

**BLENHEIM AND DISTRICT'S NEWS AND PICTURE WEEKLY**

# Official opening of Erieau Fire Station and Community Centre

Many people from the Village of Erieau will long remember the former Village Town Hall, Firestation and Library.

A new chapter opened in Erieau last Sunday when a brand new Firestation, Community Centre and book

exchange was officially opened during a special ribbon cutting that featured many folks from Erieau along with politicians from all stages of government.

A grand new solidly built and spacious Firestation, Library and

Community Centre replaced an aging mould infested former Council Chambers that simply wasn't big enough for the needs of the community, especially Firestation 14.

The old building became a health risk and costs associated with

renovation, or expansion or even the removal of the mould would be excessive.

It was decided by Chatham-Kent Council that a new building would not only better suit the needs of the firestation but also the

needs of the community.

Last Sunday a ribbon cutting and open house officially opened the new firestation and community Centre.

Mayor Hope together with MP Dave VanKesteren assisted in taking part in the official

ribbon cutting ceremony.

Several politicians and representatives from the Chatham Kent Fire Service were also on hand to proudly show off the new station.

Dave VanKesteren was obviously pleased with the finished new building.

He added "I am always happy to visit Erieau when I have a chance, this community is truly a hidden gem in our region.

Just over 9 months ago I had the privilege to announce \$1.25 million for the construction of a new community building and fire hall in Erieau. This funding was provided through our government's Community Adjustment Fund program which helped communities hardest hit by the recent global recession. Last year I criss-crossed this area announcing funding for parks, roads, sewers, colleges and community centers. Now that the majority of the stimulus has been allocated to the approved recipients, the fun part begins, seeing the finished products. I know Erieau will benefit from having this new facility and will cherish it for years to come."

An accurate cost of the project has not yet been completed but administration knows that the project will come in under the projected cost of \$1.8 million.

The municipality received a \$1.25 million grant from the federal



Erieau Fire Station 14 and Community Centre was open and ready for inspection during last Sunday's ribbon cutting.

continued on page 3



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# Ribbon cutting at Erieau Fire Station and Community Centre

Continued from front government from the "Community Adjustment Fund".

The funding opportunity came about because of the global economic downturn. When the municipality applied for the funding it had guaranteed \$550,000 which came from Capital money set aside for the construction of firestations that were identified as needing repair or replacement.

Ray Stone Deputy Fire Chief of the Chatham-Kent Fire Service said "administration is very pleased with the final outcome of this building".

He also agreed "that early on there were people from the community who felt it would be better to renovate or expand the building but because of excessive costs it just wasn't feasible"

He acknowledged "the mould issues in the basement were expensive to abate and it kept coming back. This created health concerns for our firefighters and anyone using the building. Not only that but the existing station doors and bay lengths were just too small to accommodate the new equipment and apparatus we were putting in the station. For the Fire Service to build a fire truck to fit the station was an added cost, usu-

ally about \$50,000 more. The cost to retrofit the building would have been as much as a new building once we addressed the mould, issues, bay door sizes, bay sizes and new accessibility requirements".

Not only that but a retrofitted building would have higher operational costs" (heat lighting, maintenance etc).

Stone indicated "early in the design stages we not only wanted to full fill the needs of our fire-service but we tried to provide the community needs in terms of a library and a small meeting area".

He added "there was no question some citizens didn't want the former building torn down and to maintain it as a historical site".

The cost to do that wasn't feasible.

"We wanted to consider the needs of the community and we made sure to discuss those needs".

There were meetings with the Erieau Partnership Association and the firefighters and some concerns were identified which in turn helped with the final design.

Stone added " During the planning stage five architectural firms were interviewed. Archon Architect Incorporated from Windsor was the successful firm. They were given certain crite-

ria that was wanted in the building and then came back with their plans. The appearance was the design of Archon".

"It was our plan all along to make sure the building was to contain similar uses as the original building including bright and spacious community room that could be used for meetings".

The new building houses such a room with kitchen facilities.

"I guess from the start of this whole process it was important to meet the needs of the community".

Elli Williscroft who chairs the Erieau Community Partnership Association added "the new firehall, library and community hall is a major asset for the residents and village of Erieau and we are very proud of this accomplishment . Our new library is now handicapped accessible along with our community hall that will be available for upcoming community events and is a beautiful venue looking out onto the bay. Many thanks to the volunteers and the Chatham Kent Municipality along with Federal Government who have made this dream possible.

From a firefighters perspective firefighters from Station 14 couldn't be more pleased with the outcome.

Jim Anderson, Chief of Station 14 remembers not too long ago that when a fire call came in to Station 14, firefighters had to pull trucks out of the hall before firefighters could board the trucks.

He added "Just having room to walk around...in the old hall only the driver could get into the truck, we had to pull them out to get in to respond to calls".

We also have sufficient space to store all our apparatus"

Erieau's marine unit is now housed in the new hall instead of in Blenheim which means better emergency response times".

The hall features 40 foot bay lengths that accommodate the new truck lengths.

The firehall is equipped with exhaust fans and sensors for CO.

There is oil separators that allow for on site maintenance of equipment.

The local station boasts two of the newest trucks in the Chatham-Kent Fleet.

There had been rumours in the past that the Erieau Fire Station would be closed.

"It's safe to say that this building and the fact that it is equipped with up to date apparatus will assist in serving the needs of this community for generations to come".



*"The Canoe"*  
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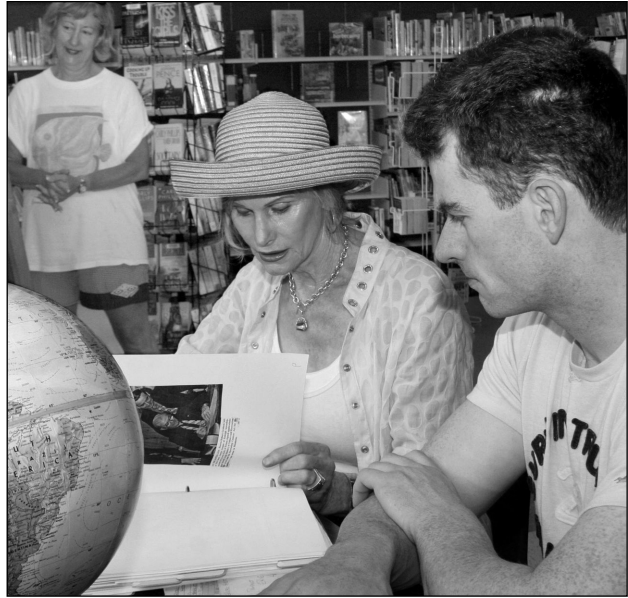
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Erieau's new fire station building also houses a Community Room and Book Exchange. Una Wilson and Ryan Wilson reminisce through some local history on display during the grand opening of the new facility last Sunday.



In attendance for the official re-opening of Chatham-Kent's impressive new Erieau Fire Station are from left, Erieau Deputy Fire Chief Brian Currie, C-K Manager of Municipal Assets Tom Skodak, C-K Fire Chief Robert Crawford, project overseer C-K Assistant Fire Chief Ray Stone, and Erieau Fire Station No.14 Fire Dept. Chief Jim Anderson.



A large crowd came out early last Sunday afternoon to tour and celebrate the grand re-opening of Chatham-Kent's new Erieau Fire Station, Book Exchange and Community Room. Pictured cutting the ribbon from left are C-K Fire Chief Robert Crawford, Councilor Frank Vercouteren, Mayor Randy Hope, MP Dave Van Kesteren and Councilor Art Stirling.

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