



Stephen Willard.

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Youngest warden ever leaving politics

By Michael Jiggins
Beaver Staff Reporter

He's 41 years away from mandatory retirement, but Amherst Island reeve Stephen Willard is waving goodbye to politics — for the time being at least.

"I will not be seeking reelection as reeve of Amherst Island," the 24-year-old Willard revealed in an interview with *the Beaver* Wednesday. "I'm off to law school and I don't think I want to be carrying both balls at the same time."

Willard burst onto the Eastern Ontario political scene as a fresh-faced 18-year-old when he was elected to Amherst Island council in November of 1988.

Three years later, he was elected reeve of the township.

His meteoric rise through the world of municipal politics reached its apex last December when he was chosen Lennox and Addington County's youngest-ever warden.

He is quick to point out the decision to step away from the limelight isn't an

indication of disenchantment with political life.

"I love it. It's been great fun."

However, Willard admits he's looking forward to some time away from what was clearly a hectic schedule.

"It will be nice to have time for my own things."

Of course more than a few politicians have used law as an apprenticeship for bigger and better things.

And Willard indicates he may steer his own career down that path.

"I suspect you'll hear from me again," said Willard, who did his undergraduate studies in English and History at Queen's University.

One option Willard didn't consider was taking on a lighter workload by trading the reeveship for a spot on council.

"Once bitten by the reeve's bug, you're kind of interested in that," explains Willard. "And, quite frankly, if I wasn't involved in county council I wouldn't be much interested."