



**TRAILS AND WALKWAYS**  
— Sadler's Park is intended as the start location for a trail in Essex that will run from Thomas Street to the industrial area of town. Essex town councillors talked with provincial ministers at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference Aug. 13-16 about several plans, including a trail system through the municipality.

## AMO CONFERENCE

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### HARROW HIGH SCHOOL

The group had also requested a meeting with Minister of Education Sandra Papatello to discuss the future of Harrow High School. Although the high school was saved from closure in November, Essex town administrators wanted to ensure the government was still committed to keeping small community schools, such as Harrow High, open.

Harrow High has around 300 students and was initially targeted by the school board for closure in June 2003. Miller said Papatello was unable to arrange a meeting, but made her parliamentary assistant, Ted McMeekin, available.

"Obviously they can't tell us forever and ever," Miller said about the school. "They're only in government for sure until next fall, but he did say that small schools will continue to be supported, especially if those schools support an entire community such as Harrow."

### ARENA PROJECT

The Essex representatives met with the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, David Caplan, to lobby for a new grant program. Caplan's ministry oversees the Canada Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund program. The group met with Caplan twice and asked that a separate grant program be established for municipalities seeking assistance to build new recreation facilities. While the town could technically request money for the Essex Arena Project through COMRIF, the money generally goes to water, sewer and roads projects, Miller said.

"We've spent \$25 million since amalgamation on water and sewer upgrades and none of that was grant money," Miller said. "We think the government should also have a program for recreation facilities. There are a lot of arenas that were built in the 50s and 60s and a lot of them need replacement."

Dufour said the proposed infrastructure project would benefit many municipalities. He said several representatives were looking for a way to acquire grant money for projects including arenas.

"The speaker asked for a show of hands in favour of the money going to recreation and three-quarters of the hands in the room went up," Dufour said, referring to a question from Nigel Bellchamber, the executive director of the Ontario Municipal Administrators Association. "... All of these arenas are getting old. There's a need in a lot of municipalities to build larger facilities or twin pads. I think it sent the message, 'Hey we should look at recreation.'"

The cost of building Essex's new arena, including a twin ice pad on the property behind Essex Memorial Arena, is estimated to be \$10 million. Architects have been hired and public forums will be scheduled for input on the design of the building.

Miller said Caplan was interested in the idea and said the government would consider the request. The group also spoke with Michael Chong, the federal minister of intergovernmental affairs. While Chong was not pessimistic about the development of a separate recreation fund, Miller said the provincial members appeared more interested in the idea.

### TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

The group's meeting with Jim Watson, the minister of health promo-

tion, was more of a "get to know you session," Miller said. The group was interested to see if the ministry might be a means to seek future support for the town's trails and walkways. There was no formal request for funding made during the meeting.

Essex currently does not have an established trail system, but the trails and walkways committee is working to change that. Plans are in the works to turn the abandoned railroad tracks at Sadler's Park into the start of a trail that will connect Thomas Street to South Talbot Road. The trail will also link to a new subdivision planned behind the town's industrial development.

Essex Parks and Recreation Director Doug Sweet says the Hanlan Street project also includes establishing a trail on one side of the street from Fairview Avenue to Victoria Avenue.

Sweet said the town has secured a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$87,000 for the trails project. It has also applied for a federal grant. Final word on that application has not been received.

"The master plan of the municipality is to develop trails and connect them through the county," Sweet said. "Through the (ChryslerCanada) Greenway we can do that."

### AMO

McDermott and Dufour attended the conference as representatives of Essex County Council. Caixeiro was the representative from Essex town council and Miller was asked to attend by the councillors. Timmins paid his own way to the conference, Miller said.

"Even if we weren't meeting with the ministers it was worth going," Miller said.

## Driver still hospitalized following North Talbot accident

A Lakeshore man remains at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Windsor following a single-car accident on North Talbot Road Aug. 25.

Essex Ontario Provincial Police released a report

about an accident involving 36-year-old William Johnson of Lakeshore on Friday morning.

The report states that at 12:54 a.m. Aug. 25 a Dodge Ram pick-up truck driven by

Johnson was traveling east-bound on North Talbot Road when the truck rolled into a ditch, hit a hydro pole and came to a rest on the driver's side. The collision reportedly split the hydro pole in two.

Johnson was freed from the truck by Lakeshore firefighters and taken to the hospital.

Const. Janet Hayes of the Essex OPP office stated Aug. 28 that Johnson had not been released from Hotel Dieu.

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