Ethan Tichenoff and Bayly Fryfogle also scored for the Bees.

Kaden Fulcher made 30 saves for his fifth consecutive decisions.

Alvinston outshot the Flames, 68-34.

The Bees, now 17-1 on the season, will entertain second-place Elora this Saturday at 6:45. Petrolia is idle until they go up against the Jets in Strathroy on Jan. 10.

The Squires lost 8-2 to Tilbury in a Dec. 22 tilt in Chatham-Kent. Daniel Gibson and Ryan Fraser scored for the Squires.



Brennan Feasey



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Noah Harse of the Petrolia Flyers breaks up a play along the boards during the PJHL All Star Game in Dresden Saturday.

Petrolia's Jaques scores at All-Star game

Andrew Jaques had a goal in the final minutes of the PJHL West All-Star Game, but it wasn't enough for the Yeck Division.

The Stobbs division took the contest, held at the Ken Houston Memorial Agricultural Arena, 8-5 Saturday night. It was part of a day-long celebration of hockey in Dresden.

Jaques, from the Petrolia Flyers, scored with less than three minutes left in the third. His teammate, Mateo Craievich had an assist on the Yeck division's third goal in the second. Noah Harse and Owen Peters of the Flyers were also on the Yeck Division All-

Star Team.

Vito Alfano of the Wheatley Omstead Sharks had three goals and three assists and Trevor Laure of the Lakeshore Canadians had two goals and three assist for the Stobbs Division.

Xandre Aitken of the Dresden Kings, Nolan Bourdage and Wesley Brooks of the Mooretown Flags and Joey and Matt Hayter of the Blenheim Blades were Stobbs Division All-Stars.

Donovan Appleford had one goal and two assists for the Yeck Division on the night.

Lambton players featured at All-Star games

Petrolia's Gage Brandon scored the lone goal for Team Martin in a 6-1 loss to Team Rinaldo in one of two GOJHL Prospects games in Elmira.

Corunna's Blake Barnes had an assist for the winners.

And Carter Fogarty drew an assist for Team Schlitt in a 6-2 loss in the second contest. Brandon, Barnes and Fogarty all play for the Sarnia Legionnaires.

Meantime, five members of the second ranked U16 team in Ontario have been chosen to play at the AAA all-star game in Komoka next month. Sarnia's Dante D'Andrea and Matthew Henderson along with Grand Bend forwards Kane Barch,

Jake Murray and Jack Taylor, all from the Huron Perth Lakers, will represent Team White. Ethan Glavin and Nolan Rosser of the Lambton Jr. Sting will suit up for Team Navy.

And four members of the Jr. Sting will suit up at the under-18 AAA all-star contest. Goaltender Mason Costa, defenceman Jacob Lassaline along with forwards Kael Cooper and Will Harding will all play for Team White. Petrolia's Brian Dobbin of the Elgin-Middlesex Canucks will coach team Navy.

Puck drop for the under-18 contest on Jan. 5 will be 1 p.m. The under-16 game begins at 4.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

The U15 East Lambton Eagles claimed Silver Stick glory at the Roy Caley Memorial Silver Stick Dec. 22.

Eagles land Watford Silver Stick crown

The Independent

The host East Lambton Eagles downed Wallaceburg, 3-1 in the championship game in the under-15 tier two finals at the regional Silver Stick finals in Watford.

The Eagles advanced to the final with a 7-1 win over the Dresden Kings in the semi-finals Dec. 21. Overall, East Lambton won four games and lost in overtime to the Kings earlier in the tournament.

The Eagles now advance to the North American Silver Stick finals in Forest from Jan. 10-12.

Elsewhere, Petrolia and Lambton Shores both reached the semi-finals but lost in the U15 tier one tournament which was won by

Mitchell.

The Talbot Trail Blazers won the A championship with a 1-0 win over the Chatham Cobras in their final.

Meantime; Michael Mackellar scored twice and Cole Pranger had a goal and an assist to lead East Lambton to a 4-1 win over Dresden in semi-final action Dec. 30 at the regional Silver Stick in Petrolia. Hunter Talbot also scored for the Eagles and Ryan Bork had two assists. Tanner Wilson was the winning goaltender. It was East Lambton's fourth straight win at the event.

The Eagles were to play either Lucan or Wallaceburg in the tier two championship game Monday however the score wasn't available at press time.

Legionnaires shake up their lineup

Barry Wright

The Independent

The Sarnia Legionnaires has released two of its top forwards to the PJHL's Petrolia Flyers.

Austin Harper, in his fifth season with the GOJHL club, has 13 goals and 25 points in 28 games this season. The totals include two power play goals, two shorthanded tallies and a trio of game-winning markers.

Ryan Richardson has 10 goals and 18 points in 29 games, including a pair of power play goals and two GWG's in this his fourth season with the Legion. The vets, both from Plympton-Wyoming, have combined to play 300 regular season games with Sarnia amassing 242 points since 2021. Richardson's brother Tyler made 60 appearances between the pipes with the Flyers from 2019-22.

Monday's transactions followed the

Legionnaires sending team captain Ty Moffatt and Jaxon Priddle to the London Nationals Sunday for Theron Tsiapalis and Noah Vandenberg and trading goaltender Logan Phillips to LaSalle for goalie Dante Bertoin.

Sarnia also released goaltender Connor Davis to Leamington of the OJHL and rearguard Matthew Andersen to the OJHL's King Rebellion.

Vandenberg had two assists in one of the two GOJHL prospect game last Friday in Elmira.

Petrolia's Gage Brandon of the Legionnaires scored in his game and teammate Blake Barnes of Corunna drew an assist.

Sarnia's next action is at Chatham on Sunday.

The Legionnaires is 10-16-3 and in tenth place in the league's Western Conference. They are 13 points out of a playoff spot.

Sting beat Spirit for first time in 15 months

Ryan Brown won a puck battle and slid home the game-winning goal between the legs of Andrew Oke to give the Sting a 4-3 win over the Spirit in Saginaw to start the second half of the season on a winning note.

Brown also had an assist and extended his point scoring streak to eight games. His line, including Liam Beamish and Zach Filak has now combined for 14 goals and 33 points in their last eight games.

Filak had three assists and has 23 points in 25 career games against the Spirit. His assists also moved him into a tie for 40th place on the all-time Sting scoring ranking.

Nick Surzycia made 37 saves including

a breakaway against the league's leading scorer Michael Misa early in the third period.

The win snapped an eight-game winless streak for the Sting against the Spirit dating back to a 3-1 victory in Michigan in October 2023.

Sarnia is now 12-18-7 and in seventh place in the Western Conference standings a point better than the Soo Greyhounds who lost back-to-back home games to Windsor over the weekend.

Sarnia has a home and home series against the London Knights New Years' Eve and New Years' Day. Results were not available at press time.

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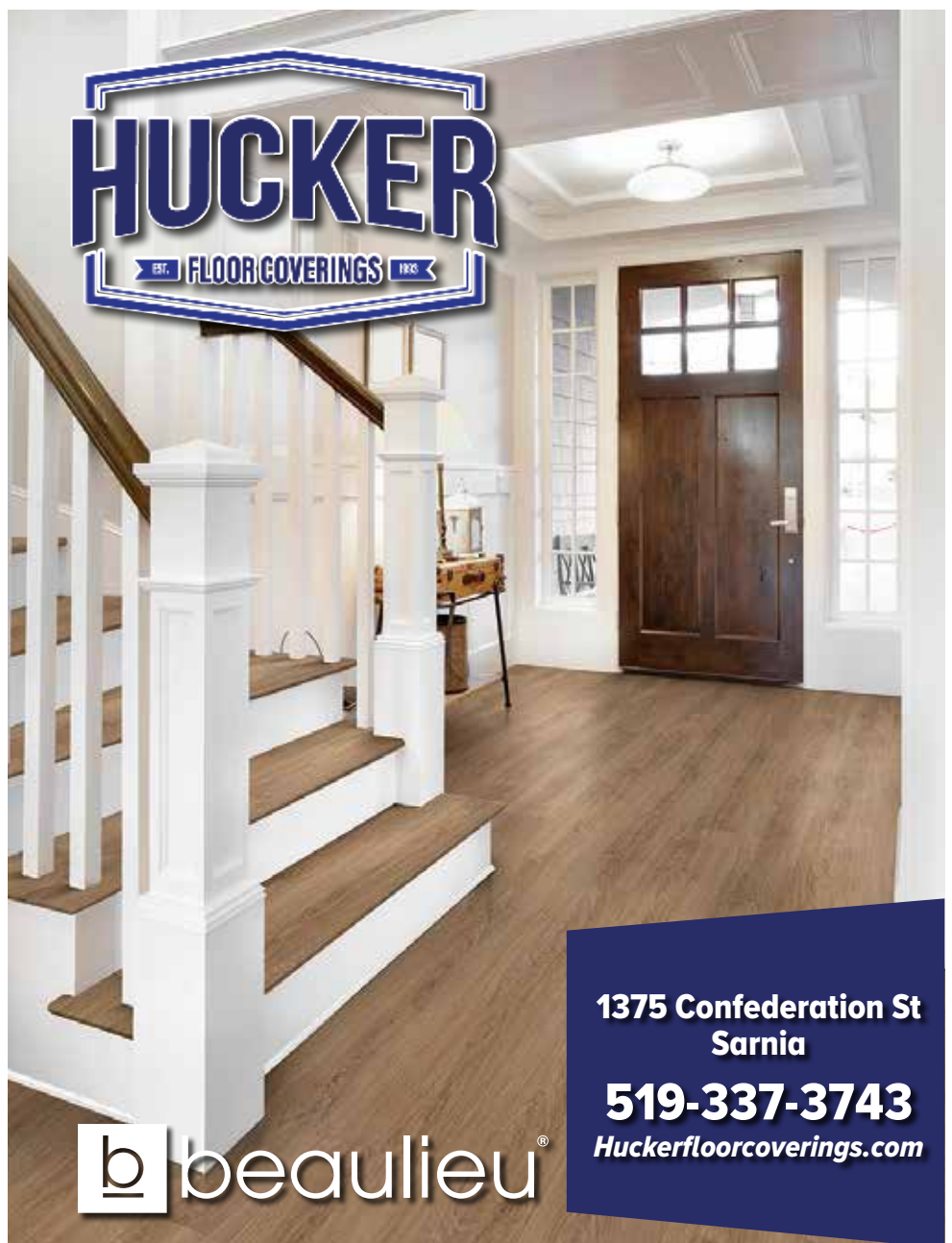
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SPORTS IN 2024

A photo review of the year in sports in Lambton County



JOHN WRIGHT PHOTO



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO



BLAKE ELLIS PHOTO



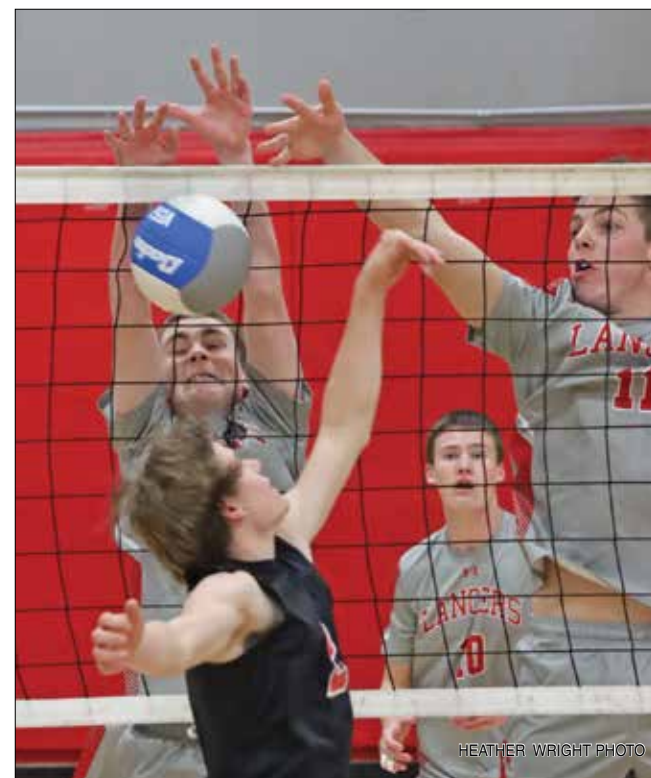
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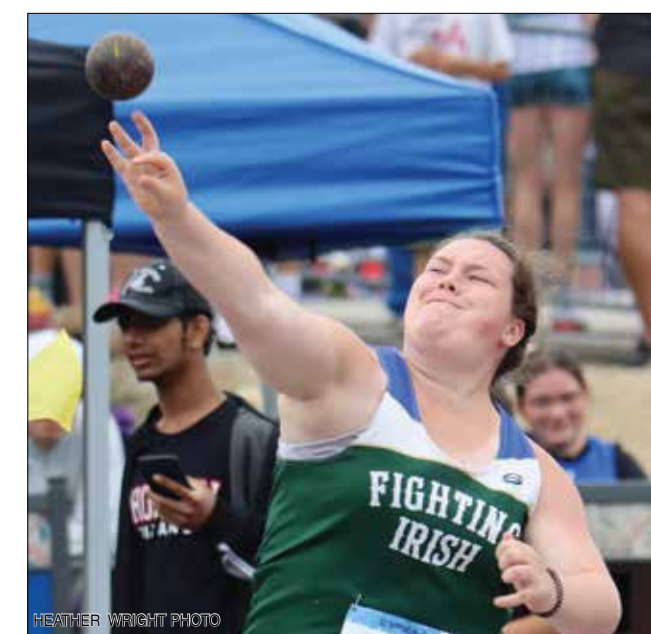
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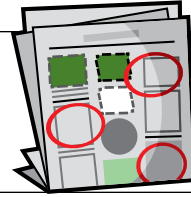


HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

The LCCVI Boys' Hockey team celebrated in Belle River after Tyler McGrail's goal in double overtime to win the SWOSSAA championship. Centre left Sean Shanahan grimaces as a St. Joseph Catholic School player slides into the net during the OFSAA gold medal game in Whitby. LCCVI won silver. Tye Johnson was waiting for the call after a collision against Tillsonburg in Western Ontario Super Hockey League action finals. Mya Beaudoin was in the weeds as the LCCVI Lancers took on Northern in Senior Girls Rugby. The Wyoming Cattlebarons swarm Pitcher Craig Steadman after he threw the final out as the team captured the Ontario Baseball Association Senior AA crown, centre left. Elijah Robinson, right, tips the ball over the net as he and Zac Colborne go up for the block in the SWOSSAA championship game at LCCVI centre right. Olympic Silver Medalist Elvis Stojko was helping skaters from the Brooke-Alvinston Figure Skating Club hone their skills.

**Classified Deadline:
Monday @ 12 noon**

Classifieds



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Death Notices

December 24 - 30, 2024

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

SCOTT, Eileen
 Age: 95
 Smith Funeral Home

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

THOMPSON, Darryl Gordon
 Age: 59
 McCormack Funeral Home

DUROCHER, Paul Gene
 Age: 77
 McCormack Funeral Home

BELL, Rhonda Ann (Langan)
 Age: 70
 McKenzie & Blundy Funeral Home

BOTHWELL, Margaret "Maggie" Elaine
 Age: 76
 Denning's Forest Funeral Home

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26TH

McMANAMAN, Lynn (nee Richardson)
 Age: 78
 Needham-Jay Funeral Home

GRANT, Robert Donald
 Age: 94
 Steadman Brothers Funeral Chapels

TIERNEY, Susan (Miller)
 Age: 69
 Badder & Robinson Funeral Home

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27TH

SCOTT, Robert "Bob" Charles
 Age: 91
 Smith Funeral Home

LONGLEY, Howard Alan
 Age: 79
 Steadman Brothers Funeral Chapels

COTE, Linda Jean
 Age: 75, of Corunna
 Knight Funeral Home

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28TH

THOMAS, William Lewis (Bill)
 Age: 89
 Steadman Brothers Funeral Chapels

CATT, Marylynne "Marnee"
 Age: 85
 Denning's Forest Funeral Home

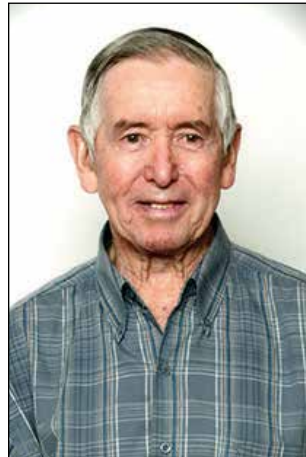
McBRAYNE, Gordon Lester
 Age: 98
 Badder Funeral Home, Dresden

FORTIN, Ghislain "Jesse"
 Age: 79, of Petrolia
 Needham-Jay Funeral Home

HARRIS, Allan
 Age: 80
 Needham-Jay Funeral Home

This information is provided as a community service. For detailed information, please refer to the funeral home website listing.

Obituary



DAVIS
 Beverley Everett

Age 87 formerly of Courtright, passed away on Saturday, December 21, 2024 at Lambton Meadowview Villa, Petrolia. Beloved husband of Catharine Mary Davis (nee Stinson) for 63 years. Loving father of Sherri (Brian) Burm, Annette Sessler and Brian (Linda) Davis. Cherished grandfather of Joshua (Karlie)

Burm, Alexa Burm, Lucas Davis, Kamryn (Cameron) Harris. Great-grandfather Riley Burm and Aria Burm. Dear brother of Betty (Bruce) Bradley, Isla (Glen) Dawson, late Joyce (late Bill) Holmes. Predeceased by his parents Everett and Hattie Davis. Beverley was a long-time farmer in Dawn Township and was a heavy equipment operator for GL Robbins. He was a member of the Leopold Lodge Masonic Lodge No. 397. Bev made many trips to Horwood Lake where he enjoyed fishing and camping. *Family and friends were received at STEADMAN BROTHERS FUNERAL CHAPELS, Bridgen on Friday, December 27, 2024 from 10:00 am until the time of the funeral at 11:00 am. Interment followed at Oil Springs Cemetery.* Sympathy may be expressed through donations to C.E.E. Hospital Foundation (www.ceehf.ca) or Meadowview Villa Auxiliary (www.lambtoncares.ca). Memories and condolences may be shared online at www.steadmanbrothers.ca.

Obituary



DeBOER
 Ann (nee Huizinga)

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Ann DeBoer (nee Huizinga), beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, was peacefully called home to be with her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on December 22, 2024, at the age of 88. Ann was born on October 6, 1936, in Friesland, the Netherlands, and immigrated to Canada with her family, where

she built a warm and loving home centered around the love of God and her cherished family. Ann was the devoted wife of the late William DeBoer (2012) and a loving and supportive mother to her six children: Wes (Dorothy), Mike (Grace), Steve (Debbie), Rick (Carol), John (Sarina), and Julie (Chuck) Vriesema. Anne's heart was full of love for her 30 grandchildren and 58 great-grandchildren. A member of Wyoming Christian Reformed Church, Ann lived a life of faith, kindness, and service. Her life was a testament to the power of love, the importance of family, and the peace found in God's grace. She was known for her warm hospitality, her caring nature, and her unwavering dedication to her family and church community. *A funeral service to celebrate Ann's life will be held on Friday, December 27, 2024, at Wyoming Christian Reformed Church, with a private interment prior to the service at Wyoming Cemetery.* As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations be made by cheque to John Knox School. Memories and condolences may be shared online at www.NeedhamJay.com

Obituary



THOMAS
 William Lewis (Bill)

THOMAS, William Lewis (Bill) – passed away suddenly at the Victoria Hospital, London on December 28, 2024. Born on July 26, 1935 on the family farm in Dawn Township. Bill Devoted

his life to hard work, family and his true passion – farming. Bill was the beloved husband of 66 years to Evelyn (Nee Wright). Proud father of Debbie (Mike) VanDaele and Brenda (Thom) McLean. Cherished grandfather of Dane VanDaele, Riley VanDaele (Kristyn Saunders) and Alexis McLean. Survived by his sister in law Colleen (the late Ted Thomas), sister Doris Cameron (the late Ross), Wes (Gloria) Thomas and sister in law Freida Alderman (the late Bob). He found peace and purpose in the fields, and his legacy lives on in the land he so deeply loved. *A private family service took place at STEADMAN BROTHERS FUNERAL CHAPELS, Interment will be held at Oil Springs Cemetery.* Sympathy may be expressed through donation to C.E.E Hospital Foundation (https://ceehf.ca/). Memories and condolences may be shared online at www.steadmanbrothers.ca.

In Memoriam

In loving memory of a dear husband

ROBERT "BOB" D. ELLIOTT

November 11, 1935 - January 6, 2020

*Those who love us don't go far away
 They walk beside us every day.
 Unseen, unheard and always near
 Still loved & still missed very dear.*

Always in my heart,
 Margaret Elliott

In Memoriam

In loving memory of a dear husband,
 father, grandfather and friend.

Antonio Libreiro

May 28, 1942 - January 6, 1992

*Death leaves a heartache
 nothing can heal,
 Love leaves a memory
 nothing can steal.*

*Sadly missed & lovingly
 remembered by Bea*

Joe, Bernadine, Tony, Emma & Jesse,
 Mike, Maria & Alyssa

Obituary



McMANAMAN
 Lynn (nee Richardson)

Lynn McManaman (nee Richardson), 78 years of Petrolia, passed away with family by her side on Thursday, December

26, 2024, at Bluewater Health, Sarnia. Lynn will be missed by her husband of 59 years, Brian, her daughter Courtney, and her grandson Ali. She will also be missed by her extended family Margo Kelm, Corrie and Rick Feldon, Nancy Pryor, Irene Richardson, Helen Richardson, and Colleen Richardson and families. Lynn retired from Royal Bank and volunteered for many years with the Petrolia Food Bank and the Petrolia Skating Club. *A service was held on Tuesday, December 31, 2024, at the Needham-Jay Funeral Home, Petrolia. Visitors will be received prior to the service. Cremation followed with interment in Hillsdale Cemetery at a later date.* As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to Petrolia Food Bank. Memories and condolences may be shared online at www.NeedhamJay.com

Obituary



LAWSON
 Margaret Rose

June 3, 1939-Dec 18, 2024. Margaret lived a full life and was an eternal optimist. She left us after a brief illness, surrounded by family. She is remembered with much love by her daughters Patricia (Geoff Evans), Diane (Philip Powell) and sons David (Elvina), Paul (Beth), and Dennis (Teresa). Margaret also enjoyed the love and affection of her 12 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren (with a 6th on the way). Margaret (nee Barnes) was predeceased by her husband (Ivor "Oscar" Blunt) and three brothers (Wayne, Robert, Donald) and survived by one brother (Richard). Margaret was born in Aberfeldy, Ontario. She lived most of her life in Warwick Village, where

she raised her five children after Oscar's early death. She did a remarkable job under difficult circumstances. Margaret worked at the North Lambton Rest Home in Forest. She spent her retirement years with good friends at the Mid-Valley Seniors Apartments in Petrolia and at Christ Anglican Church, where she sang in the choir. Margaret loved to travel and visited Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Iceland. She cruised the Mediterranean. She travelled across Canada. She loved summer days with family watching the sun set on Lake Huron. Margaret was a reader. Books gave her pleasure all her life. She was a dedicated theatre-goer. She was proud of her Scots heritage and loved the bagpipes. She was an artist at heart and expressed herself through painting and other crafts. She was a hockey mom and then a hockey and baseball grandma. She was her family's biggest supporter, encouraging the kids and grandkids in everything they did. The family wishes to thank the doctors and nurses at the Petrolia Hospital for their dedication, care and kindness. A special thanks to Dr. Wang, and Drs. Al-Zubaidi and Yoshida for helping guide her through a difficult journey. If you want to remember Margaret, please consider a donation to the CEE Hospital in Petrolia or the St. Joseph's Hospice, for the good care they give this community. *The family will remember Margaret with a private gathering.*

**Advertise your personal
 advertising here**
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Call The Independent office and find out more
226-738-0728

Classified Deadline: Monday @ 12 Noon

PETROLIA FOOD BANK

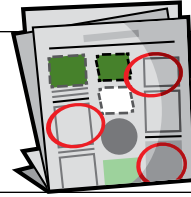
Now accepting your perishable & non-perishable items

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 9am-3pm**

at The Independent office,
 4156 Petrolia Line

Classified Deadline:
Monday @ 12 noon

Classifieds



Word Classifieds: \$10 plus tax for up to 40 words
Stop in at the office 9am-3pm – Monday to Friday
4156 Petrolia Line – Call 226-738-0728
or email: office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca

Happy Birthday Open House



100th Birthday OPEN HOUSE
Join us for **Leone Wellington's 100th** A Century and a milestone!
Drop by to share stories, love and cheer. Help make this day special, with those she holds dear!
Saturday, January 11, 2025, 1-4pm
Petrolia Legion Branch 216
4129 Glenview Rd., Petrolia, ON N0N 1R0
Best Wishes Only

Youth Activities

YOUTH AGE 12-18
LAMBTON ARMY CADETS
NOW ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERS
NO COST.
AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES,
WE MEET EVERY WEDNESDAY
4741 Confederation Line
Wyoming 6:30p.m
info@lambtonarmycajets.ca
www.lambtonarmycajets.ca

Rentals

Wyoming Lions Club **RECEPTION HALL RENTALS** - 554 Main Street, Wyoming. Fully licensed by AGCO, up to 150 seating capacity and wheelchair accessible. Now With Wifi. Book for your upcoming wedding, anniversary or business meeting. For bookings and information call 519-466-7806 or 519-845-3333.

Volunteers Wanted



VOLUNTEERS WE NEED YOU!
TO JOIN OUR TEAM

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POPPY SPORTS
LADIES AUXILIARY YOUTH & EDUCATION

Royal Canadian Legion
Branch 216 Petrolia
4129 Glenview Rd., Petrolia

Upcoming Event - AGM

Petrolia & Enniskillen Agricultural Society invites you to our

Annual General Meeting

TUESDAY JANUARY 21, 2025

at Petrolia Lions Hall
6:30PM Potluck Dinner
7:30PM Meeting Begins

All are welcome


More information:
petroliafair@gmail.com

Real Estate - Online Auction

Thinking Auction? Call/Text John van Klaveren 519-331-1095


99 Acre Prime Farm Land Online Auction
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Starts Closing **Wed., January 22nd at 6:00pm** Soft Close



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Church DIRECTORY



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

In-Person Service
Sundays @ 10:00 am

Services also available online: www.standrews-petrolia.ca
Pastor Monika Berezcki-Farkas

Christ Anglican Church
414 Oil Street, Petrolia

Join us for In-Person Services
Sundays @ 10:00am
Everyone Welcome



Church Office: 519-882-1430 | christchurchpetrolia@gmail.com Rev. Dave Hewett



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

In-Person Services
Sundays @ 10:30 am

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

First Baptist Church
Sunday Mornings @ 10:30 am
Toddler and Junior Church Programme available



Pastor: Alex Craig
418 Greenfield Street, Petrolia | Church Office 519-882-2480
email: fbcpetrolia@gmail.com | website: www.firstbaptistpetrolia.ca
Find us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/First-Baptist-Church-Petrolia

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS THE INDEPENDENT

Calendar of events

PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO CONFIRM DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Events are listed FREE for non-profit groups in Petrolia and Lambton County (space permitting).
To be included in this listing email the required information to:
office@petrolialambtonindependent.ca
Subject: FREE EVENT LISTING.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	START TIME	LOCATION	EVENT/ CONTACT INFO
Ongoing	Various	Petrolia	PETROLIA LEGION Reg. Hours: Wed. - 5-9pm; Thurs. - 5-10pm; Fri. - 7pm-12am; Sat. Noon-5pm Every Fri. Night - Adult Karaoke - 8pm-12am; Every Sat. - Lunch & Meat Raffles- (lunch at Noon, Raffles starts at 2pm); Every Mon. - Zumba - 7pm; Every Wed. evening - Euchre - 6:30pm; Every Thurs. afternoon - Afternoon Pepper - 1pm start; Every Thurs. Evening - Fun Darts - 7pm; 3rd Wed. of every month - Music Jamboree - 1-4pm - Lunch at 12:00noon; 4th Sat. of every month - Progressive Euchre Tournament - 1pm - Lunch at 12:00noon.
Jan. Various Dates	Various	Brigden	BRIGDEN LEGION Jan. 4th - Meat Raffle starts at 4:30; Jan. 11th - Trivia. Starts at 7PM. \$5.00 to play; Jan. 18th - Meat Raffle starts at 4:30; Jan. 25th - Cards starts at 7PM. \$5.00 to Play
Jan. Various Dates	Starts Noon	Wyoming	LET'S PLAY EUCHRE Wyoming Odd Fellows and the Rebekah Lodge invites you to a series of Luncheons and Card Parties. Cost: \$10 @ Wyoming Odd Fellows Hall. Model Lodge #147 - Fri. Jan. 10. Starlight Lodge #344 - Fri., Jan. 24. Proceeds for Humanitarian Work in our community.
Jan. Various Dates	1-4pm	Wyoming	WYOMING EUCHRE - TUESDAYS CHRISTMAS BREAK. Starting back up January. Fair Building Jan. 7. Wyoming Legion Jan. 14. Fair Building Jan. 21. Wyoming Legion Jan. 28.
Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25	1-3pm	Sarnia	FAMILY SATURDAY STUDIO DROP-IN Mixed Media Map Making. Take a mixed media mapping journey and create a collaged landscape using various materials. Saturdays. All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Free Suggested donation \$5/family @ JNAAG.
Starts Jan. 7	7-9pm	Sarnia	MEN AND LADIES COME SING WITH US! Meeting Tues. 7pm to 9pm (starting January 7th) at All Saints Anglican Church, corner of Charlotte and Vidal Street. Enter south door at rear of the church. NO auditions required and you DO NOT need to know how to read music. We are a fun group that loves to sing! Call David at 226-402-3060 for more info.
Jan. 27	7pm	Thamesville	CALLING ALL PLANT LOVERS AND GARDENERS! Join us Monday January 27 for the Thamesville Horticultural Society Annual General Meeting, 7pm at the Thamesville Senior Centre, 96 London Rd.. Light refreshments and a door prize. All are welcome.

Classified Deadline: Monday @ 12 Noon



TARA JEFFREY PHOTO

Students from Brigden Public School formed a Chain of Caring Dec. 18, moving about 1,000 food items to the Brigden United Church's Little Caring Cupboard.

Chain of Caring helps Brigden neighbours

Tara Jeffrey
The Independent

It may have been a bit wet and dreary outside, but the students at Brigden Public School sure brightened things up in the community.

One by one, the students — nearly 200 of them — lined up outside the school to form a 'chain of caring,' crossing the road over to the Little Caring Cupboard at the Brigden United Church Wednesday. Lambton OPP officers blocked the road so the students could safely transport much needed food and items they'd been collecting over the past few weeks.

Holiday music played on an outdoor speaker as the kids eagerly passed the items down the line, dancing and laughing, despite dropping a mitten or two.

"We chose the Little Caring Cupboard because it directly impacts the families of Bridgen,"

Principal Jennifer Gilpin said of the food pantry which opened last year.

The students made announcements and posters to help drum up support for the food drive, even prompting a friendly competition to earn more points for much needed items like diapers and hygiene products.

"We're really impressed, to be honest, with the amount of most-needed items they've collected," Gilpin added.

Volunteers lined up at the church to receive the items for the pantry, that's open 24/7 for those in need.

"It started off slowly, but it's really well-used now," said Barb Steadman, one of the organizers of the community-run pantry.

In total, more than 1,000 items were collected from the school.

"It was so nice to see," said Steadman. "Really touching."

An Alvinston Christmas tradition

Heather Wright
The Independent

Nine years after Jeannette Douglas' daughter suggested offering a community meal at Christmas, the tradition continues today.

And it has branched off into monthly meals.

Over Christmas and Boxing Day, Douglas and her family prepare a turkey dinner at Guthrie Presbyterian Church. Boxing Day over 40 people gathered around tables in the church basement with their neighbours to enjoy the meal with baked treats, listen to Christmas carols and catch up with each other.

Douglas said the first meal was inspired by her daughter who helped with a Christmas community meal in Windsor who said "there are probably people in Alvinston who need a meal." So Douglas and her family prepared

the food and opened the doors to the church. They've been doing it ever since.

Douglas says at first it took some explaining to convince people to come since they felt they didn't "need" a free meal.

"To me, it is more about the social aspect," says Douglas.

"If you live alone are you going to cook a turkey dinner for yourself? To me, it's better to eat with 10 people than yourself."

The dinners have since morphed into monthly community meals from October to April.

The Alvinston Optimist Clubs provide \$500 to help with the costs. Douglas says there is always money left at the end of the year, since people are very generous and donate food and money to keep the dinners going. The extra cash is donated to the Brooke Central School breakfast program.



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

The MacDougall family, Bob, Diane and Rachele, wash dishes at the Alvinston Christmas Dinner.

Anniversary celebrations, music festival and Campbell Park sign get county grant

The Independent

Anniversary celebrations, a book club and Inwood's music festival are among the projects receiving funding under the Creative County Grant in 2025.

Lambton County, which administers the \$75,000 yearly fund promoting community arts and recreation projects, recently announced the recipients.

Oil Springs will receive \$8,000 to help celebrate the village's 160th anniversary in 2025.

Inwood's 150th Celebration Committee will receive \$3,000 to run another music festival in 2025.

And Sir John Moore Community School receives \$1,000 for a Winter Book Club.

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority will also receive \$1,250 to create signs

marking the importance of Archie Campbell in the creation of Campbell Park. The authority is tearing down Campbell House in 2025.

Close to \$70,000 was divided up among the 19 projects this year. The total cost of the cultural events and installations is estimated to be around \$322,000.

Since 2013, the program supported more than 200 local

projects with about \$730,000 in grants. Those grants spurred \$4.4 million in spending.

Also receiving grants are:

- \$7,500 to the Moore Agricultural Society towards the 175 Years of Growth project
- \$2,500 to the Optimist Club of Grand Bend & District to support Beachfest
- \$5,000 to the Kiwanis Club of Forest for a commemorative

sign to support the Whyte Park Centennial Celebration

- \$750 to the Kiwanis Club of Petrolia for Fiery Faces
- \$775 to the Petrolia Discovery Foundation for interpretive signage for self guided tours
- \$1,500 to the Town of Petrolia, for the Veteran Lawn Recognition
- \$1,500 to Heritage St. Clair for an activity booklet based on the history of St. Clair Township

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