

"There is not an area we could tradeoff or have a service tradeoff. If it was only one call every 10 years, I would say all right, and in fact, I came from a municipality where we did that. However, the cost is several thousand dollars each year. In all fairness, how can the municipality (Rideau Lakes) absorb that cost?" he said.

The Rideau Lakes fire chief said his municipality has several automatic aid agreements with other municipalities where money is not exchanged. Rideau Lakes has an agreement with the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands for automatic aid between the two areas because the call volume for each area is similar. There is an agreement with the Township of Athens where its fire department

provides automatic aid to a certain area in Rideau Lakes in exchange for Rideau Lakes filling their air tanks and providing ice water rescue in the winter.

DeBernardi said Rideau Lakes would respond to an average of 14 calls in South Frontenac each year; however, that total could go as high as 20 depending on the year, he said. Rideau Lakes offered to extend the automatic aid agreement with reimbursement based on a lump sum or per call basis.

Chesebrough said the South Frontenac Fire Department consulted with the Ontario Fire Marshal's office and the county coordinator of fire protection and came back with the recommendation to council that the township withdraw from the automatic agreement with Rideau Lakes.

"Based on what we are doing in South Frontenac and how we are equipped, the recommendation to council was that we feel confident in providing the level of service that the taxpayers are paying for in all of South Frontenac."

Even though there is not an automatic agreement in place, South Frontenac still has the ability to request mutual aid from Rideau Lakes in the event of a major fire or emergency at no cost. Mutual aid agreements are separate from automatic aid agreements and

done inter-county.

"We are always more than happy to help neighbouring fire departments," DeBernardi said.

South Frontenac Coun. Del Stowe, who represents Bedford district and sits on the central fire committee, said the low number of volunteer fire fighters in the northern area is of concern.

"We have a more seri-

ous problem than just this aid agreement between us and Westport. We have to look at the number of fire fighters we have presently; I think that's the more critical issue."

Coun. Stowe left open the possibility of reviving the automatic aid agreement.

"Possibly it might be wise to keep the agreement until such time that

FIRE AGREEMENT

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