This page was exported from - Bancroft this Week
Export date: Fri Mar 29 6:54:24 2024 / +0000 GMT

Protecting seniors from COVID-19 a top priority, says mayor

April 28, 2020

By Nate Smelle

Each year at this time local residents and business owners start preparing for the inevitable influx of cottagers and tourists that converge on the area to enjoy the natural beauty of North Hastings. As the Victoria Day long weekend draws near and COVID-19's death toll continues to rise, for many in the community the realization that this year's summer cottaging/tourist season will be unlike any other is beginning to sink in.?One way or another, this is obviously going to have a huge impact on our local economy,? said Bancroft's Mayor Paul Jenkins.?It will not be the same this summer, there is no question about that. But what that exactly looks like, who the heck knows ? Basically nobody understands the full impact of this on the business community, and that's the thing we are really grappling with right now.?With Ontario's state of emergency still in effect, and so many uncertainties regarding the longevity of the pandemic still at play, Jenkins said Bancroft council recently decided to cancel this year's Canada Day celebration and the annual Wheels, Water and Wings festival scheduled in July. While according to Jenkins there is a chance that an event similar to WWW could be held this fall, he said it is highly unlikely considering the danger the coronavirus poses to the public's health and safety. Although there is a strategy to reopen businesses and services currently being developed by the province, in light of the fact there is the potential of a second and even a third wave of the outbreak being projected, he said he would be surprised to see any public gatherings or events anywhere in Ontario through the end of the year.?The key thing here is that we have a long-term care home and we have quite a number of seniors residences, and so far we have been reasonably successful at keeping it out of the community. When you keep it out of the community you are keeping it out of the seniors residences. As we are well aware over half of the deaths in Canada have come in long-term care or seniors' homes. So that's our ultimate goal, and everything is sort of centred around protecting those facilities.?Pointing to the outbreak at a long-term care facility in Bobcaygeon which took the lives of 29 people as an example of how ill-equipped small municipalities like Bancroft are to deal with a triage situation of that magnitude, Jenkins said it is absolutely essential that everyone continues to abide by the province's physical distancing and self-isolation guidelines. Noting the similarities between the two communities, he said ?Bobcaygeon is not that far from here, and it's not that much different in size. The population of Bobcaygeon is 3,525, and we are around 3,900 so we are very similar. They have a seniors home and they have had 29 deaths. People should not get complacent thinking that could not happen here. We have been very fortunate. We thank everybody for doing their part to adhere to the guidelines. So far it has made a difference so let's keep at it.?