



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

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NEWS RELEASE

EOWC elects new Chair and sets 2017 Priorities

Kingston, January 9, 2017 – The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC), at its annual inaugural meeting held in Kingston on January 5 and 6, 2017, elected Mayor Robert Quaiff of Prince Edward County as the EOWC 2017 Chair.

Lanark County Warden Bill Dobson, also Reeve of the Township of Montague, was elected by the membership as the 2017 EOWC Vice-Chair. The role of the Chair and Vice-Chair, elected on an annual basis, is to provide the main point of focus and contact for the Caucus and ensure that the established key priorities move forward.

2017 PRIORITIES

Three sets of key priorities were established for the Caucus in the coming year:

- 1. *Improving our Infrastructure & Connectivity:*** *The EOWC will continue to work with the Eastern Ontario Regional Network on the improvement of cellular networks in order to ensure mobile broadband services and increased public safety across rural Eastern Ontario's many communities, and work with the Province of Ontario to advocate for the \$3.7 billion in new provincial investments for municipal infrastructure.*
- 2. *Growing our Regional Economy:*** *The EOWC will continue to push for the expansion of natural gas to rural businesses, farms and communities as per its partnership with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA); additional distribution capacity for hydroelectricity and a solution to increasing hydro costs; the continued implementation of the region's economic development strategy, through the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council; and key projects such as the Picton Terminals expansion and the Marmora Pump Storage project.*
- 3. *Reducing Operational Costs:*** *The EOWC will continue to advocate for a solution to policing costs and a modernization of the current policing system, as well as provincial solutions to the legislative issues of joint and several liability and the interest arbitration system.*

QUOTES

“Like my colleagues and the many Wardens before me, I am honoured to chair the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus in 2017 and to advocate for this year’s priorities in support of the 750,000 property taxpayers across rural Eastern Ontario,” stated EOWC Chair Robert Quaiff, who has served as a member of the EOWC since 2015.

“The EOWC remains concerned about the increasing costs of certain services in the region, particularly when we think about our residents and businesses and their ability to pay. This includes everything from infrastructure to hydroelectricity and cellular network improvements to natural gas expansion, and the EOWC will continue to work with its partners at the provincial and federal government levels for regulatory changes and cost relief across all sectors – as it has done successfully in the past,” continued Quaiff.

“As a previous member of the EOWC, I am confident that this group will continue to extensively research the issues that affect rural Eastern Ontario. It will then be our objective to use those facts to lobby our partners for positive changes and new ideas that will ultimately improve service delivery as well as bring growth and new economic development opportunities in our municipalities,” added EOWC Vice-Chair Bill Dobson.

“The EOWC will also continue working with its partners in the Eastern Ontario Mayors’ Caucus and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to advocate for legislative solutions that will reduce operational costs for municipalities. By working to alleviate the financial burden on the municipal sector, the EOWC aims to improve the conditions for growth and economic development,” noted Warden Gary J. Barton of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

- 30 -

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