

**LOCAL REPS ATTEND
MAYORS' SUMMIT**

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FROM EUROPE**

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Wednesday, July 26, 2006

\$1.00 (GST included)

Whole Number 6196
Registration No. 08565

Volume 127 No. 30

Phone: 776-4268
Fax: 776-4014

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Warden: Council will address pay changes

BY SARAH FISHER

Essex County councilors voted July 20 to table a discussion on a plan for a new pay arrangement for County Council.

Paul Hertel, chairman of the Essex County Remuneration Review Committee, gave a brief presentation of his findings. Upon the request of council, a six-member committee of Essex County residents gathered information over six months' time about the pay rates of county councils across Ontario. The group has made 18 formal recommendations. The suggested changes include a reduction in the base salary of Warden Mike Raymond, an increase in the salary of Deputy Warden Bill Varga, and a cap on the amount councilors can be paid per year for attending meetings.

"We looked very clearly across Ontario and found internally in Essex County that the warden's responsibilities are onerous and very time consuming," Hertel said. "We have no doubt your warden works very hard and we appreciate that.... Although it isn't a full-time job, it really is a full-time job."

Information provided by the committee listed Raymond's base salary in

2005 as \$42,872.96. Raymond received \$3,840 in "meeting indemnities," \$1,043 in mileage reimbursements, \$7,480 to cover conference expenses and \$2,720 in conference per diem payments. Combined with out-of-town meeting expenses of \$6,481 in 2005, Raymond received \$64,417.83 last year.

During the meeting Raymond thanked the committee for the time they put into the review. Hertel said afterwards he was expecting discussion on the recommendations that night, but understood that council wanted time to think about the findings. Council requested a working session with members of the committee. Raymond permitted few comments before council moved on to the next item on the agenda. The working meeting will likely take place in September, Raymond said.

"What concerns me about the report is that you don't have some kind of annualized increase," Leamington Mayor John Adams said to Hertel about a consumer price index wage increase. "At the end of a three or four-year term you'll end up with a substantial increase."

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ROOTS AND ALL - Clarence Clement stands beside a tree uprooted in his backyard along County Road 34 during a storm July 18. Clement and his wife Mabel believe a small tornado may have caused the damage. "It sounded on the window like hail and then the wind came," Mabel Clement said.

Local insurance firm wins back-to-back national awards

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

For the second year in a row, Ives Insurance Brokers Ltd. has been ranked by Profit Magazine as one of Canada's top 200 fastest growing companies.

The firm, started in 1966 by Jerry Ives, came from "humble beginnings", said Ives' son and company president Jeff Ives.

"My father started the company basically on our kitchen table," Jeff said. "From there we moved into the garage and expanded that two or three times until 1995 when we built our office on Maidstone Avenue East in Essex."

In 2003, the Essex office doubled in size. The company also established branches in LaSalle, Leamington, Michigan and Ohio.

"Our staff has gone from starting out with two people to

now having 46 full-time employees," Ives said. "It's just been constant expansion and opportunities that we've been able to capitalize on and work with."

Ives said a number of the firm's clients put the company's name forward to Profit Magazine to be considered for the national award. The magazine then measured the brokerage's growth in customers, staff, and new locations from 2000 to 2005.

During those years, Ives said being in the insurance business was very difficult.

"We were fortunate enough to move along with that market and find solutions for our clients," he said.

For Ives and general manager Peter Grant, the success of the company always comes back to its staff.

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