



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

## Briefing/Speaking Note

### Provincial-Municipal Roads/Bridges Review

ROMA/OGRA 2009

## **Issues:**

The *Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review* resulted in an agreement to launch a joint provincial-municipal process to develop options regarding responsibilities and funding arrangements for roads and bridges. This review is essential to any decision-making before any potential changes in funding or responsibilities can be made.

The *Fiscal Review* determined that the condition of roads and bridges is a major concern for municipalities for good reason. In the 1990s previous provincial governments downloaded 5,000 kilometers of highway and related bridges to municipalities. Members of the EOWC received **40%** of all downloaded highways.

The *Fiscal Review* also noted that it will take \$6 billion annually over the next 10 years to close the existing gap in infrastructure funding. Roads and bridges accounted for \$2.8 billion a year or nearly one-half of the annual gap. Moreover “...*there are limited means of funding this need. In communities of low population density, investment needs are very high on a per-household basis*”.

The second issue involves the refurbishment of service centers along Highway #401 in the EOWC region. The closure of many of these centers without firm plans for redevelopment, particularly during these difficult times is going to severely affect people who depend upon this employment and the people who visit our region who depend on this service.

## **Action Requested**

The EOWC is once again calling on the Minister of Finance and the Government to consider sustained investments in our rural roads and bridge systems. As part of a provincial fiscal stimulus package we believe the time is right for further investments.

Second the EOWC wishes to offer its support and participation in the joint review as required under the *Fiscal and Service Delivery Agreement*. We believe that we have both the interest and the expertise to help move this vitally important endeavour forward.

With regard to the service centers we would appreciate an update from Minister Bradley regarding the closure schedules and ask that he consider the current economic situation and the affect a closure at this time will have on the local employees.