

# Urge to merge: Colborne still has it; Cramahe coy

By Eileen Argyris

If Colborne and Cramahe are ever to discuss amalgamation — even in the most academic fashion — it will be according to Cramahe's terms, township reeve Doug Galt made clear two weeks ago.

The two council met in Colborne last Monday, March 30, to discuss matters of mutual interest. "Amalgamation — pros and cons" was on the agenda at Colborne's behest.

Galt said he had made his position on the issue clear at the time of the municipal elections last November. At that time, he said he was opposed to amalgamation because he believed the majority of township residents were not in favor. He said the reeve should represent the wishes of the majority of people he served.

However, Galt did not rule out ever discussing the matter, especially if there were to be a benefit to Cramahe in so doing.

"Amalgamation is very controversial in the township, although I know it is looked on as a positive thing in the village," said Galt. "If things change, if there are the type of carrots that make it look good (to Cramahe residents) then I think there should be an opportunity for the public to have its say."

However, Galt also said that indications he had had from residents were that Colborne and Cramahe don't seem to be

able to work well together on simpler issues, such as the jointly-owned arena and past fire protection contracts.

"Let's prove we can work together and not try to do everything on Day One," the Cramahe reeve suggested.

This was the first joint meeting of the two councils since last fall's elections.

Colborne Reeve Walter Rutherford was absent from the meeting due to illness, and Deputy-Reeve Ted Pedlar presented Colborne's position.

"We're being squeezed. We're losing industrial assessment to the township. While we believe that the proper place for industry is in the industrial park, . . . it doesn't alter the fact that the village is losing assessment."

Pedlar said only a few years ago, about 75 per cent of the village's taxation income was derived from residential assessment, while 25 per cent came from industry. That ratio has shifted, he said, to a current balance of about 83 per cent residential to 17 per cent industrial.

Most of the industries that have moved out of Colborne have moved into the industrial park, thereby increasing the township's industrial base at the village's expense.

Galt said he understood that the government of Ontario wanted to deal with as few municipal structures as possible and was therefore pushing for amalgamations

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## Joint fire department discussed by councils

By Eileen Argyris

Colborne and Cramahe may enter into negotiations to create a jointly-owned fire department with at least one substation in the township, it was revealed at a joint meeting of councils March 30.

The meeting, the first of its kind since last November's municipal elections, saw members of both councils (with the exception of Reeve Walter Rutherford of Colborne, who was ill) sitting around in powwow fashion, discussing

matters of concern to residents in both municipalities.

It was Cramahe Reeve Doug Galt who broached the subject of a joint department, in which Cramahe would "buy into" the Colborne Fire Dept., and the two municipalities would strike a fire commission or committee to manage the utility.

Acting as chairman for the meeting, Colborne Deputy-Reeve Ted Pedlar explained that a similar proposal had

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