



Creepy crawlly - Monsters, ghosts and other creatures were lurking in Elora for the annual Monster March on Oct. 21. Many attended in costumes ranging from fantastical beasts and princesses to pop culture references. From left are: Dana Picken, Marguerite Picken, Briar Gemmell and Morgan Gemmell. Photo by Olivia Rutt
 More Monster March photos on page 20.

Community Living officials, families at odds over status of day programs

By Mike Robinson

FERGUS - Parents and families met with Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott on Oct. 20 to protest what they see as the dismantling of the Fergus Community Living day program for special needs clients.

However, Laura Hanley, executive director of Guelph Wellington Community Living, says while there have been significant changes over the past few years, day programs are still in place.

Those protesting argued that intellectually-challenged adults incapable of living and working independently should not be moved or forced out of safe and secure day and community programs.

One of those taking action is Kate Harper, whose sister is impacted by the changes.

Harper and others whose families are affected started a petition to Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and Minister of Community and Social Services Helena Jaczek seeking answers.

Harper said changes are being implemented at the Fergus Community Living office without consultation with families. She contends the issue began a few years ago with the Wynne government's decision to close all sheltered workshops.

Harper said closing day programs for adults with intellectual disabilities would:

- infringe on individual rights to decide where they volunteer and work in the community;
- force many to be treated as "independent adults" when many are not capable of this;
- move activity programs to group homes or out in the community, rather than in Community Living buildings.

"In our community, we have seen the effects of the dismantling of the Fergus day ... program over

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Minto authorizes flood relief fund application

By Patrick Raftis

MINTO - Town council here has authorized staff to apply to the Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance program to recover costs to the municipality from a major flood on June 23.

An Oct. 10 report from treasurer Gordon Duff stated "severe damage" occurred to both municipal and private property in the municipality during the flood, which resulted in an emergency declaration by Minto Mayor George Bridge.

The report notes the province has replaced the former Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program with the Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance (MDRA) program.

Under the guidelines for the new program, a municipality must

incur damage-related spending equivalent to at least three per cent of its local taxation levy to be eligible. In Minto's case this amount \$143,373. Once the threshold is met, the MDRA program funds 75% of cost up to the threshold and 95% of costs over that amount.

The report states town staff and engineers estimate Minto will exceed the threshold amount and recommend proceeding with an application prior to the Oct. 23 deadline.

If accepted under the program, the municipality would be eligible for a considerable cost recovery of the uninsured flood-related expenses, the report states. For example, if eligible costs were \$160,000, the town would receive a total of \$123,325 in funding.

Duff explained that while much

of the damage to municipal facilities will be covered by insurance, MDRA helps pay for uninsured damages.

"This is what's unique about this program - all the damage downstairs in the (municipal office) basement won't qualify because it's covered by our insurance," Duff noted.

"It's primarily for things out of the office like bridges and culverts and overtime pay and special supplies that we had to get in and that type of thing."

Mayor George Bridge pointed out the total extent of the damage might not be known at this point, as damage to such things as municipal drain systems might not be evident until spring. He asked if such costs could be submitted at that time.

"I don't believe so," replied Duff.

"I think we have to get everything in now. It's easy to quantify what's already done, it's what needs to be done - and 120 days goes by pretty quickly ... I think if we had any feedback it would be to extend that 120 days."

Bridge also asked if staff had any idea how many Minto residents had applied to the Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians, which provides funds to eligible homeowners, tenants, small owner-operated businesses and farms, and not-for-profit organizations.

Duff said he hasn't heard much in that regard. However, he noted the deadline for that program is Dec. 1 and urged, "If anyone's thinking of applying make sure you do."

He noted information on the program is available on the Minto

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Golden Ontario Products receives licence to export beef to China

By Lynne Turner

MOUNT FOREST - On Oct. 21 Golden Ontario Products celebrated receiving an export licence that will allow the company to export Canadian beef to China.

Receiving the licence was the culmination of five years of work by officials with the company, located just outside of Mount Forest.

Golden Ontario Products president and majority owner Nancy Kingsley-Hu was joined by general manager Patrizio (Pat) Donato, office manager Lorri Dickert and several dignitaries in making the announcement.

Kingsley-Hu said obtaining the licence means the company can now take advantage of a largely

untapped market.

"You can't just export to China, you need permission, so this has been a collaboration between the two countries," Kingsley-Hu told those gathered on a bright, sunny day.

The company president was described as being "a pinnacle of patience and persistence (because) that's what it takes to work with China."

Kingsley-Hu, her husband and children lived in Shanghai for several years. She imported honey and beer to China.

She said some of her backers wanted her to look at exporting beef to China and that's when the five-year odyssey to obtain the licence began.

When she began inquiries, the Kincardine Economic Development Board told her the 20,000 square foot Frey's abattoir near Mount Forest was on the market.

Golden Ontario Products purchased the building in December 2013.

"The first years were rough," Kingsley-Hu said. "The regulatory hurdles were daunting. Importing honey and beer was easy compared to this albatross."

Kingsley-Hu said her goal in "buying this plant was to give something back.

"I was from Goderich and used to be in the financial industry. I knew things about trade deficits. So I wanted to be able to send something to China that they would want

instead of always having things coming here."

Golden Ontario Products presently employs 30 people but in the near future that number will jump to 60 - and eventually to 100 to 150 people.

There are also plans to double the size of the facility.

"This will permanently sustain the business and mean an expansion of the workforce," said Donato. "We will be processing 80 beef a week to start."

"The ultimate goal is to process 80 beef a day," Kingsley-Hu said.

"There are 1.3 billion people in [China]."

Donato, described as one of the key players on the journey, owns Donato International. He considers

himself to be a farmer first and said it is high time Ontario farmers stand up for themselves.

"Some of the best farmers on the planet are in Ontario and it's time we stand up and take our accolades," he said.

He said he couldn't have wished for a better partner than Kingsley-Hu.

"To me, to represent Canada on the international level is humbling," he said.

Entire animals will be processed and sent to China, frozen, to be used primarily in the hospitality industry.

Rainer Knickmann of Mount Forest, who works for C&D (Canada) Import and Export Inc.,

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