



PETE FISHER Nesphotos.ca

Alnwick/Haldimand Township firefighters responded to a house fire at 433 Lakeshore Road south of Grafton around 2 a.m. on Wednesday morning. When crews arrived the front porch and front portion of the roof were on fire. Although firefighters tried to contain the blaze, flames spread to the entire roof eventually consuming the home and home-based business. Damage estimates were unknown and the exact cause of the fire was unknown at press time. Two people were home at the time but there were no injuries. Smoke alarms are being credited for waking up the occupants.

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CRAMAHE TOWNSHIP

Speedy Internet comes to Cramahe

High speed Internet is here! I am happy to report that the days of slow-as-molasses "dial up" are over. What worked well in 1995 certainly doesn't cut it in today's world and now that everyone from nine to 90 are downloading movies and "skype-ing" with friends and family, it is vitally important to have a high speed and high bandwidth Internet connection. Never mind that it is absolutely critical to economic development in rural



Marc Coombs
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areas such as Cramahe Township. It is safe to say that for prospective residents, it is as important as electricity and water when they are looking for a place to relocate to.

Many of you probably noticed the trenching up County Road 25 from Colborne to Castleton last fall and winter. That was the

fibre optic cables being laid in order to bring high speed, and most importantly, high-bandwidth to the local Bell buildings known as points of presence or PoPs.

It is part of a \$170-million project called Eastern Ontario Regional Network that is being funded by federal and provincial governments (\$55-million each), the private sector (\$50-million) and the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus (\$10-million). Northumberland County's share of this was \$600,000. This project is build-

ing 160 "points of presence" throughout eastern Ontario which act as fibre "off ramps" to local communities. In Cramahe we have one each in Colborne and Castleton which is part of the backhaul fibre network component of the project.

The Internet Service Provider (ISP) contract for the access or last mile component of the project in our area was won by Xplornet Communications Inc. (XCI) and they are providing both a satellite and a wireless solution depending on your local topography, i.e. if you can

"see" a wireless tower from your home or business. A DSL option (high speed over your existing phone lines) wasn't bid on, but that isn't to say that it won't be offered in the near future. The wireless option will give you up to 10Mbps and the new satellite is up to 5 Mbps. As well, existing ISP's can piggy back on the new infrastructure and are able to offer higher speeds and throughputs if they wish. Part of the project agreement also covered the pricing levels and rural residents are guaranteed "close to urban" pricing levels as part

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of this project.

There are three upcoming information sessions in Northumberland County and I urge you to attend if you are interested in learning more.

They are:

May 15, 7 to 9 p.m., Bewdley Community Centre

May 16, 3 to 5 p.m., Castleton Town Hall

May 16, 7 to 9 p.m., Codrington Community Hall

Also, you can find more information at www.eorn.ca

Marc Coombs is the mayor of Cramahe Township.