

# Task force to defend Warkworth prison

NORTHUMBERLAND NEWS

Local politicians join forces with MP to save local facility

By Jennifer O'Meara  
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**NORTHUMBERLAND** - County Warden and Brighton Mayor Christine Herrington has formed a task force to protect the Warkworth Correctional Facility from being closed.

"The Mayor and Warden felt we needed to take the bull by the horns," said Northumberland-Quinte West Member of Parliament Rick Norlock.

A recommendation to the federal government to close the Warkworth prison came to light in July and caused serious concern for local municipalities about the loss of jobs, tax revenue and the impact on the local economy.

A Correctional Service Canada Review Panel report on strengthening public safety included a consultants' report in the appendix on building a super jail near Kingston and closing six older facilities to save money. One of the prisons the consultants recommended closing was the Warkworth Institution.

The Warkworth Correctional Task Force is made up of politicians and town staff from Brighton, Trent Hills and the County of Northumberland. It will also include Northumberland-Quinte West MP Rick Norlock.

"I offered my services to the Warden and to the various councils," said Mr. Norlock. "We'd be working shoulder to shoulder."

The task force will identify the social and economic benefits of the Warkworth prison to local residents, workers and businesses. It will carry out a peer review of the Correctional Services report's conclusion to close local facilities and build one consolidated regional facility in Millhaven. The group will build a case for keeping the Warkworth Correctional Facility open and even expanding it.

"From my perspective, we'd be working to ensure the long-term viability of Warkworth Institute," said Mr. Norlock.

The Warkworth prison, opened in 1967, lies just inside the Brighton border and is a major financial contributor to the municipality. The federal prison does not technically pay property taxes, but the government gives that amount in a grant to the municipality. The Warkworth Institution gives Brighton \$602,000 each year, which is almost 16 per cent of the municipality's budget. The jail also gives Northumberland County a grant of \$168,500.

The possible closing of Warkworth Institution would also put 350 people — many of whom live in Northumberland — out of work. The loss of well-paying jobs would hurt the county, which has already been rocked by several plant closings and industrial job losses. Many local businesses could also be hurt if laid-off residents aren't spending.

Warkworth prison puts over \$32 million into the Northumberland economy through wages and goods and services.

Mr. Norlock has been quick to stress the proposed closure of Warkworth Institution is only a consultant recommendation. There were close to 190 recommendations from the panel report released in April 2007. So far, the only major recommendation implemented by the government is stiffer regulations for granting parole, according to the MP.

"There's been no decision on the part of cabinet," said Mr. Norlock. "There is no funding (for a new regional jail) because the last budget went into 2009. So for the next two years, it's not even a consideration."

The MP has already appeared before Brighton and Trent Hills council to talk about the threat to Warkworth prison. He will be coming before County Council on Wednesday, Sept. 3.

Public events will be held over the next few months to make sure local citizens are kept up to date on the task force's work and have a chance to offer their input on the future of the Warkworth Institution.

"I'll do everything I can to lobby on behalf of my constituents to make sure we keep hold of what we have and build on it," said Mr. Norlock.

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### Announcements

#### Deaths

**LEARNMOUTH, N. Marguerite (nee Greatrix)** - Peacefully at the Northumberland Hills Hospital on Thursday August 21st, 2008 in her 90th year. Beloved wife of the late Ralph Learnmouth. Loving mother of Frank Learnmouth (Jo Ann), Kim Briand, Patricia Gale and the late William Learnmouth. Mother-in-law of Mary Learnmouth and Dave Briand. Dear grandmother of Adam (Shannon), Aaron (Jen), Andrew, Amy, Julie, Robert, Corinne, Charly (Paul) and Shane (Sue) and great-grandmother of Elisha, Hayden, Danica and Penelope Jo. Sister of the late Helen, Victor, Fred, Oran, Kathleen and Noeën. Friends are invited to attend visitation on Saturday August 23rd from 1-2 pm. at Old St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Colborne, followed by a funeral service in the church at 2 pm. Interment in Colborne Union Cemetery. If desired, donations may be made to Legion Village or Heart & Stroke Foundation. Condolences received at www.MacOubrey.com

#### CARD OF THANKS

Thank you to all who attended the funeral service for Mrs. Marguerite Learnmouth.

#### Deaths

**LIGHTLE, Ruby Florence** - Passed away at Northumberland Hills Hospital, Cobourg on Friday, August 22, 2008. Ruby Bealy beloved wife of the late Bert Lightle. Dear mother of Brenda Campbell (Sandy) of Cobourg, Blaine Lightle (Susan Stephenson) of Buckhorn, and Penny Meones (Sol) of Colborne. Loving grandmother to 8 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Sister of Lewis Bealy and the late Theina Mercer, Victor Bealy and Meta Kinsman. Friends were received at the **ALLISON FUNERAL HOME**, 103 Mill Street North, Port Hope on Monday 7 - 9 pm. Funeral Service was held Tuesday 2 pm. Interment, Bethel Grove Cemetery. If desired, memorial contributions may be made by cheque to Bethesda, South United Church, Hospice Northumberland or Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation - Palliative Care Unit www.allisonfuneralhome.com

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