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The Highlander

Thursday May 11 2017 | Issue 287

STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED IN MINDEN - PAGES 1 - 9 FREE

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UNDER WATER: An aerial photo of downtown Minden taken Wednesday morning. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

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Anyone Else Is Just Looking Around!

Minden hit hard but relief in sight

By Mark Arlino

It's an all too familiar sight for many

Minden residents.

Sandbags around homes and businesses, several road closures and water seeping over the banks of the Gull River.

They lived through a similar nightmare four years ago—an event that was described as the 100-year flood.

But after days of copious rain and rising water levels, the township once again declared a state of emergency mid-day Saturday and warned that 2013 levels were possible.

Brent Devolin, reeve of Minden Hills and warden of Haliburton County, said the water rose seven cm on Tuesday and five cm on Wednesday, bringing it within about three cm of the 2013 flood.

"We're still not out of the woods," said Devolin on Wednesday. "I'm not as despondent as I might have been 10 or 12 hours ago. What I can tell you after our conference call today, it's the relief Twelve Mile [Lake] might crest today."

This would have a positive impact on Minden because it connects to Hornesboro Lake and the Gull River, he explained.

"I'm hoping that within 24-36 hours that we could get to see the relief here," he told The Highlander.

The recent increase resulted in the owners of Monk Funeral Home abandoning their business. A water main broke on Water Street but has since been fixed.

Even after the lakes crest, Minden will be dealing with more water than normal. Levels in reservoir lakes have hit record highs and are expected to remain high until the end of the month. This is in large part due to rain: 160 mm of rain fell onto an already saturated ground in less than a week, Devolin said.

When a state of emergency is announced, it's a cue to residents to have an emergency plan in place. Property owners, especially those prone to flooding, should line their home with sandbags and evacuate if necessary.

Dozens of volunteers, including Grade 7 and 8 students, have pitched in to fill sandbags at the Minden community centre.



Minden Hills Reeve Brent Devolin speaks to media Monday in downtown Minden. Photo by Mark Arlino.

More than 40,000 had been prepared as of Monday, said Devolin. Half were made in two days.

There are several road closures. The most recent is Bobcaygeon Road, which will be closed at 6 p.m. today (May 11). The bridge was closed Monday, forcing vehicles to detour along Deep Bay Road or Scotchline Road to get to the hospital or arena.

The Burnt River watershed has crested and may begin to recede, according to a press release. But residents are still encouraged to exercise caution, and avoid areas with fast-flowing and high water levels.

Devolin and other local municipal representatives have participated in daily conference calls with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Parks Canada, the OPP and other organizations.

In recent days, he spoke to Minister of Municipal Affairs Bill Mazow and Toronto

Mayor John Tory. Both pledged to offer support. On Monday, he received a call from Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne.

Parks Canada manages water levels and flows in the Trent-Severn Waterway, which includes the affected watersheds. In 2013, it came under scrutiny for poor communication. But things are different this time and Devolin believes they have done everything they can.

"We've never seen this water event outside of spring runoff," he said in an interview.

"We communicate every day—they tell us every logging operation, what they think the intended consequences are and then we have the subsequent conversation the next day [about the outcome]. They have abated as much water as possible along the way."

Devolin said climate change is very real. The last time this happened, the

community raised more than \$700,000 for affected residents.

At the time, fundraising was necessary to access additional financial support through the government-funded Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program. A total of \$3.3 million in claims were paid out.

But due to changes to the program, it is unknown how money will be allocated. Devolin said the municipality is armed with about 25 questions for ODRAP representatives when they arrive to visit properties.

For information about road closures, volunteering or accessing help, visit the municipality's website at mindenhills.ca. Residents in need of food or household items can go to the community centre. Those who have evacuated are encouraged to register with the Red Cross.

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Guardians of The Galaxy Vol. 2 PG Chris Pratt	7:30
The Fate of The Furious PG Vin Diesel	7:45

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Minden Flood

Residents battle flood waters—again

By Mark Arike

Like other Anson Street residents, Michael Bainbridge has been wading through water to get to town. He's also been ferrying his daughters to the school bus by rowboat, footage of which appeared on CityNews.

It's the second time in four years his family's been in this unsettling position. But this time they are better prepared.

"We'll stay," said Bainbridge in an interview on Saturday afternoon.

"We'll be fine, unless there's a mandatory evacuation. But if that happens that means the furnace is gone, so I really hope that doesn't happen."

The flood of 2013 came with little warning, resulting in significant damage and financial loss for the family. Items that perished included an entire freezer with \$400 worth of food, a furnace and water heater.

"This year, we learned our lesson," he said, pointing out their basement is quite empty but stores a new furnace. They also have a new sump pump, which "has been doing its job."

Early on, he witnessed many people driving down the street. Some needed to be there while others were joyriding.

"It was like a circus sideshow [on May 5]," he recalled.

"We even had a few people come through with their phones out, driving, making a video to see how high they can get the wake as they're going through."

Bainbridge said his family is coping better this time around and it's easier for daughters, Naomi and Clementine, who

are eight and nine years old. His wife, Brigitte, went to Sudbury to perform in a theatre festival.

"My only hope is that this doesn't weigh too heavily on her mind," he said.

As of Tuesday afternoon, Bainbridge said the water had risen about two inches from Monday. It was as deep as two feet in some areas.



Michael Bainbridge walks through flood waters. Photo by Mark Arike.

Their basement "is a bit of an indoor pool," but the furnace is still out of harm's way.

Lyn Wisnans, who also lives on Anson Street, wasn't so lucky. She woke up to smoke and her detector going off at 6 a.m.

"It turns out water came in and drowned the furnace," she said. "Cappy way to wake up."

Mary Forbes was out for a walk with her dog, Rascal, shortly after the state of emergency

was declared. She lives on high ground, near the elementary school, and was unaffected.

"It's heartbreaking," said Forbes, who is 71 and retired.

Rascal's normal route is along Anson. He also enjoys the Riverwalk, board walk and Osde Street—all are underwater. Her husband took him to the fairgrounds earlier in the day.

"I'm just surprised Mother Nature threw this curve at us and it kept raining this bad," she said, adding she believes in climate change.

Forbes said the municipality, politicians and the Trent-Severn Waterway have done a good job of informing the public.

For the latest updates on water levels, residents should visit the township's website at minderhills.ca.



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Minden Flood

Volunteers make all the difference

By Mark Arkie

Volunteers didn't waste any time getting their hands dirty to help their neighbours in need.

Since last Thursday afternoon, dozens of people have made their way to the S.G. Nesbitt Community Centre in Minden to fill sandbags. With the help of an efficient sandbagging machine, a total of 39,000 bags had been filled and distributed to those in need.

"Friends needed help and we've come out for the community," said Shauna Smith, a volunteer from Minden. "We live high and dry, so we're helping out those who need it."

She was with a couple of other volunteers who had spent about four hours leading a hand.

"Some people were here all night," said Rod Upton, also from Minden. And on Monday, about 60 Grade 7 and 8 students from Archie Stouffer Elementary School joined dedicated volunteers like Smith and Upton. Altogether, they contributed five hours of manpower. Volunteering was optional, but not one student hesitated when asked.

"They literally haven't stopped since nine o'clock this morning," said teacher Michelle Kerkhous. "They've been really great."

The principal along with the teachers decided it would be good to give back to the community, she said.

"It's giving back to the town that they live and the town they do everything in."

A flood relief centre opened at the community centre on Monday. Volunteers distributed 50 sandwiches and quarts of soup and cake to volunteers, according

to Marilynne Lesperance, chair of the Minden Community Food Centre. They also provided a hot chicken dinner for volunteers and anyone in need.

Cathy Arbour, a Minden resident who volunteers with the food bank, is one of those helpers.

"It's sad to know there are people in the same predicament again," said Arbour. A few of their volunteers were sorting through donations from the public. On Monday they were asking for donations of blankets, towels and toiletries. In 2013, they asked for clothing and were overwhelmed.

"We did not realize the generosity of the community," she said. "We had so much clothing we had to rent storage units."

People were tricking in on the first day, but Arbour expected it would get busier as people spread the word.

Three volunteers with the Canadian Red Cross were called in to host the reception and information centre, also at the community centre.

"We're just on standby should the community have additional needs as the week goes on," said Eric Smith.

And even as to provide coats and blankets, they are extra lodging if the municipality determines it's needed. They came with a trailer packed full of items. Outside the arena, a few volunteers with the Salvation Army based out of Orillia were serving hot dogs and chili to volunteers filling sandbags. They provided lunch to 80 people on Monday and 40 on Tuesday from a mobile food truck.

"We go wherever we're called," said one of the volunteers.



Grade 7 and 8 students from Archie Stouffer Elementary School fill sandbags for Minden residents. Photo by Mark Arkie.

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Minden Flood

Changes to ODRAP: what you need to know

By Lisa Gervais

Right about now, residents of Minden Hills and other county municipalities are still trying to keep their houses from flooding.

Soon, however, people and townships will start to think about the cost of this latest natural disaster.

Saturday's declaration of a state of emergency means people can apply for financial assistance through the province.

The Township of Minden Hills has been here before, applying for Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP) funding following the 2013 flood. And, like most Ontario municipalities, they found the process very cumbersome and lengthy.

Municipalities asked for a review of the ODRAP program and changes were announced on March 1, 2016 that the public should know about.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), which handles the portfolio on behalf of the province, announced the creation of two new disaster relief programs that are now in effect: the Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians (DRAO) and the Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance (MDRA) program.

Both programs apply when sudden and unexpected natural disasters occur with costly impacts. Examples include tornadoes, ice storms, and severe weather events causing flooding, to name a few.

The programs will cover eligible essential basic costs connected to disaster response and recovery but are not intended to replace insurance.

With the DRAO, the MMAH continuously monitors the province for natural disasters. Once it is made aware of an event, it mobilizes a team which includes MMAH



Sandbags surround a home on Arson Street. Photo by Mark Anis.

staff, Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal and Emergency Management staff specialized in disaster management, and private adjusters, to name a few, to get first-hand information on the event.

Based on their findings, the minister will make the decision to activate DRAO. From this point, affected private sector individuals such as homeowners, small owner-operated businesses, small owner-operated farms and not-for-profit agencies can start filing claims.

Only costs over any amount covered by insurance can be submitted and people have 120 days from the incident to submit claims, at which time the minister will review and issue a decision.

The MDRA is basically handled the same way, but applies to the municipalities themselves.

What's new in the revised programs is that the MMAH visits the affected area; the deadline for submission of claims has been extended from 14 days to 120 days; claims

are processed by professional adjusters; there is no longer a need for disaster relief committees; no fundraising is required; payments for claims are made directly from the province instead of from the disaster relief committee; and payout of eligible expenses is at 90 per cent of the claim as opposed to the province paying \$2 for every \$1 raised.

In the case of municipalities, they must include a resolution from council requesting assistance and provide detailed supporting documentation. Eligible costs must be incremental costs over day-to-day operations that can be demonstrably linked to the event.

The eligible costs are divided into operating and capital costs. Operating costs are special measures taken to protect the public's health, safety and access to essential services. Capital are expenditures typically incurred to restore essential municipal assets such as infrastructure and public facilities to pre-disaster conditions. Costs to improve property and infrastructure beyond pre-disaster conditions are ineligible.

In the case of municipalities, eligible costs must be greater than or equal to three per cent of the municipality's own purpose taxation (OPT) levy (this was four per cent in the old program); eligible costs meeting the OPT threshold are paid based on a cost-sharing formula. For costs up to three per cent of OPT: the province pays 75 per cent and the municipality pays 25 per cent. For costs beyond three per cent of OPT: the province pays 95 per cent and the municipality pays five per cent. When submitting costs, future estimated costs can be included which will be reconciled when complete.

INFORMATION PAGE

7 Mile Street, PO Box 369 Minden ON K0M 2K0 Phone: 705-286-1260
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IN CASE OF EMERGENCY PLEASE DIAL 9-1-1. FOR ALL OTHER MUNICIPAL EMERGENCIES PLEASE CALL 1-866-856-3247.

Meetings & Events

PUBLIC WELCOME

May 25 Regular Council Meeting, 9:00am, Minden Council Chambers

For Council, Boards & Advisory Committee meetings, visit mindenhills.ca

ZONING BY-LAW UPDATE - PHASE 1 HOUSEKEEPING

The Zoning By-law Update - Phase 1 Housekeeping, 2nd Open House, scheduled for 3:00pm at Minden Community Centre has been **cancelled** due to the Flood Emergency and will be rescheduled at a later date.

Employment Opportunities

The Roads Department is seeking a Seasonal Labourer to provide support and a variety of road works maintenance activities from June 1st to December 31, 2017. Submission deadline is **May 15, 2017 by 12:00 noon**. Applications can be submitted by mail or email to:

Employment Opportunity - Seasonal Labourer
Township of Minden Hills
7 Mile St, Minden ON K0M 2K0
Email: spencer@mindenhills.ca

Visit mindenhills.ca for complete posting details, submission instructions and job description.

Fire Hydrant Flushing

Please note that mandatory Fire Hydrant flushing will be rescheduled at a later date due. Please watch for update notices.

For more info, please call Ivan Ingram, Environmental & Property

Operations Manager (705) 286-1260 ext. 216

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Agnes Jamieson Gallery
2017 Annual Members Show
Featuring work by Yves Ameline

A non-juried opportunity for members to show their most recent artwork

Minden Hills Museum & Heritage Village will be opening for the season

May 20. Join us to see the new displays and become part of the past by participating in a tea being served at 1pm in Bevorn House (1866) on the Saturday and Sunday of the long weekend.

Nature's Place is now open on Saturdays during the month of May
Visit and explore the new interactive exhibits and displays

ADMISSION BY DONATION

Visit the website for hours and other programming opportunities