



Message from Queen's Park



Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski

May, 2008

As promised in last month's column, I'd like to provide a bit of an update on some of the Ministry of Transportation Highway Improvement Projects that we can expect to be worked on this year.

Since we wrote about the extension of Highway 417 through Arnprior last month, let's start from there. The resurfacing of Highway 17 will pick-up where it left off last year at County Road 508. This will continue to just east of Renfrew. There will also be resurfacing from Bruce Street to Storyland/Pinnacle Road. The township of Horton has requested a west bound, left turning lane at this intersection. I hope this request can be accommodated as part of this year's project. Highway 17 will also see resurfacing done between County Road 40 and County Road 24, east of Pembroke. Work on the rehabilitation of the Phil Shrive Bridge over the Bonnechere River and the CPR overpass, east of Renfrew will begin this year. The project will be done in stages and will be completed over the next 3 construction seasons. The Phil Shrive Bridge will have minor work done this year, then will have the deck redone in 4 stages, finishing by fall of 2010. The CPR overpass will be done in 2 stages in 2009.

Moving away from Highway 17, there will be some pavement repairs between Shamrock and Dacre on Highway 132. With the work that was completed last year, that should bring 132 up to pretty good shape.

While we've had a fair bit of work done on Highway 60 over the last few years, there is certainly more needed. I was disappointed to be unsuccessful at getting Highway 60 from McMillan Road to Golden Lake approved for this year. We're hoping that design work on this stretch can be completed this year for construction next year. Further west there will be pavement work done east of Barry's Bay where this part of Highway 60 has deteriorated over the past few years. I will continue to bring all transportation issues to Ministry officials ensuring that our area gets its fair share of capital investments.

A few weeks back, Vicky and I were pleased to join many others as we kicked off the "Hike for Hospice" the annual walk to raise money for Hospice Renfrew. Hospice Renfrew is a six bed facility providing care for terminally ill people in the final weeks of life. I want to remind everyone that this wonderful facility, which provides service at no cost is available to anyone in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. In fact, it is available to anyone with a valid OHIP

Card. I encourage anyone who is looking for very special end of life care for their loved one to contact Hospice Renfrew to learn more about what they can provide.

While on the subject of transportation, I must say that the cost of transporting goods or people seems to be on most people's minds these days. With fuel prices escalating as they have over the past few months, it is having an effect on the cost of doing business which will surely lead to higher prices for just about everything we buy. If fuel is not directly involved in the production process, it is a large part of the cost of getting products into the consumer's hands. Agriculture and Forestry are particularly hard hit by rising fuel costs. Another concern with regards to gas prices is our tourist industry and how it might be affected during the crucial summer season. Numbers released recently show that the number of visitors from the United States has dropped dramatically. Hopefully we can make up for that with an increase in domestic visitors. This may be a good year for local people to take advantage of what we have right here in Renfrew County and within a reasonable drive. You'll see some great things and save a lot of money on gas as well.

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