



## *Message from Queen's Park*



**Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski**

**December 2006**

I thought this may be a good time to update you on some of the highway improvement projects which have taken place in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke during the past year, and what we expect for next year.

Last week I met with officials from MTO to discuss the issue. I meet with MTO on a regular basis to go over concerns I have with the highway system as it relates to my riding. I believe this is the best way to ensure that when decisions are made, the areas of concern I have raised are not forgotten. I also make a point of speaking directly to the Minister of Transportation and raising these matters in the house. As a result, I believe that we have done well over the last few years. I expect that 2007 will continue to bring more in the way of transportation improvements.

In 2006 some of the main projects were the completion of phase one Highway 60 reconstruction from the Nipissing boundary east to Mitchell Road, and the start of phase two east to Barry's Bay. This work will be completed in 2007 and will make a real difference on this stretch of roadway. Heading east the Shrine Hill lookout at Wilno was resurfaced, as well as the access road this fall. I wish the late Martin Shulist could be here to see the job that has been done. It was Mr. Shulist who took me aside a couple of years ago and suggested in his unmistakable way that the area commemorating Canada's first Polish settlement needed repairs as soon as possible. I wish we could have gotten this finished sooner. Nonetheless, I think he'd be pleased with the result.

Further down the line this year saw the completion of Highway 60 reconstruction from Eganville to Douglas with a new intersection at Kelly's Corners. I must say that the positive feedback on this project has been tremendous. I recognize that during the construction phase of these and all jobs of this magnitude, motorists will be subjected to inconveniences, but at the end of the day it is more than worth it. Safer more efficient transportation routes benefit everyone.

There was other selective rehabilitative work done on various stretches of highways throughout the riding. The County of Renfrew was also able to complete a number of County road projects this year as a result of funding received through "Move Ontario," a program to invest in municipal roads and bridges.

Next year, in addition to the Highway 60 work to be completed west of Barry's Bay, I am looking forward to the re-paving of Highway 60 between Killaloe and Golden Lake. Highway 132 from County road 15 to Renfrew is also expected to be redone next year. One further project that we're hoping for is Highway 41 south of Griffith although this may not happen until 2008.

Absent from this list is Highway 417/17 which as you know, has been a priority of mine since being elected. While I have not been successful in securing a commitment for the work to continue immediately, I am optimistic that the attention we have brought to its need will result in it being added to the next five year plan. Transportation Minister Donna Cansfield has heard from me on a regular basis on this one and has indicated that she now sees it as a priority as well.

I pledge to continue to work hard on the transportation needs of my riding so that our highway system matches the beauty of our wonderful part of Ontario.

Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> was a very special day at Logos Land near Cobden with the lighting of Canada's Tallest Christmas Tree. This year's ceremony was especially poignant as it was dedicated to the members of our armed forces serving in Afghanistan, and their families. I want to thank everyone involved in making this event a memorable one. I always consider it an honour when I am asked to sing our national anthem. To be able to join Prime Minister Stephen Harper, his daughter Rachel, our Member of Parliament Cheryl Gallant, Colonel Denis Thompson, Commander of 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, along with the young tree lighters, Nathan Layman and Megan Gruhl, and lead the anthem on this occasion was a deeply moving experience.

Let me take this opportunity in what will be my last column of the year to express best wishes from Vicky, our children, and myself, for the most Merry and Blessed of Christmases and our hope for health and happiness in the New Year. A special wish to those in our armed forces who will be separated from their families during this time. May God be with you as you complete your mission and may He bring you safely home.

John Yakabuski, MPP  
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

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Office Contact Information:

Constituency Office  
84 Isabella St.  
Pembroke, ON  
K8A 5S5

Queen's Park Office  
Room 202 N.W., Legislative Building  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1A8

[john.yakabuski@pc.ola.org](mailto:john.yakabuski@pc.ola.org)