

Three-way showdown heats up

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"I'm working hard and governing, not campaigning," said Watson, adding that he does plan on throwing his name into the ring when the time comes. And, as the local Conservative Riding Association was busy moving into its new office on Talbot Street last week, the Watson camp's pre-campaigning strategies may not be too far off.

The Essex MP received 23,125 votes in the January 2006 election, 3,600 more than Whelan and about 10,000 more than Natyshak.

He cited his government's commitment to developing cleaner fuels and its investments in provincial infrastructure, including a \$400-million Windsor-Detroit border crossing, as a few of the highlights he's seen since being re-elected to a parliamentary office.

Watson said the federal government's announcement in January to create the eManifest program, which works to ensure that all cargo information is received electronically from importers before crossing the border, will improve the flow of traffic and trade between Canada and the United States.

It's what the troubled automotive industry needs, he said.

"We've gotten results for the Canadian automotive industry," he said. "The number one priority for them is infrastructure – an international border crossing – and we've laid down plans for that." But Natyshak said the



Taras Natyshak holds daughter Airika at his campaign headquarters during a visit from NDP Leader Jack Layton during the lead-up to last year's federal election. Natyshak received the local NDP nomination at a meeting held March 24.

manufacturing industry has still been devastated by NAFTA, calling Watson "voiceless and ineffective."

"We're seeing disastrous job losses," Natyshak said. "It's time to implement strategies, such as the Auto Pact, which kept our number one economic drive going. I'm sick and tired of hearing about my friends and neighbours losing their jobs and economic security."

The Canada-United States Automotive Agreement or "Auto Pact", helped increase production in the Canadian industry, creating thousands of new jobs before a World Trade Organization declared it illegal and it was abolished in 2001.

"The issue now is jobs, jobs, jobs," Natyshak said.

Three weeks after he became the federal NDP candidate during the local riding association's "most successful nomination

meeting in history," Natyshak says he is very soon planning to meet with constituents.

With the experience of last year's campaign under his belt, the Essex resident said this time around he feels more confident about his chances.

"I have a vision, a ton of energy and a clear message," Natyshak said. "Running in the last election was one of the biggest learning experiences in my life. I've leaned to listen a lot closer to what people's needs and desires are."

With the local Liberal Riding Association's nomination meeting scheduled for later this month, Whelan said she is "absolutely running" in an upcoming election campaign.

"I'm putting my name forward because there isn't any greater opportunity than working for the people of Essex County and being able to get my message

across," she said.

Her message includes new ideas to create a healthy environment and improved health care system, "starting with child-care and seniors."

Whelan is also advocating the formation of portable pensions, to protect retirees from the risks created by failing companies.

"We know Canadians will continue to change jobs and pensions should be portable with different options," she said.

Since the January 2006 campaign, Whelan said she is "better rounded" with a greater understanding of the business world.

"The Canadian government is too slow in being proactive to industry," she said. "Windsor-Essex has always been a microcosm of what Canada is. It's really important to have direc-

Heated bridge prevents safety hazards

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Essex County Council applauded plans to replace the Cedar Creek bridge with an innovative geothermally heated deck.

The current bridge structure, which sits on County Road 23 bordering the municipalities of Essex and Kingsville, was considered for replacement because of an advanced state of deterioration, said County Engineer Tom Bateman at the council meeting April 4.

In 2005, a load limit was placed on the bridge and last year an environmental assessment and preliminary

designs were approved. Construction on the replacement structure is scheduled to begin July 2, with a completion date set for the end of summer.

The geothermal design, proposed by the Becker Engineering Group, is a snowmelt concept that will use a ground source heat recovery system, ensuring the bridge deck remains at a consistent temperature of 40 degrees.

Ideally, the system will keep ice and snow from accumulating on the surface of the bridge, Bateman said.

The County was awarded funding for the project

through the Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund earlier this year.

The price of the new bridge is \$1.28 million.

Tecumseh Mayor Gary McNamara said the project is a "great opportunity to showcase what we're doing here in the county."

McNamara suggested the new bridge be submitted for recognition to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Fund.

"I think this project fits two-fold, number one, obviously on the environment and the energy that we can utilize is pretty unique,"

McNamara said.

Councillors raised concerns about the chance of the heating pipes freezing and splitting during the cold winter months.

A Becker Engineering Group representative told them that an environmentally friendly bio-solution would be used in the pipes that will prevent freezing in any Essex County temperature.

Other concerns about the cost of daily maintenance on the system were also addressed. The cost is estimated to be somewhere in the order of \$30 per day.

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