



Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night



# The Kincardine INDEPENDENT



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## Bowling for BBBS

Rylie Emmerton, 11, gets ready to bowl during the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kincardine Bowl for Kids Sake fundraiser, held Saturday and Sunday at the Bruce Bowling Lanes. The bowlingthon raised \$24,500 with 30 teams participating. (Barb McKay photo)

## Councillor Campbell docked pay over Code of Conduct violation

By Barb McKay

Municipality of Kincardine Councillor Gordon Campbell will lose 30 days' pay after an investigation found that he had verbally abused municipal staff.

Robert Swayze, an integrity commissioner appointed by the municipality, attended last Wednesday's Kincardine council meeting to report on his findings from a four-month investigation to determine if Campbell had violated the Council Code of Conduct. Swayze said he was appointed in early October and soon after received applications of complaint from CAO Murray Clarke and Water and Wastewater Supervisor Shamus Anderson regarding Campbell. He interviewed the complainants, a witness and Campbell on two separate occasions before reaching his decision.

The first complaint related to an incident on Sept. 15 of last year at the Kincardine McDonald's where a witness had reported that Campbell was overheard criticizing Clarke and Anderson over how they had treated a local resident who had brought a lawsuit against the municipality after the municipality had required him to locate and replace an old water meter.

In his report, Swayze said

that Campbell wrote a letter, in which he was identified as a councillor, in support of the plaintiff in the case and accused municipal staff of improper procedure. In the end, the claim was dismissed by the court.

"Assisting constituents is the role of all members of council," Swayze stated in the report. "However, when staff is asked to go against a by-law to assist a citizen, they are entitled to refuse. The respondent (Campbell) refuses to understand that the policy relating to replacement of water meters applied to thousands of properties and if the municipality committed to attend at every site to locate old meters, the cost would be prohibitive."

Swayze's report outlined a second complaint launched about an incident on Oct. 16, 2016. According to the report, during a meeting between Campbell, Anderson and a contractor regarding excavation at the Kincardine airport, Campbell told Anderson that he had not done his job and should not be in his current role. A third complaint resulted from a meeting between Campbell, Clarke, Anderson and another municipal staff person where the complainants again told Swayze that Campbell yelled at them for not having a piece of information that he

wanted and said, "what good are you if you can't provide account information." Campbell has denied making the comments.

Swayze went on to say in his report that Campbell does not appreciate the level of work that is involved in managerial positions.

"He expects a manager to be on site watching a contractor find a waterline and dictating work practices."

The integrity commissioner pointed out that the Code of Conduct is explicit in outlining how a member of municipal council should conduct themselves.

"I took no pleasure in writing this report, but I've learned there is a 10-year history of this councillor abusing staff," he said.

Swayze said there is nothing wrong with a councillor disagreeing or being critical of a staff member, but they must act professionally.

"Don't talk about a staff person at McDonald's. Don't yell at a staff person in front of his boss."

Campbell spoke to *The Independent* late last week and acknowledged that he was wrong to submit the letter in support of the lawsuit against the municipality and should not have made comments at McDonald's, but

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## Province commits to dropping hydro rates by 17 per cent

By Barb McKay

Relief is on the way for homeowners as the Ontario government says it will cut hydro rates by 17 per cent.

The government made the announcement on Thursday that "significant system restructuring" will provide residential hydro users with a reduced rate starting this summer. In its report, the province used the figure of 25 per cent, but that includes an eight per cent reduction on electricity bills that came into effect earlier this year.

A total of \$50 billion spent on upgrades to Ontario's electrical grid, along with high priced renewable energy contracts, have caused hydro rates to skyrocket in recent years. The government is now backing away from its original plan to fast track the debt repayment and instead repay it over a longer term.

"For too long, governments – my

own included – have made mistakes in the way we've structured Ontario's electricity system," Premier Kathleen Wynne said in a statement. "That has resulted in rates that are unfairly high. It's time to fix those mistakes, in ways that work for today, and for the future."

"For the better part of 50 years we didn't pay our way - until about a decade ago, when it came to a head. The system needed major rebuilding, which meant a major price tag. A lot of that money came in the form of rates – higher bills. So for the past few years customers have been paying not only for the power they consume but for the past neglect, for the price of major new refurbishments and for the cost of renovating a system that went without proper repairs for far too long."

"So the good news is that we've

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## Hockey smiles

Kincardine's Kendra Fisher, left, with former Toronto Maple Leaf captain Rick Vaive Thursday afternoon following a charity game between Tundra and the Bruce Power Nighthawks. The teams raised \$2,000 for the Kincardine Minor Hockey Association. (Josh Howald photo)