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Bailey, Ron

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Canada Day will indeed be special for 'Kin' Ron Bailey.

Not only will he celebrate this country's birthday, but Bailey will also be marking his first day in office as the new president of the Kinsmen Club of Belleville.

"I can't think of a better day to start my presidency than on Canada Day and I look forward to serving my club, my fellow Kin and my community," said the 59-year-old owner/operator of Ron's Quality Cars on Station Street.

Bailey has been with the Kinsmen club since 2000 and has served on its various committees and on the executive.

In 2003, he even donated a 1957 Ford fire truck to the club to use during parades and community events. He acquired the truck from the Trenton fire department and had it refurbished by the inmates of Warkworth Institution as a community project.

"It was my gift to the club and I am proud that it is being used," he said.

He earned the Kinsmen of the Year award in 2004 for his dedication to the service club that has been serving the Belleville community for 72 years.

Bailey succeeds Brian Teasdale as Kinsmen president.

"Brian showed great leadership qualities and brought our club forward and I hope I can carry on in his tradition," said Bailey.

The new president vows to uphold the club's motto — "Serving the Community's Greatest Needs."

"And we do that by supporting a swimming pool and playground facility at our headquarters on Dundas Street East and by raising money for various community causes," he said.

The club's pet fundraising project is for cystic fibrosis. Club members sell 50-50 tickets at Belleville Bulls games, run the televised bingo and volunteer at Sunday night bingos. They will also be selling fireworks June 29, 30 and July 1 in the Quinte Mall parking lot, with proceeds to cystic fibrosis.

"We are all volunteers and all the money raised goes to charity."

He is proud of the club's \$300,000 donation to the construction of the Dick Ellis Rink.

Bailey's immediate concern is the aging and deteriorating Kinsmen pool, one of the largest outdoor pools between Montreal and Toronto.

A contractor has already been hired to get the pool ready to open on the last day

of school in June.  
"The pool is 50 years old and will need extensive refurbishing over the next few years," he said. "But the club is thinking of raising the funds to replace the pool ... but it will be fairly expensive."

Bailey estimates it will cost between \$500,000 and \$1 million to construct a new pool on the same site. He said the ser-

vice club has already started planning and fundraising for the pool project.

"We're hoping for government assistance to help realize our project," he said.

Bailey has spent his career dealing with financial matters.

The Cochrane native entered the finance industry right after graduating from high school in 1965 and made a name for himself in a relatively short time.

He spent six years with General Acceptance Corporation and was selected Manager of the Year for North America in 1968 and Canadian manager for four years.

Bailey was working in St. Thomas when the company decided to sell its Canadian operation. So he moved to Belleville and became a supervisor for Pacific Finance and, later, Superior Finance.

"They offered me more money to come to Belleville and I have been here ever since," he laughed.

He joined a North Front Street Chrysler car dealership in 1981 as a sales representative.

Two years later, he decided to open his own used car dealership at 163 Station St. The 1.5 acre property boasts a large building that doubles as his home, garage and sales office, and has enough room for about 45 cars and trucks.

"I have enjoyed serving the citizens of Belleville and area for their automotive needs for the past 22 years. Business has been good and I believe I have chosen the right thing to do with my life."

Tragedy struck his life just three months after he opened his car lot. His wife, Judy, died Christmas Eve of Rhyes Syndrome. The couple had two children, Ronlee and Cheryl.

Bailey initially thought of joining the Belleville Kinsmen club after moving to Belleville in 1970. But the meeting nights were the same as the Sea Cadets of Trenton, where Bailey was commanding officer. (He was commanding officer for six years and earned the rank of captain.)

Family connections convinced Bailey to join the Kinsmen in 2000. His son-in-law, Doug Whatham, was president at the time "and he convinced me to join. I'm glad I did and I have enjoyed my five years with the club."

Bailey is one of 33 Kin members.

"I encourage anyone who would like to join our club to come out the second and fourth Monday of the month to the Kinsmen Centre," he said. "All volunteers are welcome."

"It's an opportunity for men to make a positive difference in the community plus have some good fellowship and fun."