



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **EOWC elects new Chair and sets 2016 Priorities**

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The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC), at its annual inaugural meeting held in Kingston on January 14 and 15, 2016, elected Warden Peter Emon of the County of Renfrew as the 2016 Chair. Peterborough County Warden J. Murray Jones was also elected as 2016 Vice-Chair, for a second consecutive year.

Chair Emon is Reeve of the Town of Renfrew while Vice-Chair Jones is Mayor of the Township of Douro-Dummer. By virtue of his election, Chair Emon will also represent the EOWC at board meetings of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

Under the leadership of Chair Emon and Vice-Chair Jones, the 13 members of the EOWC set their five key priorities for the coming year:

- 1. Convincing the Province, Hydro One and the major natural gas providers to urgently invest in the region's hydroelectricity and natural gas transmission systems, to provide major industrial and commercial customers with affordable expansion opportunities and greater relief in operational costs. This will allow for the creation of new jobs as well as safeguarding many others that are presently at risk, due to the lack of availability and exorbitant costs.*
- 2. Working in tandem with the Eastern Ontario Regional Network to close the cellular network and mobile broadband gaps that exist in many rural Eastern Ontario communities. This is an essential service that has become indispensable for economic development, emergency services and home-based businesses.*
- 3. Continuing research and advocacy on the Province's consideration for "growth planning for eastern Ontario." The EOWC has concerns on any proposal that would limit growth and economic development opportunities in rural Eastern Ontario, particularly as numerous development controls already exist in the region and most townships bordering the City of Ottawa experience little growth.*

4. *Supporting the Leadership Council as it begins the implementation of key actions proposed in the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Strategy. This council, formed in September 2015, is a financial partnership between the EOWC, the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Committee, the Eastern Ontario Regional Network, and the Ontario East Economic Development Commission.*
5. *Advocating at the provincial level for an across-the-board decrease in Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) costs, namely by eliminating inefficiencies in service delivery, finding cost savings through the modernization of policing services, and using available technology to gather evidence for court and defence procedures.*

## QUOTES

“Like my colleagues and the many Wardens before me, I am honoured to chair the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus in 2016 and help implement this year’s priorities in support of the 750,000 property taxpayers across rural Eastern Ontario. As always, the EOWC will continue to extensively research the issues that affect our region and use those facts to advocate for positive changes and generate new ideas that will ultimately improve service delivery in our municipalities,” stated EOWC Chair Peter Emon.

“One of our major concerns this year is the proposed growth-planning exercise for Eastern Ontario – which, if implemented for the wrong reasons, could negatively impact the growth potential and economic development opportunities in many of our small and rural townships. By the same token, the EOWC will continue to lobby for regulatory changes and cost relief in the energy sector – both hydroelectricity and natural gas – as the current system has left the region at a standstill in terms of expansion and growth.”

“The EOWC will continue to monitor the escalating cost of policing, and will work with the Eastern Ontario Mayors’ Committee (EOMC) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to find solutions that will reduce the burden to local taxpayers of providing emergency services,” added EOWC Vice-Chair J. Murray Jones. “We also look forward to working with the Eastern Ontario Regional Network as well as our federal and provincial partners to close the cellular gaps that exist in many of our communities.”

“Municipalities across the region continue to face significant financial shortfalls, and one of the most important things that the EOWC can do to alleviate that burden is by improving the conditions for growth and economic development,” concluded Emon.

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