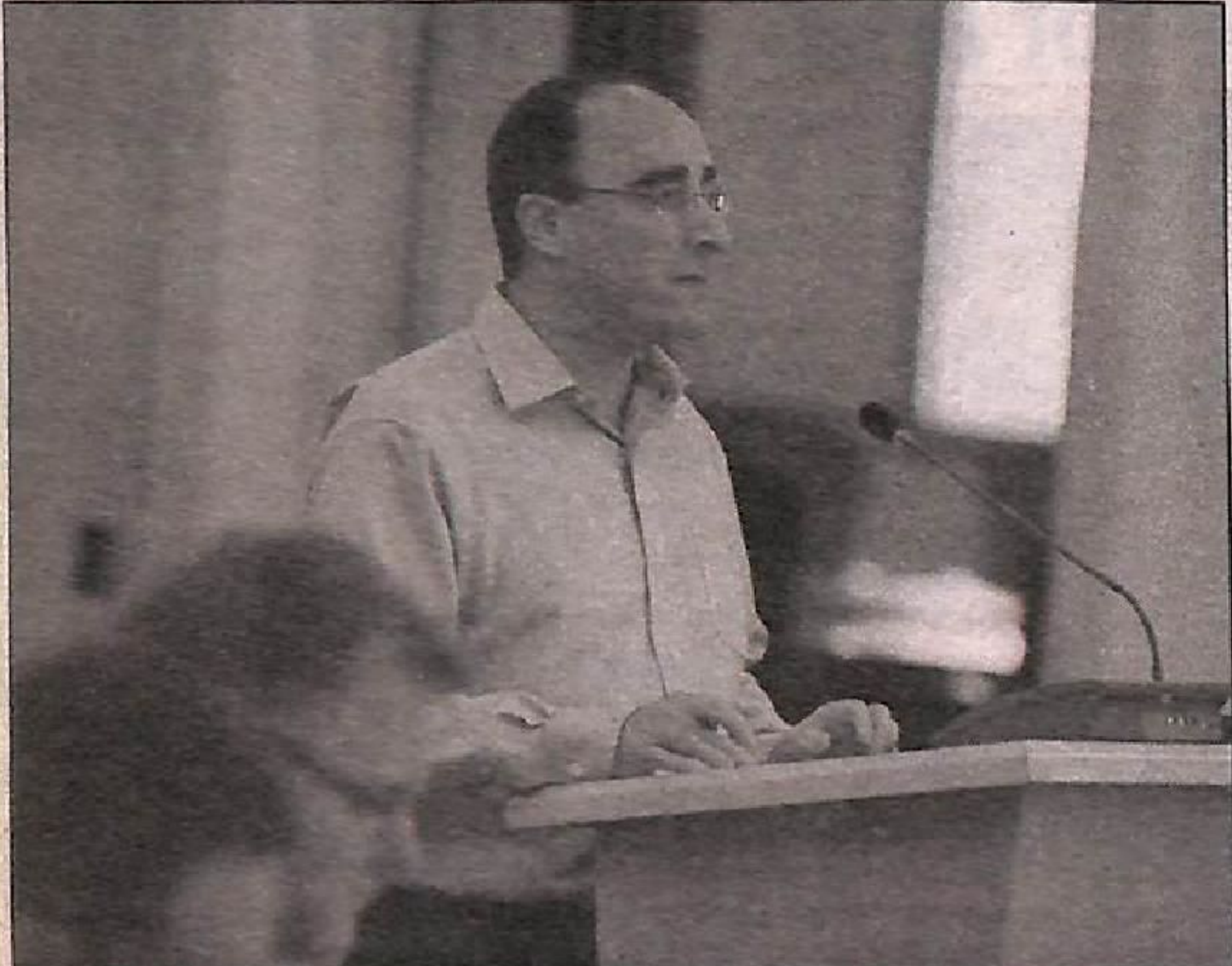


County hears update on Highway 401 snow clearing



Ministry of Transportation's eastern region operations manager Rafael Albino told county council motorists can expect better road conditions on Highway 401 this winter because of changes made in snow clearing. Photo: Dominik Wisniewski

By Dominik Wisniewski
News - Northumberland County
 Flanked by nearly a dozen representatives from the Ministry of Transportation, eastern region operations manager Rafael Albino said Northumberland County motorists should see an im-

provement in snow clearing efforts on Highway 401 this winter. Since meeting with county officials in March 2014, Albino said last week the ministry (MTO) has opened the Port Hope patrol yard allowing for quicker response times to incoming storms, with the addition of one new salt and sand loader. "The reinstatement of the Port Hope patrol yard will play a strategic role in snow storm cleaning," he said, pointing out that it will serve one new complete route, called the Mainline 401 route, which will see one extra combination unit and one tow plow in use to improve service. Instead of using two separate pieces of equipment to do the job, the combo unit drags behind it a tow plow which swings out to the side to clear the adjacent lane. "The tank on top of it is just used as a balance to maintain the weight and control," Albino said. An additional tow plow will be in use west of Cobourg for alternating inside and outside shoulder plowing, consistent with the adjacent six-lane section in Durham County where drivers reported seeing an increased level of service. "In the past folks had picked up on the difference in maintenance that was going on at that boundary, but now with that tow plow we're able to match the activities that are being carried out in Durham County," he said. "You shouldn't be seeing any differences with the exception that, because they are two different operators, the meeting of the two at that boundary won't necessarily happen at the same time." The final improvement in Northumberland County are two new combo units dedicated specifically to on and off ramp snow and ice removal—increasing the current ramp service by 50 per cent. According to Albino, the MTO is also tendering a trial system for low visibility, to deal with streamers that come off the lake and produce lake effect snow. "Certain other jurisdictions have implemented them for fog but we're going to use it for snow squalls," he told council November 19. "The way this works is similar to the wildlife de-

tection system that we have on Highway 416. If it picks anything up it will alert the drivers that they should be expecting low visibility." The MTO installed a Large Animal Detection System targeting deer near the Highway 416 and Leeds and Grenville Road 43 Interchange in March 2012. "We're also meeting with other jurisdictions to see what they are doing [and] have a meeting set up with the New York Department of Transportation," added Albino. He said there was "nothing exceptional about last year" in terms of accidents on Highway 401—citing an MTO review of multi-vehicle collisions from 1991 to 2010 along the corridor, which he said have remained consistent—but Councillor Hector Macmillan said he was confused by the comment. "The public's perception as well as mine is that we have been plowing the roads since roads were invented, and people just want the damn snow off the roads," he said, adding that for some reason this hasn't happened during the last two years. "I think what we want to hear is that it's going to happen because it used to happen." Macmillan said the province needs to start recognizing Northumberland County as unique owing to glacial activity in the area, and start treating it accordingly. "My suggestion is they need to be more proactive so that we can stop cremating truckers on the 401," he said, pointing to a friend who witnessed that kind of accident. "It hasn't gone away for him and in fact he'll never work again because of it." In response, Albino said the changes they have implemented this year were customized with Northumberland County in mind. The county has also asked the MTO to provide it with an annual update on winter maintenance services along Highway 401.

Cramahe will save money on policing, receive more in partnership funding

BRIGHTON INDEPENDENT NOV. 27/14
 By John Campbell
News - Cramahe Township - The news from the province is all good for Cramahe Township: the municipality will pay \$159,600 less for policing in 2015 and receive about \$20,000 more from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund. Under a new billing method adopted by the OPP, the township's police bill will add up to about \$1,068,000 next year. The new formula takes into account the base service the provincial police force provides Cramahe (routine patrols, crime prevention, RIDE programs, training and administration), along with the number of properties in the municipality, and the standard province-wide cost per property. There are 2,700 households and 151 commercial and industrial properties in the municipality, according to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. Also factored in are calls for service "related to policing services that are typically reactive in nature and usually require a police officer's attendance," treasurer Mora Chatterson said in a report to council. The township stands to save additional monies in future as the cost per property for policing is projected to drop from \$404 this year to \$329, a decrease of \$75. However, the decrease is being phased in, as it is for municipalities that will pay more for policing. In Cramahe's case the cost per property will be lowered by \$30 to \$374 in 2015, with more adjusting to follow. The savings will be placed in a reserve, on the recommendation of staff, "just in case we get a surprise" in actual costs, Mayor Marc Coombs said last week. The township will receive \$665,000 from the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund next year. That's an increase of \$21,700 when coupled with a provincial upload in court security and prisoner transport costs of \$2,500. The province said the combined benefit is the equivalent of 14 per cent

of municipal property tax revenue Cramahe will earn in 2015. The modest increase in OMPF funding came as a surprise to local officials. The amount paid out annually to Cramahe has been declining for years because "traditionally the overall envelope's been shrinking too in Ontario," Coombs said. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario reported the fund is being cut by \$35 million to \$515 million in 2015 after being reduced by \$25 million for this year. The association said 245 municipalities in Ontario will receive smaller allocations as a result of the latest reductions. Cramahe is one of 143 that will see its funding remain stable or increased in 2015.

"It's never gone up I don't think in any of the times [Cramahe has received OMPF funding]," Coombs said. "It's always gone down." Having that trend come to an end was "excellent" news, he said. OMPF funding is used as general revenue, "it's not really set aside for anything," Chatterson said.

NORTHUMBERLAND NEWS *Peggy was librarian*
northumberlandnews.com *NOV 27/14* *in Ameliasburg for many years*

Going by the book in Cobourg

COBOURG — Promoting her latest book, 'Laura Secord Heroine of the War of 1812', Peggy Dymond Leavey wore historic costume to the Word Northumberland event at the Cobourg Public Library. Karen Longwell / Northumberland News