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HALDIMAND & SIX NATIONS

EMERGENCY SIGNAGE FOR VACANT LOTS

'IT'LL BE A LIFESAVER'

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Kathy McDonald recalls the question that left her cold during her phone call to 911 the day her brother flipped the tractor almost 37 years ago.

"Ma'am, what's your address?"

"I was terrified," said McDonald. "Suddenly, I didn't know it or where he was."

The ground was soft from rain, she said, and her chest hurt from running to their South Cayuga farmhouse to call for help.

"I was gasping on the phone and kept saying, 'two roads down,' but I meant the field access was two driveways down," said McDonald.

Such imprecise location information can be difficult for emergency responders to access remote areas. However, to alleviate this issue, Haldimand has voted unanimously to support Farm 911 — The Emily Project, an initiative that promotes emer-

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Haldimand will be implementing Farm 911 - The Emily Project, named after seven-year-old Emily Trudeau, who was killed in a farming accident on her family farm in 2014.

Farm 911 photo

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HALDIMAND ENDORSES EMILY PROJECT

Continued from front

agency civic signage on farm fields and vacant lots.

"It's a worthy cause for sure," said Coun. John Metcalfe. "(There) could be hunting accidents, there could be four-wheeler accidents, all kinds of other issues; it doesn't have to be a farming incident."

The county's dispatch system is based on civic address, so if an accident happens on agricultural land without an address, first responders wouldn't know where to enter the property. Further, giving each field its own address gives emergency service workers a better chance of reaching an individual in distress, who may be working well away from the home where they have an

existing address.

The county has identified 776 possible land parcels in the county without civic signage. The new signs for vacant rural and agricultural land parcels would adopt yellow and black civic address signs, rather than the green and white signs used at other rural properties.

Civic signage costs \$109.61 and would be installed at the natural lip or driveway. The application process will be made simple, with a form and room to sketch the property and entrance.

President of Haldimand Federation of Agriculture Henk Lise said Haldimand will be the 20th county to endorse the cause.

"Everybody can put a value on somebody's life, but a \$109 sign is, well, 109 bucks."

Council discussed methods of implementation for farm entrances, which will remain on a volunteer basis — for now, although staff said that other municipalities found mandating it difficult.

Meanwhile, agricultural associations will reach out to their members, and the county is developing a marketing campaign to promote the project. Costs incurred will be reviewed at the 2022 draft tax supported budget meeting next spring, as will discussions on how the initiative will move forward.

Brett McDonald, whose son has taken over the family farm, said the signs would be a "game changer."

"I was lucky," he said. "But this project could make a difference between life and death and I hope

ABOUT THE EMILY PROJECT

The provincewide Farm 911 — The Emily Project which seeks to get civic addresses for agricultural and vacant rural land is named for Emily Trudeau, a seven-year-old girl who died in 2014 after being struck by a moving tractor on her parents' beef farm near Tweed. First responders could not immediately locate the field where the accident had occurred.

they'll make it mandatory. It'll be a lifesaver and may my family never need it."

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: When we learned about Farm 911 — The Emily Project, we wanted to know how Haldimand would implement the initiative.



Kate McDonald photo

Bob McDonald, right, almost died after he accidentally flipped his tractor on the family farm 37 years ago. He considers himself fortunate to have survived, and believes signage on vacant lots for emergency services could be a lifesaver.

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