

Newcomers Innes, Rogers look forward to new council

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Ward 3 councillors Paul Innes and Ron Rogers say they are looking forward to tackling a number of issues as new members of Essex Town Council, including the implementation of proper development, a fiscally responsible arena decision and a resolution to the "north-south" rift in the municipality.

Innes, 57, and Rogers, 52, will be sworn in during council's inaugural meeting at Essex Town Hall Dec. 4.

Rogers says he'd like council to move toward bringing more light industry and commercial and residential development to the area.

"I'm hoping for a focus on development that's done with proper planning and control with the current residents in mind," said Rogers, a production manager for Sigma Engineering in Oldcastle.

Rogers spent three terms on the former Colchester

South council.

He said at this point, he is not in favour of building a new arena in Essex, but added that he is not completely opposed to a fiscally responsible plan.

"Now that I will be a decision maker on whatever the outcome is on that arena, I want to go first hand and see what the Memorial Arena has to offer right now," he said.

Innes shares a similar opinion.

"At this point, I'd like to see us do something significantly less expensive," Innes said of plans for a project exceeding \$12 million.

Innes admits he is still reviewing the engineer's report, but says part of the problem stems from neglecting maintenance to Memorial Arena.

"We took over something that was ignored by the former Town of Essex," Innes said. "If I was a player bringing other teams in to play there, I would be embarrassed."

Innes also said he considers it a personal responsibility to heal the "north-south" issue – a perceived rift between Essex and Harrow.

"I think the people of the south have not been represented properly," he said. "It's my job to do that."

Innes said he plans to put his name forward for the council's deputy mayor position, currently held by outgoing Ward 3 councillor Percy Dufour.

Ward 1 councillor Randy Voakes, who remained a staunch supporter of the Essex Arena Project throughout his recent election campaign, said he congratulates Tecumseh for bringing in the Ice Track, but said it's important to "grow our own infrastructure and community."

Voakes also said finding a resolution to the "north-south" issue is as important an issue as any council will face.

"Hopefully, collectively we'll be able to find a solution," he said.



Nineteen-year-old Jordan Collins competes in the Canadian Youth Talent Competition in Edmonton in mid-November. The Maidstone resident placed second for an improvised jazz drum solo.

Fun Fest talent show winner soars to second in national competition

BY FREE PRESS STAFF

Jordan Collins has a knack for impressing judges with his work behind a drum kit.

The 19-year-old Maidstone resident earned second place for an improvised jazz drum solo during the Canadian Youth Talent Competition in Edmonton last week.

In September, Collins won the Western Fair competition in London, Ont. In July, he won the Essex Fun Fest's Youth and Junior

Talent show.

"I was really surprised," Collins said of winning the runner-up prize in Edmonton. "Right before I went on I was really nervous...I'm usually like that right before. When I go on stage it mellows out."

The competition featured thousands of competitors, including dancers and singers between the ages of 13 and 21.

Placing second in the competition earned Collins \$2,000, which he will be investing into a new drum

kit.

The four-minute routine traced roots back to the 1930s era, similar to the styles of jazz greats Benny Goodman and Buddy Rich.

A 14-year veteran of the instrument, Collins also teaches students to play the drums.

He hopes to further his career by performing in wedding bands and is thinking of heading to Toronto to record material with an Edmonton-based group.

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Lakeshore Ward 3 Residents

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Charles W. McLean

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