

Heritage Essex elects board for '07

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Despite a shortfall in bingo revenues for nearly all local organizations over the past year, annual financial statements for Heritage Essex presented during their general meeting last week showed the numbers were up in the last quarter of 2006.

Yearly fundraising through bingos was still down more than \$1,000 from 2005, but last year's closure of Windsor's Hollywood Bingo may have had more people frequenting the hall rented by Heritage Essex - Classic Bingo at Ottawa Street and Walker Road, said Mike

Cowan of BDO Dunwoody Accounting, who presented the auditor's report.

Although Cowan told the Heritage Essex board "to be very conscious of spending money" because of the suffering bingo industry, he ensured the members that they were still in a "comfortable" financial position.

"The next couple years will be difficult with the (struggling) economy, but you still have a cushion," Cowan told the group.

Heritage Essex president Bill Gay said the group has only 17 bingo dates per year and can rely on a number of other fundraisers throughout the year to generate revenue.

"We're not a big bingo player, but we're glad to have it," Gay said.

Gay praised such events as the Essex Citizen of the Year and the annual Model Train and Toy Show for their consistent success for the group.

"The train show is the biggest of its kind in southwestern Ontario," Gay said. "The fact that it's two days, people stay overnight and our motels and bed and breakfasts are booked and restaurants are busy."

One downtown restaurant even had to close its doors because it was filled to capacity with customers from out of town, Gay said.

"It creates a good economic spin-off," he added.

Gay said these types of events are made possible because of the group's large staff and operating budget.

"We operate on the largest budget of any heritage organization in the province," he said. "One of the reasons we are one of the biggest heritage organizations in the province is because we have a staff. Very few heritage organizations even have a building."

During the meeting, the group elected its new board for 2007.

Gay will continue as president, while Evelyn Burns will return as past president and Wilber Brett as vice president. Carol Pyne will serve as treasurer and Marlene Markham as secretary. Morley Bowman, Allan Halliday, Tony Malkowski, Vera Newman and Doug Canavan will serve as directors.

Second phase of Hwy 401 improvements completed

Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Lawrence Cannon, along with Ontario Transportation Minister Donna Cansfield, announced March 9 the completion of phase two of the widening of Highway 401 from Windsor to Tilbury.

"This multi-phase project will improve traffic flow and safety on this important stretch of Highway 401, which leads to Canada's busiest commercial border crossing," said Minister Cannon. "The completion of phase two of this project is another example of governments working together to achieve results for Canadians."

"The McGuinty government is committed to improving Ontario's infrastructure through record investments in our highways and public transit systems," said Minister Cansfield. "Improvements to this area of Highway 401 will keep our people and goods moving and our economy strong."

Both governments are investing more than \$310 million to improve 46 kilometres of Highway 401 between Windsor and Tilbury. The first and second phases of this project are now complete.

Phase one of the Highway 401 Windsor to Tilbury project was completed in December 2005, and involved widening and improving Highway 401 between Essex Road 42 and Highway 77. Drivers have already benefited from improved safety and traffic flow on this important stretch of highway with the additional lanes, a concrete median barrier and improved signage.

The second phase of this project, which included improvements to Highway 401 from Puce Road to

Manning Road, was completed on November 27, 2006. Investments included widening Highway 401 from four to six lanes, improving both Manning Road and Puce Road interchanges to increase safety and traffic flow, as well as installing a concrete median barrier to enhance safety.

The third phase, which commenced construction in spring 2006 and is expected to be complete by fall 2007, involves improvements between Highway 77 and Essex Road 27, such as:

- widening Highway 401 from four to six lanes;
- installing a concrete median barrier;
- replacing the St. Joachim Road (French Line Road) bridge and rehabilitating and widening the Ruscom River bridge;
- rehabilitating the Rochester Townline Road and 3rd Concession Road underpass structures;
- upgrading highway signs; and
- upgrading the Windsor South Truck Inspection Station to a commercial vehicle inspection facility.

The first three phases of this project are funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario under the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program. Under the program, both governments are investing more than \$460 million in highway improvement projects across the province.

Through the Border Infrastructure Fund, the federal and provincial governments are undertaking the detailed design and construction of the fourth section of Highway 401 from Highway 3 to Manning Road as part of the Let's Get Moving strategy. Construction of this fourth phase is expected to begin in spring 2008.



Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program 5% Down-Payment Assistance

The Federal and Provincial governments have partnered to fund an interest free down-payment assistance program for households in Windsor and Essex County.

The Homeownership program provides 5% down-payment assistance up to a maximum of \$8,000.00 to assist households in purchasing affordable homes.

In order to be eligible for consideration for this Homeownership program, applicants must be renting, be at least 18 years old, a Canadian Citizen or Landed Immigrant under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act Canada, have a combined total annual gross household income at or below \$61,400.00 and a combined total maximum household asset level at or below \$20,000.00. [Asset level does not include: primary form of transportation (car/van), furnishings, RRSP or RESP.] The home must be modest in size, with a purchase price at or below \$160,000.00.

Homeownership Preliminary Application forms for this program can be obtained **on or after Tuesday, March 6, 2007** by:

- ➔ email (on-line) through the City of Windsor website: www.citywindsor.ca
- ➔ mail, call 311 or 519 255-5200 extension 5470 - leave your, telephone number, name, address and postal code and an application will be mailed out to you, or
- ➔ picking up an application at one of the following municipal offices or agencies throughout Windsor/Essex County:
 - Amherstburg Municipal Office, 271 Sandwich St South
 - Essex Main Office, 33 Talbot St South
 - Kingsville Municipal Office, 2021 Division Rd North
 - Lakeshore Municipal Office, 419 Notre Dame, Belle River
 - Lakeshore Community Services, 571 Unit B, Notre Dame, Belle River
 - Leamington Civic Centre, 38 Erie St North
 - Tecumseh Municipal Office 917 Lesperance Rd
 - City of Windsor, City Hall 1st Floor Reception 350 City Hall Square West
 - Customer Care Centres:
 - College Ave Community Complex 3325 College Ave
 - Forest Glade Community Complex 3215 Forest Glade Dr
 - Optimist Community Centre 1075 Ypres
 - Gino Marcus Community Centre 1168 Drouillard Rd
 - South Windsor Recreation Complex 2555 Pulford
 - Habitat for Humanity, 3064 Devon Rd, Windsor ON
 - Housing Information Services, Windsor ON 3540 Ypres, Suite 200

In order to be eligible for consideration for the Homeownership program, completed preliminary application forms with all required attachments must be received on or before Thursday, April 5, 2007. Late submissions may not be considered. The completed application with required documents may be mailed or dropped off to:

**City of Windsor, City Hall, 1st Floor Reception
350 City Hall Square West,
Windsor, ON N9A 6S1
Attn: Housing Services, Program Development Officer**

Applicants will be notified by mail as to whether or not they have met the eligibility criteria to be considered for the Homeownership program. In order to continue to be eligible, applicants will be required to attend a mandatory information session at a later date.

If you have any questions regarding this program, contact Kathy Sasso, Program Development Officer, Housing Services at (519) 255-5200 extension 5470 or call 311, Windsor City Services.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Praise for free swim

On Sunday, March 4, my husband and I had the pleasure of taking our family to the Essex pool for a free swim, courtesy of the Essex Optimists Club. The kids had a great time going on the water slide and my husband and I relaxed in the hot tub - all for free! We have been to many of the events this wonderful organization puts on, including their recent Basketball Tri-Star. Although none of my kids won any trophies, they had a lot of fun and everyone had free pizza and pop after the event - all courtesy of the Optimists!

A couple of the Optimists were at the pool on Sunday, welcoming everyone that came in the door saying, "Go ahead, swimming is on the Essex Optimists today!" Everyone was smiling back and thanking them for footing the bill!

On behalf of my husband and myself, I'd just like to thank the Essex Optimist Club for such a fun afternoon. I'm sure it was enjoyed by all that were there!

*N & R Skinner
Essex*

