

More than \$200,000 for Bancroft's wastewater systems



MP Mike Bossio, acting Mayor Paul Jenkins, CAO Hazel Lambe and fire chief Pat Hoover celebrate the announcement of more than \$200,000 through the Government of Canada's Clean Water and Waste Water fund for the Town of Bancroft. The funding represents 75 per cent of the total needed for the town's investigation and rehabilitation of its wastewater system ? 50 per cent federally and 25 per cent provincially. The town will make up the remaining around 25 per cent. / SARAH SOBANSKI Staff

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By Sarah Sobanski

The governments of Canada and Ontario have jointly released \$75,000 for study and inspections and \$122,562 for rehabilitation for Bancroft's wastewater collection system.

"The \$131,708 represents 50 per cent of the total project from the federal government. The province will provide a further 25 per cent and the town will contribute 25 per cent for a total project of \$263,416. The project includes camera imaging of the sewer lines, smoke testing and line repairs," said Bancroft CAO Hazel Lambe.

A press release of the announcement for the funding by MP Mike Bossio stated \$65,854 will come from the province.

The announcement was made May 24 by Bossio in Greater Napanee. It's a part of 10 new projects in Hastings-Lennox and Addington under the Government of Canada's Clean Water and Waste Water Fund. The release totalled more than \$1.1 million for water and wastewater infrastructure ? \$796,849 federally and \$398,426 provincially. It will also support projects in Napanee and Marmora and Lake.

"The municipalities will provide the balance of funding," stated the release.

"We have estimated \$80,000 for imaging and smoke test, balance for repairs identified following image identification of damaged lines. The imaging has been out in a **[request for proposals]** to be received. [The] RFP closes on May 26 when we anticipate selecting one of the proposals received," said Lambe.

According to a release, the first sum of funding is to go to "determin[ing] specific areas of rehabilitation focus within the wastewater collection system to improve optimization through reduced inflow and infiltration." The second sum will go towards "rehabilitation (remediation activities) to specific wastewater collection system areas identified as priorities by technical Feasibility Study and Inspections Report."

Bancroft's acting Mayor Paul Jenkins expressed gratitude for the funding in the release.

?Repairs to our wastewater infrastructure is in critical need. This financial support will allow the town to take the first step in addressing our major infiltration issue in order to make the system more efficient and affordable for our citizens," said Jenkins.

The fund is described as an "agreement between Canada and Ontario."

?Ensuring that rural communities have the tools they need to thrive is one of my top priorities, so I am very happy that the federal government is making such historic investments in Napanee, Bancroft, and across our riding. The \$796,426 of federal funding that I announced today for ten water and wastewater infrastructure projects are essential for building long term, sustainable rural

communities right here in Hastings?Lennox and Addington," stated Bossio in the release.

"People are frustrated, it's getting expensive to live," said MPP Todd Smith on what many in Bancroft have called the wastewater crisis. "Whether it's your water and sewer charges or your electricity or your natural gas or gas charges... Life is getting more and more unaffordable every day."

He added, "I feel for the current council because the current council had their hands tied on this. It's the situation that they inherited and they're required by law for full cost recovery."

Smith noted similar situations have happened in surrounding municipalities such as Stirling-Rawdon township.

"There were a number of protests at council meetings and in parks in the village. What happened there was the municipal council purchased a wastewater system and sewage lagoon that just didn't work so they ended up having to build another system," said Smith, noting a mistake was made but at the end of the day these things need to be paid for.

Smith said it's unfortunate that the province isn't in the position to bail out municipalities and ratepayers must pick up the cost.

"It's a positive thing they're getting the money for upgrades and the work that they need and getting some assistance. Otherwise, they would have to go out on their own and Bancroft certainly isn't in a position where they can do that. It's good for the upper levels of government to be assisting on this because it's a big cost for local municipalities especially the smaller more rural municipalities."