

April 2025

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WESTERN ONTARIO  
**WOWC**  
WARDENS CAUCUS

**Monthly  
Update**

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## Your monthly news & updates

### Western Ontario Municipal Conference 2025

#### Registration Opens Tomorrow

WESTERN ONTARIO  
**WOWC**  
WARDENS CAUCUS

**WESTERN ONTARIO  
MUNICIPAL  
CONFERENCE**

October 17, 2025 | London, ON

*Powering Ontario's Economic Engine*

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus presents the *Western Ontario Municipal Conference 2025: Powering Ontario's Economic Engine*, with a goal of providing relevant, dynamic programming and opportunities to share knowledge and best practices to enhance opportunities and successes, along with many opportunities for networking.

**Friday, October 17th, 2025**

**8:30 am - 4:00 pm**

**Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre, London, ON**

A Welcome Reception will take place at the Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre on Thursday, October 16th from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, hosted by Middlesex County.

Join us for an evening of food, drinks, and entertainment, and enjoy the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow attendees before the main conference begins. No need to make dinner reservations—there will be plenty to eat and a great atmosphere for mingling and conversation.

Early bird pricing available until August 31, 2025.

Are you interested in sponsoring the WOMC or participating as an exhibitor? Please see the [2025 Sponsorship Package](#) for more information or contact: [info@wowc.ca](mailto:info@wowc.ca)

[Register Here](#)

## Building Communities: Bridging Research with Practice



The University of Guelph hosted the 11th annual Rural Research Symposium on March 26th, bringing together students, faculty, community practitioners, government, and non-governmental organizations to share research on emerging rural themes. The event featured a series of insightful presentations, posters, and networking opportunities, with the goal of fostering collaboration and innovation in rural research.

Presenters highlighted several critical themes, including sustainability, agriculture, rural peoples, infrastructure development, education, technology, economic development, and Indigenous peoples. These topics sparked engaging conversations among attendees, emphasizing the importance of addressing these challenges to improve the quality of life in rural areas.

All posters and presentations presented at the event can be accessed online through the [Rural Repository](#).

## Workforce WindsorEssex releases EV impact report highlighting economic growth, job creation



A new report from Workforce WindsorEssex highlights the economic impact of the region's growing electric vehicle (EV) sector and the transformative role of the NextStar Energy battery plant, noting thousands of jobs are expected in the Windsor-Essex region thanks to the local EV industry.

The report, [Automobility in Windsor-Essex: Impact of the NextStar Energy Plant](#), examines how the facility, set to begin production later this year, is shaping the local economy, workforce, and investment landscape.

The report positions Windsor-Essex as a leader in Canada's transition to a green economy, emphasizing the region's advanced manufacturing capabilities and strong workforce.

## Lambton County Selected to Host

### 2027 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo



The Lambton County Plowmen's Association is proud to announce that it has been selected to host the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM) in Lambton County in 2027. This historic event will bring together plowing enthusiasts, farmers, and visitors from across the globe to celebrate agricultural excellence and community spirit.

The IPM is a prestigious annual event that showcases the latest in agricultural practices and equipment, traditional plowing competitions, and local food, crafts, and entertainment. With a rich agricultural heritage, Lambton County is the perfect backdrop for this international gathering.

The Lambton Plowmen's Association is already in the planning stages, collaborating with local businesses, farmers, and community organizations to ensure a successful and inclusive event. Further details, including dates and venue information, will be announced in the coming months.



#### **Dave Taylor Selected as Chatham-Kent's New Deputy Chief Administrative Officer**

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent has appointed Dave Taylor, Director of Legal Services, as the Municipality's first Deputy Chief Administrative Officer. Dave will be assuming this role in the coming months to allow for a transition of work in his current portfolio.



#### **Middlesex County Appoints Acting CAO**

Durk Vanderwerff was appointed Acting Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the County of Middlesex, effective April 8, 2025.

"We are pleased to welcome Durk Vanderwerff as Acting CAO", said Warden Ropp. "Durk's years of service and commitment to Middlesex County make him an excellent fit for the role. His professionalism and strong understanding of County operations will ensure stability for our organization during this transition. Council is

Dave brings a wealth of knowledge to the role. He has worked in the municipal field for 15 years and has worked for Chatham-Kent since 2012. Dave's educational background positions him well for the Deputy CAO role, as he holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree from the University of Ottawa, a Law degree and Master's degree in Public Administration from Western University as well a certificate in Long Term Care Leadership. Dave is also an Instructor of Municipal Law in the Local Government Program at Western University.

The role of Deputy CAO will focus on a portfolio overseeing several divisions of the Municipality, but is also tasked with advancing the Municipality's advocacy efforts with senior levels of government.



### **Grey County Welcomes**

#### **New Deputy Chief Administrative Officer**

Grey County is pleased to announce that Niall Lobley will be appointed as the new Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (Deputy CAO), effective May 20, 2025.

Niall brings a wealth of experience in municipal leadership, operations, and community engagement. Most recently serving as CAO for the Township of Georgian Bluffs, he has demonstrated a deep commitment to strategic planning, effective team building, and delivering high-quality services to residents.

Niall's extensive career includes leadership roles at the City of Kitchener and Conservation Halton, where he successfully led multi-disciplinary teams, implemented climate action and risk management strategies, and contributed to regional planning initiatives. His work has spanned both rural and urban settings, making him well equipped to support the diverse needs of Grey County's communities.

confident in Durk's ability to guide our team and maintain momentum on key priorities."

Durk Vanderwerff has served with Middlesex County for more than 30 years in various positions, including his current position as Director of Planning and Development, a role he has held since 2016. He is widely respected for his collaborative approach, strategic insight, and commitment to the County and its communities. His long-standing relationships with staff, Council, local municipalities, and partner organizations position him well to lead the organization through this interim period.



### **Bruce County Announces New Director of Long Term Care and Senior Services**

Bruce County is pleased to announce the appointment of Emily Kussmann as the new director of long-term care and senior services, effective May 26, 2025.

As a member of the County's Senior Leadership Team, Emily will lead the delivery of long-term care at Brucelea Haven in Walkerton and Gateway Haven in Wiarton. Emily will also provide leadership to Bruce County's Age Friendly Community initiative.

Emily joined Bruce County in January 2022 as the Administrator at Brucelea Haven and brings more than 10 years' experience in long-term care, including senior leadership roles. Emily has a bachelor's degree in gerontology and a master's degree in community care health administration.

"I am very pleased to offer congratulations to Emily Kussmann, our new director of long-term care and senior services. Emily's leadership is vital to continuing our service excellence and ensuring Bruce County is an age-friendly home

Mr. Lobley's assignment will follow the upcoming departure of Grey County CAO Kim Wingrove on May 2, 2025. Current Deputy CAO Randy Scherzer has been appointed the incoming CAO.



### Rural Healthy Democracy Forum

June 11, 2025

AMO's Healthy Democracy Project is a unique initiative focused on improving local democracy through civic engagement that's respectful and diverse. It's a project based on collaboration and a collective will to improve the health of local democracy in Ontario. For more information on the origin of the Healthy Democracy Project and initiative click [here](#).

Location: Almonte Old Town Hall Auditorium

Registration fee: \$50.00

[Register Here](#)

### Municipal Codes of Conduct: Essential to Good Governance

May 14, 2025 - 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Municipal Codes of Conduct are extremely valuable for local councils to establish a general standard to ensure that all Members of Council share a common basis for acceptable conduct, and to which all Members are expected to adhere to and comply with.

This training will be delivered by a leading Ontario lawyer in the municipal sphere including in that of integrity commissioners.

[Register Here](#)

to all residents," says Bruce County Warden, Luke Charbonneau.



### Ontario Breaks Ground on New Emergency Mental Health and Addictions Services Unit in Guelph

Construction is underway on the [phased expansion](#) of the emergency department at Guelph General Hospital (GGH), making it faster and easier for people in Guelph, Wellington and surrounding communities to connect to emergency mental health and addictions care closer to home.

Once opened, GGH's new mental health and addictions services unit will include:

- Expanded capacity in the Short Stay Assessment Unit from four to eight beds to monitor and treat more adult patients experiencing psychiatric emergencies
- A new emergency follow-up service that will increase individual and group counselling services by 14 per cent to help more than 2,220 patients stabilize before being discharged and reduce re-admissions
- A new walk-in patient intake zone
- Additional ambulance capacity from two to three by building a new three-bay ambulance garage with a dedicated offload area, reducing offload wait times in the emergency department
- A brand new reception area in the emergency department, including a new waiting room and triage area

View the full [press release](#)

## Southern Ontario Community Futures Week: April 7- 13, 2025



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who played a role in the success of Community Futures Week 2025.

Your commitment and support for the Community Futures program have significantly contributed to fostering entrepreneurship, enhancing small business development, and creating economic opportunities throughout Southern Ontario.

Impact of the Community Futures Program in Southern Ontario - Results from 2023-24 Fiscal Year:

- Jobs Maintained – 2,520
- Jobs Created – 1,359
- Businesses Assisted - 715
- New Loans Issued - 740
- Value of New Loans for SMEs - \$63.5 Million
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These figures illustrate the substantial influence of the Community Futures Program throughout Southern Ontario for the 2023-24 fiscal year, highlighting our dedication to empowering and supporting entrepreneurs in the region.

Thank you for contributing to the success and significance of Community Futures Week 2025. Let's keep collaborating to build a vibrant and prosperous future together.

For more information on the Community Futures Program in Western Ontario and its member offices, visit: [www.cfwesternontario.ca](http://www.cfwesternontario.ca)

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