



# SEGUIN TOWNSHIP

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## SPRING 2005 NEWSLETTER

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### Message From Reeve David Conn

I'm pleased to provide a brief report on progress regarding Seguin Township's major 2004 initiatives as well as outline our key objectives for 2005.

Improving financial planning and control was a key focus in 2004. Council and I are really pleased with the results which are reported in more detail below. In summary, we generated an operating surplus in 2004, a complete turnaround from the 2003 deficit your Council inherited when they took office. Thanks to excellent budget control by Staff, a major contributing factor to the surplus was a decline in operating spending for the first time in the past 5 years. Further, we never would have achieved this financial progress without the incredible contribution of our Finance Committee under the leadership of Bruce Gibbon.

As a result of our strong 2004 financial performance, the 16% increase in tax dollars predicted for 2005 can now be reduced to an increase in the 10% range. Council and I recognize that this is still a large increase but it is certainly an improvement from what we warned you to expect.

Council and I are also pleased with the progress achieved in 2004 on our two major planning initiatives—the Official Plan and the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan can be found on our website or call the Township Office for a copy. These are absolutely essential tools for the governance of your Township. We encourage everybody to provide input to both of these plans which will be finalized in 2005.

On the economic development front, we are pursuing several developments. In reality, all of these projects are “long shots” but we are hopeful that at least one has a reasonable chance to become a reality in 2005.

The project to revitalize the Rosseau Waterfront and provide basic renovations to the Rosseau Memorial Hall is on track. Both of these projects are significantly funded by Provincial and Federal government grants. Other major activities during the year included: the preparation of Community Development Plans by all Departments establishing priorities linked to the Strategic Plan; all staff took customer service training; a vehicle rationalization study was completed and acted upon; an updated Emergency Service Plan was developed; resolution of a long-standing issue involving the Township, the First Nations and Indian Affairs concerning the Rose Point Bridge; development of a first ever 5 year capital spending plan; and resolution of many outstanding land issues.

In summary, 2004 has been a busy and productive year. All of the progress achieved has been the result of strong teamwork among Council, Staff, and Citizens' Committees. We will continue this teamwork approach in 2005 as we focus on the major priorities of: continued effective and efficient financial management; the completion of the Official and Strategic Plans; the completion of the Rosseau Project and the pursuit of economic development opportunities.

**DON'T FORGET TO KEEP UP WITH NEWS AND EVENTS IN SEGUIN TOWNSHIP  
BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE AT [www.twp.seguin.on.ca](http://www.twp.seguin.on.ca) !**

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - BRUCE GIBBON, CHAIR**

Past newsletters have outlined the very difficult financial position the Township found itself in at the end of 2003. Early in 2004 Council accepted a 3 year recovery plan to address our financial issues that was based on strict spending controls and increased tax revenue over the three year term of Council.

We are now into year two of the plan and are pleased to report that the Township exceeded the goals for 2004 with revenues higher than anticipated and expenses lower than planned. As a result the Township achieved a budgetary surplus estimated to be approximately \$600,000. This is great news that will help reduce the projected increase in taxation for 2005.

A preliminary budget for 2005 / 2006 has been completed and approved in principle by Council, subject to 2004 audited results and finalization of 2005 budgets from external organizations for whom the Township collects taxes. Key elements of the budget include operating and capital expenses below the three-year plan levels, a 5 year capital spending and funding forecast, increased revenues from Building Permit fees and a reduced capital debt requirement. The Finance Committee once again evaluated a number of options for 2005 and has recommended a continuation of the "tax and debt" strategy adopted last year to smooth out required taxation increases. The 2005 recommendation is based on capital debt of \$500,000, down substantially from the planned level of \$1,500,000. The all-important bottom line for ratepayers is a still substantial 9.9% increase in taxation for 2005 but well below the projected 16% increase. Most importantly, we are on track to achieve the goal of "inflation level" (2%) tax increases for 2006 and beyond.

While the 2005 budget is necessarily constrained there are opportunities to improve the plan and these will be pursued vigorously over the remainder of the year. In addition Council has also accepted a recommendation to implement performance measurements for all major operating departments in 2005 through "benchmarking" of our operations against similar municipalities. Benchmarking will allow us to accurately measure our current operating efficiencies and identify opportunities for improvements. The benchmarking results and opportunities combined with implementation of our new Strategic Plan and supporting Community Development Plans will provide a great foundation for a drive to "Operational Excellence" in future years.

2005 will be another challenging year financially for the Township but we are confident that we have a solid recovery plan, and, our plan is working. If we execute successfully once again this year we can look forward to being back on a solid financial footing in 2006.

## **OFFICIAL PLAN STATUS**

We are nearing completion of the New Official Plan for the Township of Seguin. During the late Summer and early Fall a series of four well-attended Workshops took place to obtain input from Seguin Ratepayers. The four Discussion Papers resulting from the work of the Official Plan Committee and the workshops are now available on the Township website.

In addition, a detailed survey for the New Official Plan was mailed to 5,234 property owners in the Township. We received a very high response rate of 32% which provided valuable input in a broad range of items from water quality to land development.

The overall theme of the responses centered around a strong desire to preserve the natural environment of the Township. For example 92% of the respondents would prefer to see a natural shoreline rather than a developed shoreline.

The information obtained from the Workshops and the survey will be utilized by Meridian Planning Consultants Inc. to develop a draft New Official Plan for the Township of Seguin. The public will have further opportunity for input into the draft plan during a community meeting to be held in the Spring of 2005.

## **ROSSEAU WATERFRONT UPDATE**

Work has begun on a major rehabilitation of the Waterfront. This work will be done in two phases, with the first phase providing new floating docks and a new beach area. Phase One is scheduled to be completed by June 15, 2005. We are working with the contractor, Fowler Construction, to ensure that there will be the ability to launch your boat on the May 24<sup>th</sup> weekend but we are anticipating that vehicle parking may be very limited.

Phase two of the project will be going to tender in February 2005 with completion in November, 2005. Phase two will consist of a redesigned Waterfront Park with picnic areas and walkways. There will be new parking areas, roadways and landscaping features.

## **ROSSEAU MEMORIAL HALL**

The Rosseau Memorial Hall received a new roof in 2004. A new propane boiler was also installed in January of this year with expected savings and efficiencies for years to come. Other upgrades being discussed for 2005 include drainage works around the building, new windows, masonry work on the exterior brick and a new water feed.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

The successful and popular Township of Seguin Swim Program will once again be offered this year at the Foley Matheson and Rosseau Beaches. The tentative dates for the program are July 4<sup>th</sup> to July 22<sup>nd</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup> to August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Come out and enjoy our beautiful beaches. Watch the Seguin Website for registration information.

Summer Ice! The Humphrey Arena is offering summer ice rentals again this year. For ice rental information please call Gord Brown at the Humphrey Arena - 732-4313.

## **SEGUIN PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD**

The Township of Seguin Public Library Board currently has two vacancies on the Board. Meetings are held once a month except for July and August. Interested ratepayers should apply including your background information by letter, fax, or email to the Township Office by March 31, 2005.

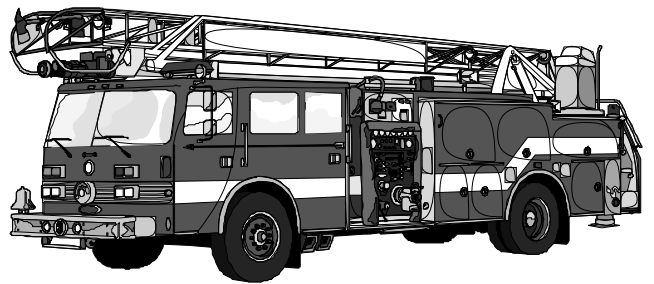
## **WEST PARRY SOUND MUSEUM**

From May 21<sup>st</sup> - December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005 the feature exhibition at the West Parry Sound Museum in Parry Sound will be "The Avro Arrow: A Dream Denied" This exhibit will trace Canada's aviation dream from inception to destruction. The 2005 summer exhibits are: "Connecting: Park to Park Art Show" running from June 24<sup>th</sup> - July 24<sup>th</sup> and "Impressions of the Massasauga Provincial Park" running from July 29<sup>th</sup> - October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

## **SAVE ON YOUR INSURANCE PREMIUMS**

Seguin Fire Services completed a Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) in September 2003. This is a comprehensive study of Fire Department operations, equipment and staffing. Insurance Underwriters use the FUS findings to determine fire premiums for their clients. During the study Seguin Fire Services completed an operational water shuttle test. The Fire Department was able to move a large enough quantity of water to place us in the top 10% of Fire Departments province wide.

This Water Shuttle Accreditation provides township property owners with a possible insurance reduction depending on your proximity to a Fire Hall. The Fire Department recommends that property owners contact their insurance company to make sure that the appropriate savings are being applied to their premiums. The Shuttle Certificate can be downloaded from the Seguin web site [www.twp.seguin.on.ca](http://www.twp.seguin.on.ca) or a paper copy can be requested from the Township Office.



## **OPEN WATER BUBBLERS**

The Ontario Provincial Police would like to remind everyone who has a bubbler operational at their dock or boathouse that they have a legal duty to guard it in a manner that is adequate to prevent persons from falling in by accident and they must also provide adequate warning to indicate that open water exists (Sec. 263 Martin's Criminal Code, 1998).

Failure to provide appropriate notice could result in criminal charges as well as civil action if bodily harm occurs.

## **WASTE & RECYCLING UPDATE**

2004 was a busy year for the Waste Department. Our Waste Coordinator Bob McKeown has been successful in increasing efficiencies in the system and improving the waste disposal and recycling programs. A new transfer site was built at the Airport in the fall of 2004 with the closure of the Islandview site. The new site offers more containers and easier turning movements for vehicles. System improvements planned for 2005 include fencing at some of the transfer sites, camera upgrades and improved signage.

The Township is also working towards a provincially legislated goal of 60% diversion by 2008. We currently have a 23% diversion rate. To help with our efforts please remember the following:

- FLATTEN CARDBOARD and RECYCLE MORE

- NO CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS OR BULKY GOODS PUT INTO BINS

The 'Free Waste Pass' program has been eliminated commencing 2005 however we continue to offer disposal opportunities at the Christie Landfill Site for your bulky goods. For further information on Waste and Recycling issues please see our web site or contact Bob McKeown at 705-732-4300.

Please remember - Close the bin doors and DO NOT FEED THE BEARS!

## **RURAL ECONOMY STUDY**

The Township of Seguin is participating in a study regarding increased communication through the web. This project involves studying internet users and how their use connects them to other people in their own community and elsewhere.

Please respond to the questionnaire found on the web at [www.websurvey.laurentian.ca](http://www.websurvey.laurentian.ca) until April 30, 2005. Watch the Township Website for further information. Your participation is appreciated.

## **SEGUIN TOWNSHIP COUNCIL - Contact Information**

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**Ward 1** - Councillor Bill Jameson  
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**Ward 2** - Councillor Doug Graham  
22 Rose Point Rd., General Delivery  
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**Ward 3** - Councillor Lorne Campbell  
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**Ward 5** - Councillor Everett Jacklin  
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**Ward 6** - Councillor James Swift  
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