

# County over budget for '08:

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Roads and waste budget savings efficiencies could cut another half million, council heard

Mr. Pyatt will have to consult with waste management to determine what can be deferred so that the county can stay within budget.

Deferring projected contractual work and other potential savings would save \$514,000, he said. He offered some suggestions where money could be cut, but added it is council which must make the decision. Mr. Pyatt put forward Food 4 All and free waste vouchers as programs which could be considered.

Mr. Pyatt agreed with Coun. Peter Delanty of Cobourg who suggested road work could be considered optional. The CAO said that is one area where cuts could make a "significant impact on the budget."

Coun. Hector Macmillan of Trent Hills took offence to that suggestion. He considers roads as one of the county's core business activities. He went on to offer that county works staff don't pick roads to rebuild or repair just so they can spend money. Coun. Macmillan said roads costs have been "pretty light" in the past few years.

"The roads program has not been what it should be," Mr. Pyatt agreed.

Coun. Macmillan said the amount being spent by the county is not 100% acceptable. Not spending now will cost the county later and asphalt is not getting any cheaper; it's pay now or pay later as far as Coun. MacMillan is concerned.

A chart provided by Mr. Pyatt bears out Coun. Macmillan's remarks.

In the past year, asphalt cement has doubled from a low of \$414.20 per tonne in January 2007 to its current price of \$930.35. From 2001 to 2005, there was little change in the cost as it fluctuated just under \$300 per tonne.

## Fixed costs

When it comes to cost-cutting, some county responsibilities cannot be touched. Ambulance response times and snow removal requirements fall under provincial regulations.

Alnwick-Haldimand Mayor and county councillor Councillor Bill Finley says that the county must look at the whole picture if it considering cuts. Wages and salaries make up 90% of costs. The economy is weak and the county may continue to grow but not provide some services, he says, suggesting current services need to be assessed.

Mr. Finley says county council must look at wages and the salary grid.

"I have a strong feeling we can't continue on the road we are going down," he said. "More and more people are wondering what they are getting from government."

Mr. Pyatt believes the county will be close to break-even at the end of the year if cost-cutting measures are taken.

## Local News

### SCENES FROM SALEM HARVEST DINNER



Ten-year-old Holly Hutchinson was one of many happy diners at the Salem Harvest Dinner Oct. 15.



Ruth Mackenzie wields the knife as she cuts the pie for the Salem Harvest Dinner Oct. 15.

## Public meet set for conservation plans

By Jack Evans

Lower Trent Conservation is trying to inform the public about proposed changes to environmental planning policies.

The agency is looking at new or changed policies in nine different categories and have set Tuesday, Oct. 28 from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Conservation Authority Office for the public to drop in and examine the plans.

Lower Trent officials expect the open house should be of special interest to rural landowners, developers and municipal officials.

"The planning policies have been updated to reflect changes in provincial legislation and regulations over the past several years as well as contemporary environmental management approaches," said Kelly Weste, environmental planner for Lower Trent.

"We want to make sure that municipalities are receiving consistent environmental advice to their planning process," Weste added.

The various environmental

considerations involved in the planning aspect include: floodplain management, erosion and dynamic beach hazards, surface water quality and quantity, groundwater, stormwater management, wetlands, fish habitat, natural heritage features, and the Oak Ridges Moraine.

"Consideration for the natural environment is an important part of land use planning," Weste added. "Lower Trent Conservation provides input to municipal land use planning processes by working with landowners and developers to ensure that development proposals have regard for the environment and will not lead to problems for adjacent lands."

Other highlights of the open house will include information on provincial changes and up-to-date technical information and guidelines about environmental protection and public safety.

The office is located in the former Murray Township Town Hall on Murray Street, Trenton. For more information or queries, telephone Kelly Weste at 613-394-3916, extension 220, or (613) 394-4829.

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