

CN provides historical dangerous goods data to Milton

By Michael Gregory
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A rail company shipping dangerous goods through Milton has started providing historical data to the Town and its fire chief in an effort to beef up emergency response efforts. In November, Transport Minister and Halton MP Lisa Raitt directed the Canadian National Railway Co. (CN), as well as Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) to begin sharing the cargo information annually with municipalities that request it. The *Champion* has learned that CN met with Town officials in February and provided data on the top 25 dangerous goods that were shipped through Milton in 2013. Milton Fire Chief Brian Ellsworth said the new information is "beneficial" and "adds to our database and helps us in engaging our emergency responses."

"The purpose is to give us information about the type of materials, and where possible, the quantities that traverse the train tracks throughout the town of Milton," said Ellsworth.

CN estimates approximately 10 per cent of its shipments across North America are considered dangerous goods — a classification assigned by the federal government.

Those types of materials include anything from crude oil to chlorine or fertilizers, and more than 60 per cent of the goods are considered flammable.

At the request of any municipality, CP and CN have agreed to provide local officials with the list of 25 most commonly transported goods through an area, ranked according to the volume commodity.

Jim Feeny, spokesperson for CN, said the company provides the information to assist in the training of emergency responders.

"We share information on dangerous commodities that pass through municipalities with the first responders and that's to ensure they know what they have to prepare for," Feeny said. "So that they know what kind of training that they need in order to be able to respond to an emergency."

Milton is part of the Halton Region Fire Mutual Aid Plan with neighbouring fire departments, whereby additional resources may be sought from other municipalities in the event of an incident.

The Town of Milton wouldn't comment on whether a list of the dangerous goods transported by CP had been requested from the company. It also wouldn't comment on the February meeting with CN because of a non-

disclosure agreement.

CP spokesperson Ed Greenberg said company officials have met with Milton's fire department within the past two years and is "ready to meet with local first responders for ongoing rail sessions to review preparedness."

"We try to meet on a regular basis with all the communities that operate through on our network," Greenberg said. "It's important to be in step with local first responders

because if there is an instance we feel it's invaluable to have the coordination so we can work together in addressing a situation."

The federal government's guidelines for more sharing of information was brought on by the derailment of a 74-car freight train in Lac-Mégantic, Que., which destroyed dozens of buildings and killed 47 people last summer.

"Before that we weren't getting a lot of information," Ellsworth said. "What it's go-



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