

**MORE ELECTION
CANDIDATES JOIN THE RACE**

Nomination deadline looms

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**THIS WEEK'S COMMUNITY
PROFILE:**

Citizen of the Year Ib Fynbo

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LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Tyler Brown named

2006 Late Model Rookie of the Year

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Essex awarded high honours by Communities In Bloom

BY FREE PRESS STAFF

OWEN SOUND — Essex came close to receiving the Communities in Bloom judges' highest possible honours Sept. 16, during the group's 12th annual Ontario Awards and Symposium in Owen Sound, Ont.

The town fell just 6 percentage points short of receiving a perfect score of 'five blooms,' in categories that include environmental awareness, floral displays and community involvement.

"I've always said from day one that we're looking to build a foundation and to improve and we've done that," said Doug Sweet, director of parks and recreation for the Town of Essex.

Sweet was involved in various aspects of preparing Essex for the arrival of judges Phil Vinet and Angela Vieth near the end of July.

Sweet and the local CIB group escorted the judges around the town for two days, visiting local landscaped areas, parks and murals.

Essex was awarded a 76 percent overall rating. The judges commended the town for its clean and litter-free parks, and for having no sign

of graffiti.

Among other categories, such as tidiness efforts, natural and cultural heritage conservation and turf and ground cover, the community scored 95 out of a possible 125 in the category of landscaped areas.

"Overall the community of Essex is beautifully landscaped," Vinet and Vieth wrote in the town's evaluation. "Residential yards were landscaped with pride and creativity."

Also mentioned were the downtown flowerbeds, which the judges said were appealing and complemented the existing streetscape nicely.

In total, representatives from 26 Ontario communities were present at the award show.

Although each community is judged based on the same scale, from one to five blooms, Sweet said it's hard to tell how other communities of Essex's size fared in the competition.

"The competition is how well each community does, not how they compare to other communities," he said. "By scoring four blooms, we know we're improved."



Free Press / Dan Schwab

SAYING HELLO —

Kiera Adams, 3, gets a friendly hello from Ay Caramba, a horse at Cidermill Farms Sept. 17. The site was one of seven agricultural spots chosen to be a part of the 13th annual Essex County Farm Hiker tour. For more on the tour, please turn to page 7.

Trustees to receive honorarium boost

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Trustees of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board will receive more than a 50 percent boost in annual honorariums after the Nov. 13 municipal elections, according to Superintendent of Business and Operations Services Peter Marchini.

Honorariums — money paid out to cover gas and meals — will be increased from \$5,000 per year to \$10,900 for the board's trustees serving in the four regions of Essex County and six wards in Windsor, Marchini said.

Trustees serving the Greater Essex County District School Board will receive \$12,000 annually, Marchini added. Trustees on both boards will also receive \$5,000 for professional development, mainly for "conferences out of town," he said.

Another change to the position this year is that trustees will serve a four-year term, instead of the traditional three years. Those vying for the positions have until Sept. 29 to file nomination papers.

So far, more than a few spots are without candidates in the Greater Essex County District School Board. Director

of Education Mary Jean Gallagher said waiting this late to file is not necessarily out of the ordinary.

"Often people wait," Gallagher said. "They are off during the summer taking things easier and they start to seriously consider things in September."

School board trustees are responsible for establishing policies within the context of provincial legislation and for holding school board staff accountable so the board functions successfully, Gallagher said. They also fulfill the role of being responsive to ratepayers and addressing the concerns of parents.

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