

The ROCKWOOD Miller

Township funds court fight

By Denise Paulsen

Guelph/Eramosa Council voted unanimously to spend 10 cents per capita - \$1,200 - to help defend a set of minimum maintenance standards (MMS) used by municipalities in Ontario to fight court case allegations that lower than acceptable standards of maintenance contributed to accidents on roads, bridges or sidewalks.

The Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) is asking all provincial municipalities for financial help

to defend the MMS. According to the OGRA, "an application has been filed with the Superior Court of Justice to have the MMS declared null and void." The court case begins in September.

Ken Gagnon, Manager of the Township's Public Works department advised council at a recent meeting that support for the MMS is vital, as it is often used as a defence in court to prove levels of maintenance were adequate. Gagnon assured council that this "low threshold" of care and maintenance on muni-

cipal roads is regularly exceeded by his staff.

Guelph/Eramosa Township has been cited in two multi-million dollar claims currently being heard in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Both cases have been in the judicial system for two years involving vehicular accidents on the Township roads - one resulted in a fatality. A third lesser charge, for vehicle damage, is now in small claims court.

"The Township of Guelph/Eramosa, like every other municipality, relies heavily on the



GOING ONCE: A Scratch & Dent Sale at Jim's Repair Shop in Rockwood was held on Saturday morning. Lawn and garden equipment was auctioned off, making for a hub of activity later in the afternoon when purchasers picked up their buys. - Denise Paulsen photo

MMS for a defence and cannot afford to have them ruled null and void," Gagnon said. "The Township has recently had a claim dropped during the early stages because we were able to show we met

the standards under the MMS," Gagnon said.

Mayor Chris White is fully supportive of OGRA's fight to defend the validity of the minimum maintenance standards. Based on the

Township's population of just over 12,000, council will contribute \$1,200 to the MMS Litigation Fund. An amount of \$12,000 is in the 2010 budget for insurance claims and deductibles,

Township Digest

Cemetery costs increase

Increased excavating costs translated into a hike in interment fees at the Rockwood Cemetery as of July 15 - the first increase since 2007. Woodlawn Memorial Park Cemetery is under contract with the Guelph/Eramosa Township to manage interment and sell plots within Rockwood Cemetery. The cost for a full-size interment has risen to \$795 from \$700, a 13.5 per cent increase, and the cost a cremation burial rose to \$390 from \$310.

Township permits

As of the end of May, building permits issued by Guelph/Eramosa Township were down to 71,

compared to 91 permits issued during the same timeframe in 2009.

The most significant decrease is for pool permits, as none were issued in May 2010, compared to six in May 2009.

Six permits for additions or renovations to residences (including decks) were issued, compared to nine last May. There were no institutional building permit applications for new builds or additions this May, or during the same period last year. Similarly, no permits were issued in May for additions or renovations to commercial or industrial buildings. Four permits were issued for new barns, sheds and silos in both May of this year and last year. Three permits were issued to construct new residential



SUMMER STARTS HERE: Counsellors at Camp Edgewood recently eagerly awaited the arrival of kids to the evangelical Lutheran Church affiliate in Eden Mills that is open for both weekly and day campers. Waiting to welcome campers were from left: Rebeckah Ludolph, Nathan Mantey, Jonathan Constantino, Vanessa Wilson and Pastor Ray Ludolph. - Denise Paulsen photo

units this May, compared to five in May 2009.

No new industrial or

commercial building permits were granted in May, and only one permit was processed for an addition or renovation to a residential garage in the Township. Michael Newark, the Municipality's Chief Building Officer said the number of building permits issued so far this year, compared to last year, is "unremarkable."

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