



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

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Thursday September 28th



REVITALIZING COUNTY WEBSITES: PAVING THE DIGITAL PATH FOR ACCESSIBILITY, SECURITY, AND INNOVATION

The County's websites need upgrades for accessibility, security, and new program interfaces. A delay occurred due to unforeseen challenges, but it's time to re-engage to meet the modern needs of our communities and residents alike.

The Economic Development Department secured \$50,000 in funding through the Ministry of Economic Development's Rural Economic Development Program (RED) to support the redevelopment of the County's sites by the end of 2024.

County Council approved staff's recommendation to utilize Sandbox Software Solutions, who has the necessary expertise and familiarity with County operations.



DRIVING EXCELLENCE: ELGIN COUNTY'S AMBULANCE FLEET RENEWAL STRATEGY



Elgin County currently has a fleet of twelve (12) ambulances and two (2) emergency response vehicles. Every six (6) years, this fleet is refreshed by purchasing two (2) new ambulances each year.

Currently, there are only two (2) manufacturers that are certified for Type 3 ambulances in Ontario - Crestline Coach and Demers Ambulance. Since Demers acquired Crestline, staff recommend that the County purchase from Crestline for the next two (2) years. County Council approved the purchase of two (2) ambulances from Crestline in 2023 and again in 2024 and the disposal of two (2) surplus ambulances each year.

ENERGIZING ELGIN: POWERING UP THE POA COURTHOUSE AND EMS HEADQUARTERS WITH NATURAL GAS GENERATORS

As part of the 2023 Capital Budget, the County issued tenders for the supply of labour, equipment, and materials for new Natural Gas Standby Power Generators at the Provincial Offences Administration (POA) Courthouse and Elgin-St. Thomas EMS Headquarters on Edward Street, in accordance with the Procurement Policy.

Clark-Haasen Electric submitted the lowest compliant bid and was subsequently approved by Elgin County Council to complete the installation at a total cost of \$258,300.00, excluding H.S.T.



FOSTERING BUSINESS EXCELLENCE: EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS IN ELGIN COUNTY AND ST. THOMAS



The Elgin Business Resource Centre (EBRC) hosts an annual business plan contest called "The Pitch" for local businesses in Elgin County and St. Thomas. The competition awards a grand prize package, and the EBRC is seeking sponsors to help support the prize. On January 24, 2024, "The Pitch" will return for its eighth annual event. The EBRC is looking for sponsors to support the prize package. Previously, Elgin County Economic Development contributed \$1,000 towards the prize package. This year, the EBRC aims to raise \$35,000 (\$25,000 cash and \$10,000 in-kind) for the prize package. County Council approved sponsoring "The Pitch" with \$1,000.

The Elgin- St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC), which offers programs to small businesses in the region with valuable support, resources, business counseling, loans, and youth-focused, recently launched the Young Entrepreneurs Initiative (YEI). YEI a dynamic group that focuses on supporting and connecting entrepreneurs under 40 in Elgin and St. Thomas. To continue building momentum for this group, SBEC is seeking a small number of sponsors at \$1,000 to support the group for the entire year. County Council approved sponsoring the Young Entrepreneurs Initiative with \$1,000.

CHARTING A PATH TO A STRONGER COMMUNITY: ST. THOMAS-ELGIN SOCIAL SERVICES' VISION FOR 2023 AND BEYOND

Elgin County Council received an update from representatives from the St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services with information on their services for 2023 and beyond. They focused on three areas: Ontario Works, Housing Stability Services, and Children's Services.

Joanne Weber, the Manager of Ontario Works, gave a detailed breakdown of the statistics for 2023 to date. She noted that 25% of applicants were from Elgin County, with the rest being from the City of St. Thomas. She also mentioned that Ontario Works would transition to Employment Services Elgin in 2024 and that Social Services will focus on Employment Services Transformation as directed by the Ministry of Labour. This new service will provide job seekers with person-centred support for basic needs, life skills, health, and community support.

Danielle Neilson, the Manager of Housing Stability Services, discussed the Homelessness Response Plan for Elgin County. She highlighted the community's achievement of being recognized as Functional Zero on Veterans Homelessness, which is a significant step in combating homelessness in the region. Danielle also spoke about the Coordinated Access St. Thomas-Elgin program, which matches people to resources through bi-weekly meetings of local service groups. She also mentioned The Family Central in Aylmer and the West Elgin Community Health Centre and their services for people experiencing rural homelessness.

Teresa Sulowski, the Manager of Children's Services, presented Council with an overview of childcare needs in the community. She mentioned the shortage of qualified Early Child Educators and the desperate need for more spaces across the entire County.

Overall, the presentations were well-received and sparked the need for further conversations between St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services, Elgin County Council, and Elgin County staff.



PLANNING FOR PROGRESS: ELGIN'S COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Elgin's local economy and community are set to receive a significant boost with the establishment of the Amazon Fulfillment Centre, the PowerCo SE Gigafactory and other related investments. To ensure all Local Municipal Partners (LMPs) are informed and involved in any joint efforts that may be required, the Economic Development and Planning staff presented Council with an Education Session.

During the session, an overview of the expected growth in our region over the next few years was presented. This sparked a conversation about how the Local Municipalities and the County plan to respond to this growth. The session also highlighted the importance of professional planners and their expertise in guiding us on this growth journey. The full presentations can be accessed [here](#).

ACCESSABILITY OPEN HOUSE - THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 28TH



Free AccessAbility Open House

Hosted by the St. Thomas Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
In partnership with the Elgin County-Central Elgin
Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

Event
Details

Everyone Welcome!

Date: Thursday September 28, 2023

Time: 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Location: St. Thomas Memorial Arena
80 Wilson Ave, St. Thomas, ON

**Door Prizes Vendors Food Trucks
Guest Speaker Music Performance**



Free AccessAbility Open House

Guest Speaker David Lepofsky

Topic: Making Ontario Accessible to People with Disabilities: How Are We Doing? What Can You Do? An Update from the Disability Advocacy Front Lines



Date: Thursday September 28, 2023

Time: 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Location: St. Thomas Memorial Arena 80 Wilson Ave, St. Thomas, ON or Online Via Zoom (link to be provided)

About the Speaker:

David Lepofsky is the volunteer Chair of the AODA Alliance, lawyer, professor, and advocate. Since the late 1970s, David has been actively advocating for new laws on the rights of persons with disabilities in Canada. His work includes pushing for protections for persons with disabilities in the Ontario Human Rights Code and campaigning for the passing of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in 2005.



For the complete September 26, 2023, County Council Agenda Package, please visit the Elgin County [website](#).