

## LOCAL NEWS

## Cramahe Twp. council seeks organizational change

By BOB OWEN  
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Recognizing ratepayers want more open government and a say in that government, Cramahe Township has hired a consultant to facilitate changes in the way it does business.

Doug Scott outlined his proposal to council last Tuesday. He identified communication and openness as key ingredients success.

The consultant acknowledged in his report "there is a desire to make some fundamental changes in the way the administration conducts its day-to-day business in order to achieve more open and responsive government."

To accomplish change, the consultant will consult with council, Cramahe staff and conduct phone surveys with residents. Following his consultations and information gathering, Mr. Scott will conduct eight "Town Hall" gatherings starting in September. These meetings will focus on specific topics related to how the Township can be better governed and administrated.

By February 28, Mr. Scott promises to complete his work and his final report by February 28, 2005. The service will cost \$6,300.

One of Mr. Scott's tasks will be to ascertain whether problems currently being experienced by Cramahe Township council are real or perceived. The

consultant referred to negative comments about press coverage made by Clare Musselman earlier in the meeting and how they affect the impressions of new residents that was.

Councillor Ed Van Egmond wanted assurance from Mr. Scott that he wasn't at council to muzzle its members. The councillor was vehement he would continue to say what he needs to say to the public; he wasn't sure council needed a person to stand between it and ratepayers. He was not in favour of having the work being done, if the purpose was to have everyone saying the same thing.

When Mayor Lee Dekeyser attempted to respond to the councillor's comments, Mr. Van Egmond interjected he wanted to hear from the consultant.

Given the floor, Mr. Scott assured the councillor he hoped to make the lines of communication clearer. He added that he believed much of the concern in the community is perception. The major thing is communication.

Endorsing the report, Councillor Tim Post stated his support of open government and the opportunity for all sides to have their say.

Councillor Marc Coombs agreed it was a very worthwhile venture, adding it requires the buy-in of council and senior staff. He suggested this is not happening when committees are not allowed to put their ideas forward and people are not permitted to speak.

Admitting council is "not working at 100 per cent now", Mayor Dekeyser gave his support, too.

Deputy Mayor Ray Kelly made it unanimous, commenting it was too bad that the township has to go this route. Despite their efforts, council and staff are not getting credit, in Mr. Kelly's opinion. He doesn't know why council isn't getting support from the ratepayers.

Township resident Pat Patterson opened the public discussion. He suggested people are using the press to

ask valid questions but the mayor turns discussions into "bitching sessions", to which Mayor Dekeyser replied he had taken enough; he wouldn't take it any more. He doesn't put his ideas forward in the paper because, "it's all screwed up," Mr. Dekeyser said. "It's negative reporting. I'm willing to work with you if you're willing to work with us."

Ed Greenwood sided with Mr. Patterson, noting that disagreeing with an idea isn't negative; it's democracy.

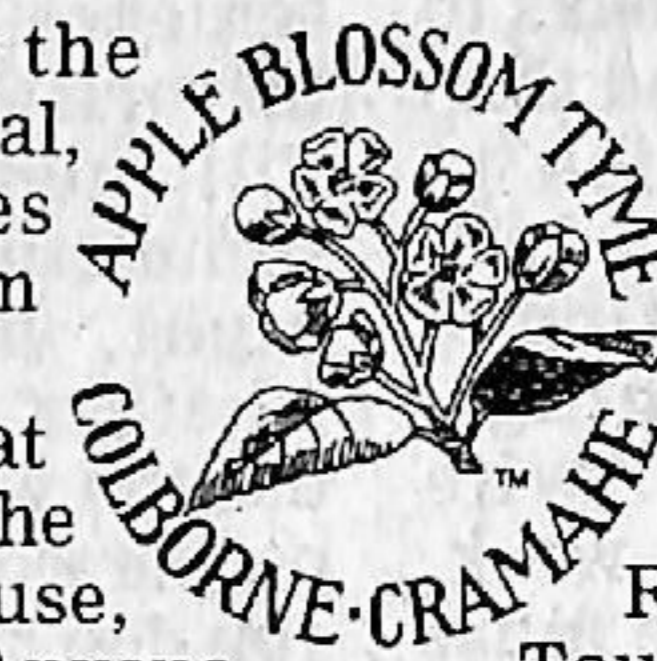
## Apple Blossom festival seeks new ideas

As planning commences for the 2005 Apple Blossom Tyme Festival, the festival committee invites input, ideas and suggestions from the public.

An open meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, August 25, at the Optimist-Rotary Friendship House, 77 King Street East in Colborne. Anyone with anything to improve, expand or upgrade the Festival is asked to attend.

"We would like to create a positive attitude where everyone can work together for the betterment of the community", festival committee chair Graham Norcutt says. "We realize a lot of work can be done to improve the festival, but we need input to make sure local residents are in agreement with what the Apple Blossom Tyme Festival represents to local residents, as well as out-of-town visitors. It is an ideal opportunity to put Colborne on the map and create one of the best festivals in Ontario".

Volunteers and committee members are required. While some additional committee members are required, more volunteers to look after smaller, specific tasks and certain aspects of the festival are urgently sought.



"Several people have already come forward to offer their support and are willing to work with us for future festivals," Mr. Norcutt says. "For example, Mayor Lee Dekeyser has promised support from Cramahe Council, Parks & Recreation Director Ken Woods and Tourist Board Chairman Marc Combs have been in contact with us."

If unable to attend the August 25 meeting and you would like to put forth an idea, contact festival secretary Pat Johnston at 905 344 7845 or at cawilce@eagle.ca

If you would rather present your ideas personally, contact Pat Johnston to arrange a date to attend one of our meetings.

The Apple Blossom Tyme Festival is a community event supported by the municipality and local businesses. It is always held the last weekend in May.

"All our meetings are open to the public - times and dates are posted in Community Coming Events," Mr. Norcutt notes.

If you require further information, contact wither festival secretary Pat Johnston or Graham Norcutt at 905 344 7000.

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