

# The Independent

Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton

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## FREE FALLING



There was lots of happy faces and excited laughter as The Cannonball at the 167th Brighden Fair made its way to the top of its tower and a few frightened faces as the ride hurtled toward the ground only to stop gently about ten feet from the bottom. Some of the riders heaved a sigh of relief when they hit the ground, others looked at their friends saying "that wasn't as bad as I thought." For more photos of the last fall fair of the season see pages 7 and 8.

Heather Wright Photo

## Petrolia CAO owns youth centre building

Baron says he didn't disclose ownership to council because he's giving centre free rent

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Petrolia's chief administrative officer owns the building which houses a town run youth and seniors centre called The Rec Room - a fact not disclosed to council when the project was approved.

On March 13, 2017, Dave Menzies, director of facilities and community services, came to council for support for a youth and seniors drop in centre. "In discussions with programming staff at the OHDCC over the last year, one of the goals for continuous improvement was to develop and implement a youth drop in centre," wrote Menzies. The centre was to be located at "4168 Robert Street (rear, vacant LCDS offices)" according to the report. The owner of the building was not disclosed nor did councillors at the time ask who owned the property.

A budget attached to the report said it would cost \$38,000 to run the centre. The biggest cost was wages at \$16,400 per year. The report says one year of rent was to be \$9,600. The budget also included \$1,800 for utilities.

Town councillors agreed to set aside \$11,000 for the project. The budget projected service clubs would pay \$5,000, and when the building opened, the town recognized the Fiddick family as the major sponsor, contributing \$10,000 to the project.

SEE YOUTH CENTRE PG 2

## Alvinston water tower repair costs soar \$100,000

Heather Wright  
The Independent

Brooke-Alvinston will pay about \$100,000 more than expected to repair the Alvinston water tower.

The Alvinston standpipe is used to keep the water pressure up during high usage - especially in the case of a major fire.

It has been in need of repair for a number of years, according to Randy Hills, the municipality's manager of public works. The municipality recently received over \$60,000 in grants to complete the project this year.

But when Brooke-Alvinston asked for

estimates for the job which was estimated at first to cost about \$165,000, the cost escalated.

One company, which erects scaffolding inside the empty water tower and then sandblasts and coats the interior of the tower gave a price of \$775,000. The other, Jacques Daoust Coatings Mgt. Inc, offered to do the work for \$269,000.

The Daoust tender was much lower because the company lowers workers into the standpipe in "bucket" according to Mayor Don McGugan which saves a large amount of time and labour.

Council briefly considered putting the project off for another year, hoping to get

more grant money from the federal and provincial governments. "We could take a gamble and see if there is another grant," said Hills at a recent council meeting.

Instead, council decided it was time to move ahead with the work. The extra \$100,000 will come from the yearly payout the municipality receives after merging its utility into Bluewater Power years ago.

"It doesn't leave us a lot of money left in that reserve, but at least it will be done," says McGugan.

The work is expected to begin this month and the mayor says it is scheduled to take about seven weeks.

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