



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Newsletter – Winter/Spring 2020

This newsletter provides updates regarding recent activities and advocacy of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC). The intended audience includes Wardens, Mayors, CAOs, upper-tier and lower-tier municipal councils, municipal staff, and the media. EOWC members are encouraged to circulate this newsletter within their County networks.

For complete details about the EOWC, including priorities, membership, meeting schedules, minutes and press releases, please visit www.eowc.org, or via [Twitter](#).

EOWC Inaugural Meeting

In early January, members gathered for the annual EOWC inaugural meeting in Kingston. The incoming Caucus met for EOWC orientation, and support staff provided an overview of EOWC history and past advocacy efforts. Members heard presentations on the accomplishments of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) and the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council (EOLC).



Vice-Chair Rick Phillips and Chair
Andy Letham

At this meeting, the EOWC appointed the Chair and Vice-Chair for 2020. Andy Letham, Mayor of the City of Kawartha Lakes, returned for his second consecutive term as the EOWC Chair. Rick Phillips, Warden of the County of Hastings, was appointed as Vice-Chair of the EOWC.

"I am honoured to return as the 2020 EOWC Chair in order to continue advocating on behalf of the 103 municipalities and the 750,000 property taxpayers across rural Eastern Ontario." – Chair Andy Letham

Pierre Leroux, Warden of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, was appointed to EORN's Board of Directors to fill an existing vacancy.

The EOWC concluded the inaugural meeting by discussing priorities with Eastern Ontario MPs and MPPs as well as members of the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus and AMO.



MP Michael Barrett, MP Derek Sloan, MP Eric Duncan, MP Cheryl Gallant, MPP Jim McDonnell, Chair Andy Letham, Vice-Chair Rick Phillips, MP Neil Ellis, MPP Daryl Kramp, and MP Francis Drouin

[Media Release: EOWC Appoints Chair and Vice-Chair for 2020](#)

2020 Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference

EOWC members joined more than 1,000 participants from across rural Ontario at the annual ROMA Conference, which took place from January 19 to 21 in Toronto. The EOWC met with Provincial Ministers during the ROMA Conference to discuss key priorities, including the Provincial Health System overhaul, expansion of broadband services, affordable housing, long-term care funding, child care funding, and joint and several liability. Members also met with the Ontario NDP Caucus and updated the Official Opposition on recent advocacy work.



Photo 1: EOWC members with Provincial government officials

Photo 2: Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure; Andy Letham, Chair

[Media Release: EOWC Advocates Strongly for Priorities at ROMA 2020 Conference](#)

EOWC Priority Setting



The EOWC met in Greater Napanee on March 12 and 13 for a two-day priority-setting meeting in order to establish 2020 advocacy efforts.

The Caucus welcomed John Matheson from StrategyCorp who spoke about intergovernmental relations and municipal strategy setting. Brenda Stonehouse from the City of Kawartha Lakes facilitated the session, during which EOWC members had productive discussions on issues impacting rural Eastern Ontario and deliberated on priorities for 2020.

The EOWC welcomed [AMO's 2020 Youth Fellows](#), Raghed Al-Areibi from the City of London, Graham Taylor from the Township of Chatsworth, and Emilie Leneveu from the City of Belleville, to learn more about its rural advocacy work during the priority setting meeting. The AMO Youth Fellows Program provides politically and municipally engaged young adults in Ontario with an opportunity to work alongside the AMO Board, of which the EOWC Chair and Government Relations Manager are members.



“The EOWC does some amazing advocating on behalf of the region’s municipalities around representation and service delivery to Provincial and Federal Governments. It was a pleasure speaking with Chair Letham. He gave us some useful advice on being a politician and great insight into Eastern Ontario municipalities.” – Raghed Al-Areibi, AMO Youth Fellow

The EOWC applauds AMO’s youth engagement efforts and recognizes the importance of young professionals’ involvement in the municipal sector, as seen below in the continuation of the EOWC Mentorship Program.

2020 EOWC Priorities

“The EOWC has kept its focus simple and identified affordable housing and long-term care as key priorities for the rest of the year. The EOWC remains committed to being the government’s municipal voice and offering advice and support for a local lens. We look forward to advancing EOWC priorities that will make a difference in the daily lives of eastern Ontario residents.” – Chair Letham

In addition to its two priorities, the EOWC will continue to advocate for the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) Cellular Network Improvement Project and Broadband Gap Strategy, the modernization of Public Health and Emergency Health Services, and infrastructure funding. To learn more, visit the [EOWC's website](#).

COVID-19



EOWC Wardens and CAOs discussed COVID-19 at the March meeting and shared updates on proactive measures that EOWC member municipalities are implementing in order to prevent the spread of the virus and ensure organizational preparedness.

The Caucus spoke about the importance of collaboration among EOWC members and the sharing of best practices and resources when responding to COVID-19.

EOWC Mentorship Program



In 2019, the Caucus launched the EOWC Mentorship Program and welcomed two young municipal sector professionals, Maddison Ellis and Meredith Staveley-Watson.

EOWC members are excited to announce that Maddison and Meredith are returning for 2020 and will continue to provide policy and administrative support to the EOWC.

(From left to right: Meredith Staveley-Watson, Justin Bromberg and Maddison Ellis)

Upcoming Events

The EOWC will meet with Federal Members of Parliament on June 2, 2020 in Ottawa. The Caucus looks forward to discussing regional issues at this meeting such as infrastructure. The EOWC values its strong relationship with Elected Officials and understands the importance of working collaboratively in order to best serve residents.

The Eastern Ontario Communications Officers have announced that the second Eastern Ontario Communications Conference will take place on October 22, 2020 at the County of Frontenac. The goal of this conference is to bring together a network of municipal staff from across the region who work in local government communications and related fields.

For more information, please contact:
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