



**MEDICAL CENTRE OPEN:** The new Guelph/Eramosa Community Health Centre is unofficially open in the new building it shares with Rockwood Pharmacy and Dentist Dr. Ho on Alma Street. The grand opening is slated for January 23. – Frances Niblock photo

## Rockwood Health centre finally open for healthcare

By Frances Niblock

It was almost business as usual at Rockwood's new medical centre yesterday (Wednesday) except everyone – clinic staff, drug store owners and health officials – were anxiously waiting for phone and internet service.

While walk-in patients were being seen at the medical centre – officially know as the Guelph/Eramosa Community Health Centre – without computer service, the pharmacy could not fill prescriptions.

As they stocked shelves in the store and dispensary, Rockwood Pharmacy co-owners Mary Murrell and Maija Dale said there would be a seamless transfer for clients to the new, larger store.

"We now have a proper consultation room that would allow us to privately counsel people about their medication needs and we have an expanded

area for various clinics," Murrell said.

"Hopefully, there will be more of a chance for people to have a physician in town with the expansion of the medical centre," said

Pharmacist Dale, adding it is very convenient and easy to have the clinic and pharmacy in the same location.

Years in the planning, the Alma Street building houses the pharmacy, medical centre, Rockwood dentist Dr. Dominic Ho and there is still one vacant office. At the medical centre, there are two physicians and room for one more.

Michelle Karker, executive director of the East Wellington Family Health Team which operates the medical centre said they lease space from building owner Coldpoint Holdings that will "gift" the facility to the Guelph/Eramosa Township in 25 years.

Karker said patients have been "flexible and

adaptable" during the transition from the old medical centre that will be torn down to provide more parking for the new facility.

"The clinic includes exam rooms, we have a treatment room, a counselling facility for our mental health staff and dietician and we also have administration space," Karker said, adding the expanded space allows them to bring all of the health practitioners to operate under one roof, instead of rented facilities in Erin and Rockwood.

A new physician, Dr. Elinora Sofronova will join Dr. Alejandra Marin on staff next week and Karker said they are looking for a third physician to take the patient load of the retiring Dr. Jane Hostil, who was Rockwood's sole practitioner for over three decades.

The official opening of the new medical centre/pharmacy building is January 23.

## Village break-ins over Christmas

The Rockwood OPP Break and Enter team is investigating a rash of thefts from cars and two break-ins over the Christmas holidays in Rockwood.

On Christmas Day, the owner of the Eramosa River Café received a call just after 5 a.m. from her alarm company saying there had been a break-in.

Police found that the front door had been jimmed open – possibly because of a faulty lock – and the till from the cash register containing the float of approximately \$95 had been stolen.

At 2:34 a.m. on Boxing Day, two suspects reversed an older model Dodge Dakota pickup truck into the front doors

of the Petro Canada gas station on Alma Street. Once inside, they stole an undetermined amount of cash float from the register and lottery tickets.

Police said the suspects – one wearing a red hoodie and one wearing a black hoodie – then fled the scene. Damage to the building is estimated at \$4,500.

OPP also report they had nine incidents of cars being broken into in the period between December 23 and January 5. Half of the cars were locked and the thief smashed windows to steal gifts cards, Christmas presents and a purse.

Police have no suspects in any of the incidents.

## Winter driving tips

One of the common things our County of Wellington OPP officers investigate throughout the winter is cars that have slid into the ditch. One of the most common responses by the drivers when police attend to investigate "Oh, it wasn't my fault-I must have hit a patch of BLACK ICE!"

Most of the accidents attributed to the "black ice" phenomenon seem to be single car accident. So my question is--what is black ice, and just how prevalent is it? Does it really cause all the accidents attributed to it?

Black ice is not black at all; rather it is clear ice or a thin layer of ice on the roadway. Any ice is dangerous to drive on because it's so slippery but this ice is especially dangerous because a road covered with it looks merely wet, not icy. This ice isn't really black, of course, but it's so thin and transparent that the dark color of the pavement shows through.

The slipperiness of a road surface is usually measured by your stopping distance, which is the distance required to bring a vehicle to a stop. Stopping distance on ice has been measured to be about nine times greater than on dry pavement. And before you run out to buy an SUV, you should know that four-wheel drive vehicles won't

help much for stopping on sheer ice. They suffer from the same lack of stopping traction as a two-wheel drive car, though they may make starting on ice somewhat easier.

Ice is most commonly formed at night and very early in the morning, when temperatures are lowest and traffic is the lightest. It is usually thin enough that it often melts soon after the sunlight hits it, but it can persist much longer on a shaded stretches of roadways.

Any source of moisture can form this transparent ice. If water melts from a snow bank during the heat of the day and flows onto or across the road, it can refreeze at night, leaving a small patch of ice on the pavement. When your car idles (such as driveways, plazas, and intersections), your automobile engine and exhaust heat may cause snow underneath to melt and add water to the road.

Bridges and overpasses are another danger spot. Since they do not receive as much heat from the ground and the cold wind in the air, they can drop below freezing even when the rest of the roadway isn't.

The County of Wellington OPP are committed to improving Road Safety throughout the County and offer some ice driving tips that will enhance your traction when driving.

### Driving safely on icy roads

1. Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front.

2. Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.

3. Keep your lights and windshield clean, to make it easier to see road conditions ahead.

4. Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.

5. Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.

6. Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.

7. Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

In winter - Expect ice. Adjust your driving accordingly.



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