



INDEX

Walton - A5
 Sports - A6, A7
 A8, A10
 Obituaries - A9
 Births - A9
 People - A4, A9
 Dublin - A13

Huronview redevelopment on hold. See page A3.

Trio to initiate Hensall day-care. See page A3.

Danes play last game in Seaforth. See page A7.

Serving the communities
 and areas of Seaforth,
 Brussels, Dublin, Hensall
 and Walton

The Huron Expositor



Seaforth, Ontario

HURON EXPOSITOR WEDNESDAY JANUARY 11 1989

50 cents a copy

Abandoned railway line can be a boon to Huron county



THE CANADIAN PACIFIC railway line, from Goderich to Guelph, will become a recreation corridor for use by snowmobilers, hikers, cross-country skiers etc. A committee in Goderich is at work putting together a proposal to have the province obtain the railway rights-of-way so it can be turned into a recreational resource. Corbett photo

Trains have stopped using the Canadian Pacific Railway line from Goderich to Guelph as of January 1, 1989, but a group in Goderich proposes that the route can still be a benefit to the communities along it.

The group, a committee of the Maitland Trail Association, has been investigating the possibility of turning the route into a "multi-use recreation corridor" to be used by hikers, cyclists, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, horseback riders and even sled dog racers.

This idea is not a new one. Abandoned railway lines in the United States have been converted from rails to trails, and have been found to be generators of tourist dollars. In Ontario, a 17.2 mile abandonment was approved for development in Collingwood, and a recent acquisition of an abandonment was made in the Kawartha district.

The members of the Maitland Trail committee have been meeting with, and are still looking for, potential user groups and people who would like to be a part of their initiative.

Joan Van Den Broeck of Saltford, a member of the committee and a horse enthusiast, says the committee has met with enthusiasm or at least favorable response from groups approached. Sled dog racers, for example, have already made a commitment to make use of the recreation corridor if it is acquired. Other groups such as riders, cyclists, hikers and snowmobilers are represented by the committee, have also suggested they would make use of the corridor. Even Mennonites along the route have suggested the corridor would provide an alternative to risking their horse-drawn buggies on roads.

"It's very important that user groups learn to work together," says Mrs. Van Den Broeck, adding once the trail was established, the various user groups would have to accommodate each other when using it.

ECONOMIC BOON

Because of the corridor's great value as a recreational resource, the committee sees it as an economic opportunity with massive potential.

"Villages along the route would see great benefits," claims Mrs. Van Den Broeck, making reference to when the railroad was first built, and villages and towns were anxious to see the route come through their municipality, because they knew their town would live or die according to where the railroad ran.

"This would bring as much prosperity to

the route as the original railway did," she says

Mrs. Van Den Broeck notes recreational trails in the United States bring tremendous amounts of tourist dollars to the areas they traverse, and thinks the development of this trail should be looked upon as an economic development project for southern Ontario.

And at a time when people are steadily losing access to recreation land, Mrs. Van Den Broeck calls this "probably the least expensive way to obtain recreation lands for people in Ontario to have presented itself in the past decade."

"It's a very valuable recreation resource - it's irreplaceable. And if we lose the initiative now, we've lost the land forever."

The committee has been looking into a variety of issues which will have to be addressed. Concerns of landowners adjacent to the corridor will have to be dealt with, maintenance of the path and who will carry it out, and liability are all hurdles which will have to be overcome.

PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE FORMED

There have been many enquiries about the acquisition of abandonments in Ontario, and the provincial government has put together a committee to deal with them.

The interministerial committee was formed on December 22, 1988 to consider provincial acquisition of railway rights-of-way for transportation, recreation and other public uses.

"In recent years, railway rationalization programs have resulted in the abandonment of some 1,500 kilometers of branch lines in Ontario," said Minister of Transportation Ed Fulton in announcing the formation of the committee. "If present trends continue, even more lines will be taken out of service."

"The vacant rights-of-way have the potential to be developed by the province for a variety of uses. If we do not act quickly, however, we may be faced with the permanent loss of these valuable tracts of land."

The Maitland Trail committee will soon be before the interministerial committee with their proposal. If they can show the provincial committee their plan is feasible, the province may acquire the Goderich to Guelph line and allow it to be developed as a recreational corridor.

According to Cikia Thomas, secretary to the interministerial committee, the committee will be interested to see what uses are proposed for the abandonment, how issues such as maintenance and liability will be dealt with. They will want a concrete proposal before the province negotiates the purchase of the rights-of-way.

The province assuming a railway's right-of-way, and even the liability, would make it much easier for groups who wanted to develop the corridor.

The committee does not yet know what it would cost to develop the 77.2 mile corridor from Goderich to Guelph. A major expense would be the modification of bridges to make them usable by traffic. Plantings may be needed along the route for aesthetics, to inhibit large vehicle entry, to help designate the trail and to act as a buffer.

The cost is estimated at \$900,000 for development of the 17.2 mile trail near Collingwood, so the cost of the 77.2 mile trail is expected to be a proportionate several million.

However, the Maitland Trail committee feels that over the long term the cost of developing the corridor will be more than made up for in the benefit of having this recreation facility, and in tourist dollars.

Mrs. Van Den Broeck points out the fact the government of Ontario has put together an interministerial committee to investigate acquisition of abandonments shows the province realizes it can't afford to give up this resource.

The Maitland Trail Association would be interested in speaking with any potential user groups, or anyone who would like to become a part of their initiative. Mrs. Van Den Broeck can be contacted at 524-2845.

County irked by government fermentation

BY BILL HENRY

The Ontario government's "fermentation" of seniors care policies is frustrating Huron County Council's plans to rebuild its Huronview Home for the Aged.

A county application for \$0 per cent capital funding for the project, expected to cost as much as \$10 million over the next several years, is under review while Community and Social Services ministry officials revise policies, Huron County Council learned Thursday.

Some councillors said the delay is likely to extend beyond the county budget process, effectively scuttling the \$10 redevelopment for at least another year.

A London-based ministry official said Monday she was aware of no recent discussions on the Huronview application, which remains under review by senior MCSS officials.

Linda Girard, an MCSS program supervisor, said senior officials are also reviewing the policy which dictates the level and type of services available for Ontario senior citizens.

A draft policy is in the process of being modified to become provincial policy, partly in response to the growing shift toward seniors remaining longer in their own homes with the help of a wide range of provincial, municipal and private homecare services.

Meanwhile, the Huronview project and others like it from around the province are on hold, Girard said, adding she did not know how long Huron County officials can expect to wait for approval.

"It's certainly my understanding that the Huronview proposal does meet all of the criteria of the draft (policy) proposal," she said.

Huronview's administrator, and several councillors who have worked together on the redevelopment project for several years, expressed concern over the delay Thursday.

"The province has put us on hold for a period of time because of a corporate policy decision that they want to make," Huronview administrator Wayne Lester told council Thursday. "They are in a period of fermentation, whatever that is...they tell us

to get our act together and make a proposal and then they put us on hold."

Huron County Council agreed in July to rebuild Huronview in three, separate phases, beginning with a replacement of part of the 90-year-old Huronview complex near Clinton. Later, the project calls for northern and southern satellite centres, as well as private washrooms and apartment-like accommodation, an alzheimer's daycare centre and other services not currently offered at Huronview.

The proposal, approved by county council in July, followed two extensive studies.

The first determined that it would be too costly to renovate the existing facility, which currently fails to meet some provincial health and safety regulations.

The second gathered information from around the county and elsewhere in determining the type of seniors facility best suited for the area.

"I am certainly disappointed," said Exeter Deputy-Reeve Lossy Fuller, who chaired the Seniors Facility Review Com-

Turn to page 14A



LIGHTNING left a large hole in the roof of this Chalk Street home, Saturday night. Averaged approximately 200 knots per hour. Normal winds at this time of year travel 100 to 120 knots per hour. McIlwraith photo.

Appliances, roof damaged by storm

No serious damage resulted from an unseasonal electrical storm Saturday night, but a number of Seaforth and area residents have reported damage to a variety of electrical appliances. One household even reported damage to the roof of their Chalk Street home.

That damage occurred at approximately 11 p.m., during the second storm, when lightning apparently hit a tree adjacent to the Costello house, then jumped onto the roof, causing a power outage to the house and leaving a large hole in its wake. A neighbor, Jim Palin, hooked up a generator and helped as Bob Costello covered the hole with a tarp. "Everything's okay now," said Mrs. Costello Monday, adding the family is in the process of renovating the exterior of the home, and was fortunate there was no fire.

That was about the most serious damage done by Saturday's storm. Ken Cardno of Seaforth Insurance, said he's had no word on fires or other serious damage, but has received several reports of lightning damage to television sets, VCRs and other electrical appliances.

Jim Cardiff of McKillop Mutual Insurance and Steve Murray of Steve Murray Insurance, reported similar claims. Mr. Cardno noted damage was not centralized, and appeared to be over the whole of Seaforth and area.

"So far we've been lucky," said Mr. Cardiff, adding he's only had one report of a VCR being hit by lightning.

Mr. Murray too, said repercussions of the storm have been fairly minor, with only two claims being made, one for damage to a television set and the other a VCR. He said it was fortunate there was no flooding as a result of the rains, and added this was the perfect time of year of it, since outlets are frozen closed, and back ups can occur.

Saturday's storm is being treated as a rarity for this time of year. An official from Huron Satellite Systems said one can usually expect a January thunderstorm once every two years, but added it usually lacks the intensity of Saturday's storm. That storm occurred as a result of a cold air loft being pushed ahead of a cold stream, by winds that averaged approximately 200 knots per hour. Normal winds at this time of year travel 100 to 120 knots per hour.



THE SHOP AT SDHS had to be extinguished on Wednesday, as a fire was started by oily rags in the shop's office. The fire created a lot of smoke and heat which did an estimated \$8,000 to the shop. Corbett photo

SDHS smoke damaged by fire

A fire causing thousands of dollars in smoke damage broke out at Seaforth District High School at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday.

The fire started in the school shop in a room used for storage and as the instructor's office. SDHS principal Jim Empringham says the room is surrounded on floor, ceiling and three walls by concrete, and on the fourth wall by concrete, glass and a fire door which was closed, so the fire was effectively contained and had a limited supply of oxygen.

However, the fire smouldered and caused a lot of smoke and heat damage to the room's contents. Burning wooden shelves were the main source of flame, and smoke from the fire damaged a router, grinder, jigsaw and other hand tools, all of industrial quality. Also smoke damaged was the teacher's desk, a cabinet, and binders of resource materials, some of which were one of a kind. Virtually every item in the room, including the walls and ceiling, had

to be scrubbed with special materials to absorb the smoke, painted or replaced. The cost for the cleanup and to replace items damaged in the fire is estimated at approximately \$8,000.

The cause of the fire is not yet certain. Some rags were burned in the fire, and it is speculated spontaneous combustion may have ignited them.

Mr. Empringham says the fire was "definitely not caused by vandalism." The room the fire started in contains a heat sensor which set off an alarm in the school. Gord Dick, custodian at the school, inspected the school after hearing the alarm, found the smoke in the shop, and called the fire department.

Mr. Empringham says the fire has not disrupted classes. One shop class was involved in taking an inventory of the burned items, and another has been given a writing assignment which is a part of the curriculum.

A company was in to do a cleanup Thursday morning.