

Plans for Highway 3 reviewed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sauve brought his concerns to a public information centre regarding highway construction held at the Essex Community Centre Feb. 15.

Project managers invited public input, which will be collected and used to tweak the detailed design if possible.

Sauve's suggestion, along with a number of others from area residents, will all be considered, project managers said.

Dozens of people turned out for the session and there were more questions than concerns, said Dennis Ryan, Ministry of Transportation senior project manager.

"People have been wait-

ing for this project for a long time," Ryan said.

When Essex MPP Bruce Crozier formally announced plans for the \$80-million, three-phase project in October, he said it was a plan he's been working towards since he took office in 1993.

The final phase is expected to be completed by 2014, and will mean Highway 3 will be widened to four lanes from Leamington to Windsor.

Phase one of the project is approximately 6.9 kilometres long, running just west of County Road 34 (Talbot Road) near Maidstone, easterly to just east of County Road 8 in Essex, Ryan said.

A preliminary cost estimate for phase one carries a price tag of about \$25 million, with a completion date set for Fall 2008.

Other public concerns brought forward during the session included the possibility of increased traffic and road closures.

"There shouldn't be a whole lot of impact on traffic," Ryan said. "Traffic will remain on the existing highway and the two new lanes will be built to the south of the existing highway. The highway won't recognize any impact of traffic but there will be some impact at the intersections when we do some work there."

Short term intersection closures are expected at Manning Road, County Road 8 and Ellis and Malden Side Roads.

Work in those areas will mostly be done during nights and weekends to minimize the traffic impact, Ryan said, adding that the plan is to close one inter-

section at a time.

Still, for county commuters like Judy Bertram, the widening of the highway will make for a smoother drive.

"I'm very pleased they are widening it," Bertram said. "I'm on it everyday working in south Windsor."

Phase two of the project is a 6.4-kilometre stretch west of Walker Road to County Road 34 near Maidstone.

The final and most expansive phase is also the longest. The 20.2-kilometre stretch will run eastward from County Road 8 in Essex to County Road 34 in Kingsville to connect with the Leamington Bypass.

There will be upgrades to the traffic lights at both County Road 8 and Manning Road.

There will be no changes to the 80/km speed limit.

Raiders enter playoffs in fighting form

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

So far, Miller says the season has been great. The performance of the team's junior players has surprised her and the veterans have been consistent and steady under pressure.

"It's been a really good group to coach," she said. "They're really dedicated and they work really hard."

Miller, a former EDHS volleyball star herself, says what sets the club apart from other teams in the league is their ability to keep the ball up.

"I think our strength is defense," she said. "We keep the ball alive and we frustrate entire teams. We have a strong offence as well, pretty much across the board. Our middles are strong but then if they're not playing well, our powers are playing strong."

For the Grade 11s, joining the senior team meant going from playing weaker teams last year in the 'A/AA' league to facing tougher competition in 'AAA/AAAA.'

Most Red Raiders sports teams were bumped up into the higher division because of an increase in enrollment this year.

But Miller admits that she wasn't nervous about coming into the league for bigger, better teams.

"I was confident that we were going to have a strong team," she said. "I would rather be in a stronger division because it makes you play better. Our players are better because of playing in this league. Did I know that we were going to be 31-2? Absolutely not. That's a pleasant surprise. But I definitely knew we were going to be contenders."

Three of the 'contenders' have been named WEC-SSAA 'AAA/AAAA' first and second team all-stars.

Grade 12 player Sam O'Neil and Grade 11 player Janelle Balkwill were named to the first team. Grade 12 player Jocelyn Cooper was named to the second team.

The all-star game will be played March 20 at Herman High School.

Erie St. Clair LHIN increasing community-based care in area

The Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) is increasing access to community health services in its service area for

patients who no longer need acute hospital care but instead need long-term or community-based care, Michael Hurry, acting vice

chair announced Feb. 16.

"We want people to receive appropriate care at home or in other community-based settings, so they are more comfortable and are closer to family and loved ones," said Hurry. "We're also creating more alternatives to acute care hospital beds, so hospitals can better use their acute care resources for patients who need them the most."

The Erie St. Clair LHIN has worked collaboratively with the provincial government to develop the local solutions announced today. These investments include:

- \$913,000 to increase home care and community support services
- \$154,300 to assign CCAC case managers to hospital emergency departments to assess and divert clients to more appropriate community services
- \$168,400 for a geriatric emergency management program to increase emer-

gency department nursing services for seniors with complex functional and/or psychological challenges

"We believe quality care for patients is best delivered with input from local health care partners," said Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman. "These innovative and collaborative partnerships will help local patients get the care they need that's appropriate and provide them with a higher level of comfort."

Hurry also announced allocations for the following investments under the government's Emergency Department Action Plan, announced last October:

- \$633,900 as part of the \$5.3-million investment to

address pressures in 10 communities experiencing the most serious long-term care and community care pressures. This funding is targeted towards CCAC crisis support, early discharge strategies, and Enhanced Community Wound Care Program.

Other steps the government has taken to improve access to community care and reduce pressures on hospitals in Erie St. Clair LHIN include:

- one new community health centre and one satellite centre
- 448 long term care beds scheduled to be developed
- 14 convalescent care beds announced in the last two years.

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