



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2007

Eastern Wardens Kick-Start 2007

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) has selected Warden J. Douglas Struthers of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville as Chair and Warden Clayton McEwen of the County of Lennox and Addington as Vice-Chair for 2007. The elections took place at a meeting of the Caucus held in Kingston on January 18th and 19th.

The EOWC represents thirteen counties stretching eastward from Haliburton County and the municipality of Kawartha Lakes to the United Counties of Prescott and Russell and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. The Caucus meets regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern and to represent constituents as a strong and unified municipal voice when dealing with the Federal and Provincial governments.

In accepting his nomination, Warden Struthers committed to continuing the advocacy role that has been established by the EOWC with the various levels of government. "As Chair, I am determined to ensure continuity as the EOWC proactively engages our federal and provincial counterparts. We have caught their attention and must persist in our efforts to get the Eastern Ontario message to all of them."

At its January meeting the EOWC met with provincial government representatives including the Hon. John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Hon. Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. During the meeting the EOWC pressed for:

- A new payment-in lieu program for Crown lands
- Action to reduce education tax rates on commercial and industrial properties
- Creation of an Eastern Ontario Economic Prosperity Fund
- A share of Provincial gasoline tax revenues to be made available to municipalities without mass transit systems, in order to fund roads and bridges and
- An amendment to the Assessment Act to ensure that permanently located trailers are fully assessed for property taxation.

These recommendations were also addressed by EOWC representatives with Provincial Treasurer, the Hon. Greg Sorbara, during consultations held on January 16, 2007 in Trenton.

Warden McEwen stated, "I am glad once again to be working with my EOWC colleagues. Together we are able to present a united front and through effective data and information make a sound case for all of our municipalities."

Both Warden Struthers and Warden McEwen indicated that 2007 is a very important year for EOWC with a provincial election in early October and the possibility of a federal election anytime. "It is vital that our Caucus delivers unified messages on behalf of residents to all parties seeking election this year."

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