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Eganville, Ontario

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Valley hoteliers say NO to new proposed tax

Angry members withdraw from Ottawa Valley Tourist Association



Jim Hemlin, Chief Operating Officer for Calabogie Peaks, joined several local hotel owners at the Renfrew County Administration Building in Pembroke last Friday to resign en masse from the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association. He said a proposed tax imposed on hotel owners was unfair and served no value in Renfrew County, but can be of benefit in large centres like Ottawa.

By R. Bruce McIntyre
Staff Writer

Pembroke -- It was a true sign of solidarity last Friday as representatives speaking on behalf of the majority of hotels located in the Ottawa Valley withdrew their memberships from the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association (OVTA) to protest OVTA's support of a new tax that would force hotel owners to charge guests an additional four per cent, with half of that going back to the OVTA.

The group met with County of Renfrew CAO Paul Moreau Friday morning at the county's administration building in Pembroke and submitted their letters of resignation from the OVTA.

During a one-hour meeting they voiced their concerns and displeasure in the manner in which the proposed the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) was presented to a number of local municipal councils over the last few months.

If implemented, the OVTA would keep 50 per cent of the tax revenue and the host municipality would keep the remaining amount. The tax would be levied against any hotel/motel, Air B&B and Bed & Breakfasts within a municipality.

Along with the resignation letters, the group requested an investigation into the conduct of the OVTA and provided a list of statements made

by the OVTA when they appeared before Greater Madawaska Township council along with the group's data that refutes each of the statements.

Paul Murphy, owner and operator of Calabogie Peaks which is one of the largest hotels/resorts in the area, did not hold back when discussing his concerns about the information provided by OVTA representatives when they met with Greater Madawaska council recently.

"They intentionally mislead councils in their presentations and the information was false and at no time did they even bother to pick up the phone and ask any of us here, who represent pretty much all the hotels in the county, what we thought about introducing the tax," he said. "They said the township would keep one-half of the tax revenue to spend any way they want."

"When our mayor (Brian Hunt) asked how the tax would be collected from Air B&Bs, the OVTA told him the township would be responsible for collecting the tax and if they didn't, then those Air B&Bs are stealing from them. Well I can tell you how a municipality will spend that 50 per cent. They will have to use most of it and go hire a full-time by-law officer to go knock on every door that has an Air B&B and all the while the OVTA will keep their 50 per cent."

See Page A2



A letter from home

Tzu Shuan Yu wipes away a tear after reading a letter from her family during a lunch break in the hills of Laurentian Valley Township. The Ottawa resident and 100 other children found a quiet place in a farmer's field to read personal letters delivered by the Pony Express. The children were part of a 45-km pioneer trek that re-enacted the Brigham Young-led Exodus of Mormons from the American mid-west to Utah during the 1840s. Along with 50 adults, the children spent four days along the trails and forests without the use of any modern conveniences. Full coverage of this unique event on page A11.

Massive power outage in area

Eganville -- As of press time yesterday (Tuesday), there was still no official explanation from Hydro One concerning the widespread power outage along the Highway 60 corridor and other Valley locations leaving more than 15,000 homes and businesses without power for as long as 16 hours.

At approximately 3:15 p.m. Monday, several communities, including Eganville, suddenly went dark when a wave of outages swept across the area. Some other communities impacted by the sudden loss of power were Pembroke, Wilno, Round Lake

and sections of Highway 41 and some Whitewater Region communities including Westmeath and Beachburg.

According to Hydro One interactive mapping throughout Monday and into the early hours of Tuesday morning, the outage appeared to directly affect 16,000 customers at its peak in the late afternoon to just under 10,000 around 6 p.m.

The first major centre to turn the lights back on was Pembroke and most of the power was restored by 8:30 that evening. However, communities along the Highway 60 corridor were not as fortunate.

Residents around Silver Lake did not have power until 3:30 a.m. while the Eganville area had to wait until 5 a.m. before power was restored.

As residents and businesses struggle to understand the explanation for the widespread loss, all officials at Hydro One were able to offer up is that the incident was under investigation.

The Leader can confirm three transformers blew in substations in Beachburg, Eganville and Golden Lake shortly after 10 p.m. Monday while power was being restored and the explosions can be directly linked to the extended outage.

Algonquins of Pikwakanganagan (First Nations of Algonquins)

POW WOW

Saturday, August 17, Sunday, August 18, 2019

Pow Wow weekend

The Algonquins of Pikwakanganagan 32nd annual traditional Pow Wow takes place this weekend and included in all copies of this issue of the Leader, circulated within Renfrew County, is a special 32-page commemorative booklet that will provide readers with a greater understanding of this cultural event.

The booklet contains a wide range of information designed to make your visit to the pow wow more enjoyable, or if you can't make, it will give you an in depth understanding of why the Algonquins celebrate in this manner.

The last of the pioneers

Barry's Bay -- The last of a generation of Valley lumber pioneers, Dowdall Murray, passed away Saturday in Valley Manor Nursing Home two weeks shy of his 92nd birthday.

Mr. Murray was the youngest son of Thomas and Hannah Murray and joined the family business in 1947. For many years he guided the company and was president and Chief Executive Officer of Murray Bros. Lumber Company, a very successful lumbering company that has provided thousands of jobs in the Madawaska Valley area for 117 years.

A mass of Christian burial will be celebrated in St. Lawrence O'Toole Catholic Church today (Wednesday) at 12 noon.

Due to a major power outage Monday that left the wider Eganville area without electricity until 5 a.m. Tuesday, a more in-depth story on the life and times of Mr. Murray will be published next week.



Dowdall Murray

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