

Support Letter  
October 20, 2022

## **PC 52 - OCNA: Online Breaking News Coverage**

Smiths Falls Record News

Dear Judges,

Our news team was on top of this story from the start – and continues with subsequent stories. When the initial photos of the fire at the fire station in Portland were shared on social media, it alerted our web editor, Hollie Pratt-Campbell to post a quick hit, garnering a buzz of readers rushing to click the link.

Reporter Melissa Novacaska took it from there in a follow-up story the next day with interviews with people on the scene, as she gained access to those photos and a video for her story. In a relay of sorts, I (news editor, Laurie Weir) took the baton and went to the scene. I spoke with the fire chief and the mayor, who shared their devastation of the loss and the costs associated with it.

It was at this time – after our third story was posted – that the dailies got to the story.

It was a true team effort by the three involved to not only beat the dailies with this breaking news, but to have some of the highest number of readers visit our website over the weeks that followed.

There have been other stories written that include the township spending \$10,000 to source out a contractor to discover the best place to build a new station. The township decided to go a different route, spending \$180,000 to purchase property 10km outside the village of Portland. This not only created a great deal of strife in the village, but during this election campaign, it has been a source of controversy to oust the entire council as they “aren’t listening to the people” who want to build a new station closer to the village, so their insurance rates don’t increase too drastically.

This story continues...

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