



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

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NEWS RELEASE

EOWC elects new Chair and Vice-Chair, sets 2013 priorities

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NEWS

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Inc. has elected Rick Phillips, Warden of Hastings County as its new Chair for the coming year. Ron Holman, Warden of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville was elected Vice-Chair.

BACKGROUND

Each January the 13 members of the EOWC also review their activities from the previous year and set their priorities for the coming year. Last week the members met in Kingston for two days to conduct this important task and shared these issues with M.P.s and M.P.P.s from around the region.

QUOTES

"I am honoured to have been elected Chair by my colleagues. We have a great team and I look forward to working as hard as I can with them over the course of the coming year," said Phillips. "I am equally delighted that Warden Holman will be our Vice-Chair. He brings a tremendous amount of insight and leadership to the Caucus having served previously on the EOWC," added Phillips.

"As we do each year early in January the EOWC meets in Kingston to set the priorities and directions for the Caucus as we continue to work to make Eastern Ontario's economy grow which assists people in finding work," said Phillips.

"This year we are focusing on two key priorities," noted Vice-Chair Holman. "They are economic development and the strategies needed to support new growth, and continuing our financial sustainability research and analysis on key sectors like water and wastewater, waste management and social housing" that support our advocacy efforts.

“We believe we can make some significant strides forward by zeroing in on the two key priorities, while being prepared to deal with other issues that might arise,” said Chair Rick Phillips.

2013 Priorities:

Priority #1: Economic Development

The primary objective to foster growth and development for the region will be to create an *Eastern Ontario Economic Development Strategy*. This means working with the EOWC partners in the cities, including Ottawa, the federal and provincial governments, agencies like Community Futures Development Corporations, local economic development groups, First Nation leaders and health and education institutions.

- Strategy components will include areas like:
 - business retention
 - skills development
 - completion of the building of the EORN project
 - Algonquin land claim

Priority #2: Financial Sustainability

In the past year the EOWC has commissioned significant research on key topics that relate to the challenges and opportunities of keeping municipalities financially sustainable. Last year’s efforts focused on determining the kinds of investments that are needed to address for example the capital improvements for the nearly 88,000 kilometers of the region’s roads and 8,600 bridges. In the case of roads and bridges the data has exposed a growing deficit of nearly \$3 billion in needed capital investments.

In 2013 the EOWC is expanding its research into other key municipal service including:

- social housing
- waste management
- asset management
- roads and bridges fund

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For more information contact:

Rick Phillips, Chair
(613) 966-1319

or

Ron Holman, Vice-Chair
(613) 342-3840