

**Man on a mission:** Clinton Gibson is walking to Ottawa to deliver his thoughts about the homeless, the needy, the elderly and the sick to possibly Prime Minister Jean Chretien. He stopped in Cobourg yesterday briefly.

PHOTO BY TED AMSDEN

"That's where we can start from," he said.

The second priority surrounding a new hospital facility was set out during a meeting with provincial Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer on

# Water damage lowers pricetag



PHOTO BY TED AMSDEN

**Water damage:** The price of the Cobourg jail has been renegotiated because of water damage.

BY VALERIE MACDONALD  
STAFF WRITER

COBOURG — Old man winter almost scuttled the sale of the Cobourg Jail.

Plunging temperatures combined with howling winds caused pipes to burst and flooding to occur in the 1906 Covert Street, Cobourg building in January.

The damage jeopardized the \$254,000 price agreed upon between the purchaser, The Winchester Arms Group, and the jail's owner, Northumberland County Council.

After about three weeks of wrangling and repairing, a new price was agreed upon, says County Warden George McCleary.

The sale price dropped to \$205,000 and the deal was renewed.

The county is also getting \$19,000 from its insurance claim, although it had to hire mechanics and other professionals to repair the damage.

"Everything is in apple pie order as far as we are concerned," said Mr. McCleary.

The official closing of

the sale is next week.

John Lee, president of the Winchester Arms Group, agrees that the deal is still on.

He expects to hire local trades people within three weeks and begin converting the former place of incarceration into a place of good food, accommodation and retail outlets.

About 40 people will also be hired in May to work in the businesses, he added.

The restaurant is expected to open at the end of May and the hotel and retail outlets by the summer. The company is looking to rent spaces to crafters selling specialized wares.

"We have a similar concept in Port Colborne," he said.

Some of the ideas for the rest of the property include possibly establishing a farmers' market in the court yard, previously the prisoners' exercise yard, and installing mini golf.

Mr. Lee and his partner, Mike O'Brien, were to meet yesterday afternoon with Cobourg Mayor Joan Chalovich to talk about the project.

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