

Colborne Chronicle

First impressions of Colborne



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You may know that this year Cramahe Township embarked on a Ministry of Agriculture-sponsored program called First Impressions Community Exchange. It is a free program that twins your community with another and then has two groups from each community visit the other community to assess their "first impressions." It is basically like a mystery shopper program. It is designed to help you confirm what you may already know about your community, highlight opportunities that you may be overlooking and find those things that can be both short term & long term fixes. It is meant to not only cover what

would be attractive to tourists to your community but also to potential residents and investors.

Cramahe's team was formed by Pat Westrope, Jan Hoselton, Burke Fredrickheit, Sarah Toyne and myself. The Brighton Cramahe Chamber of Commerce and its executive director, Sherry Hamilton, happily agreed to take on the daunting task of managing the project for us and Sherry also participated in the visit to the other community, which was Cannington. Cannington is located in Brock Township, about two hours' drive from Colborne. It is a small (population 2,000) rural village with a small downtown core anchored by a few key businesses and its municipal town hall. Both communities visited each other's village back in September and Cramahe has already done its report to Cannington.

The Cannington team visited us last week to present their report and findings.

The First Impressions program follows a very strict format so all aspects are covered. The good thing is that you get a very balanced and extensive view of your community. The Cannington group found Colborne to be a "charming and beautiful community." They liked the variety of housing and were impressed with the Colborne Creek development. They liked seeing a number of new homes being built as their own community faces both water and waste water constraints which is severely hampering their development. They appreciated the heritage homes and distinctive architecture. In their research they thought we had a good mix of pricing on homes. They found the signage coming into town at-

tractive and consistent but didn't stand out as much as it should.

The Cannington team were impressed with the playgrounds, the Keeler Centre and the numerous ball diamonds. They thought the Ecology Garden was a "gem" and that the nature trail at Rotary Centennial Park was great and could be longer. They found Victoria Square to be attractive and were happy we had completed the cenotaph project which had been underway when they had visited, as they felt that would really add to our downtown. They found the flower gardens were well kept and added to a unique downtown, especially the elevated walkway on the north side of King Street. They thought the streets were clean and that we had plenty of parking. The garbage containers were a big hit as it showed us promoting recycling. They were im-

pressed with the Guardian Drug pharmacy and the breadth of products carried and found Cree to be "amazing" and the service to be "phenomenal." As they drove out of town back home they also stopped at Hoselton Sculptures which they really enjoyed and of course at the Big Apple where they had a great time enjoying all it has to offer. They quickly realized that the Big Apple represents a huge opportunity for the village as there are a large number of visitors there. The next question is how do you capitalize on that as a community and draw some of them into the village.

In next week's column I will continue with Cannington's findings and present where they thought we have both challenges and opportunities for our future prosperity. *Marc Coombs is mayor of Cramahe Township.*

Council approves fire service agreements

MANDY MARTIN
FOR NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY

CRAMAHE TOWNSHIP — Cramahe Township Council approved at its Dec. 1 meeting renewed mutual aid agreements to assist, if required, fire departments in the municipalities Alnwick / Haldimand Township, Brighton and Trent Hills.

Each agreement defines specific areas of responsibility, particularly in border areas of the municipalities. For the Alnwick / Haldimand agreement, Cramahe will cover most of Lakeport and spots on Boyce, Clarkson, Covert Hill, Day, Dudley, Ferguson, Herro, Hofer, Hogan, Inglis, Landon, McGlennon, Moore, Old Mill, Park, Porter, Riley, Shelter Valley, Telephone, Thomas, Turk, Wolfram, Urborne and County 2 and 29 roads, plus McGregor,

Mercer and Ward lanes.

With the Brighton fire department, Cramahe will assume coverage for Begg, Carr, Hardy, Grady and Phillips roads and Massey Lane. These roads were formerly covered by Trent Hills Fire Department.

In all cases, if Cramahe Fire Department is called out to another municipality, it will provide a minimum of four fire-fighters and one first response vehicle. The municipality that calls on the Cramahe Fire Department agrees to cover the cost all materials used at the scene, not including medical supplies.

In all three cases, the first hour of response time is considered fire protection. Any additional time is covered under the Northumberland County mutual aid agreement as no cost to the home municipality.