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## CHRISTMAS JOY



HEATHER WRIGHT PHOTO

Lucy Bright, 20 months, lived up to her name, posing for a picture in the new light display at Victoria Park in Petrolia Sunday.

## Marriott calls for unity as he becomes warden of Lambton

Heather Wright  
The Independent

The new warden of Lambton County is calling on his peers to “put aside politics of individual municipalities and work for the good of Lambton County.”

Enniskillen Township Mayor Kevin Marriott was elected warden of Lambton County over the incumbent, Lambton Shores Mayor Bill Weber and Sarnia City/County Councillor Brian White.

The warden is the representative of the county and is elected by politicians who serve on county

council.

In an interview with *The Independent*, Marriott says it has been evident for some time that some Sarnia politicians question if the city gets “bang for its buck” being in the county system. Earlier this year, Sarnia City/County Councillor Dave Boushy asked Sarnia council to stop sending money to the county. The idea was nixed by council, but Marriott acknowledged the city feels alienated. “I recognize there is some tension there and I want to see it gone.

“As far as I’m concerned, we

all need each other to make the county system work,” Marriott says.

The new warden wants to make sure they know the benefits of being part of the county federation and says while Sarnia may contribute slightly more than it receives back, he believes the finance department at the county could produce the numbers showing the contribution is pretty close to the payout.

The rift between Sarnia and the rest of the county is only one of the issues in the next two years. Marriott, in his address

to councillors Dec. 2, called for unity in the county as it faces the economic fallout of the pandemic.

Marriott says 2020 has been a year to remember, but he worries what is ahead. Marriott says the province and the federal government have expanded the debt of the nation and that could affect Lambton County and its municipalities.

“I fear upper and lower tiers of Lambton will feel the cutbacks, probably worse than in the 1990s,” he says recalling how the provincial government downloaded the costs of things

such as ambulance services to Lambton. He called it “top down austerity.” Marriott says the cuts could be a “one-two punch” as the county needs to renew long term care, create new affordable housing units and save to buy the building which Shared Services is housed in Sarnia.

The new warden also voiced concern the province won’t address the funding problems facing rural Ontario. Cuts to the Ontario Municipal Partnership grant have hurt Lambton municipalities like Enniskillen.

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