



## A CHRISTMAS DINNER TO GO

Hailey Stewart, Claire Schill and Dylan Brownlee (from the left) displayed one of the boxes that would be packed with all the fixings – including a grocery gift card to buy perishables – for families in need. “Every year we do a Christmas dinner free for the community at the arena. This year, with COVID, we pivoted,” explained Pastor Andrew Pilkey, pastor of the Living Way Church in Englehart. The church prepared Christmas boxes, for pick-up December 12 or delivery, for as many as 200 families. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)

# One plus one

## City adopts 2021 budget in principle

**Diane Johnston**  
Speaker Reporter

TEMISKAMING SHORES – City council has adopted in principle a “one and one” budget for 2021 – a one per cent increase in the overall tax levy and a one per cent hike in water and sewer rates.

For a homeowner in Temiskaming Shores with a property valued at \$225,000 and using municipal water and sewer services, the budget would translate into an overall increase of about \$30.30, to \$3,930.85.

City council approved the budget in principle December 15.

“I think it’s an excellent budget. We got it approved very early in the year, so that’s a great thing,” said Mayor Carman Kidd.

The spending plan incorporates anticipated increases in what the city must pay to the district’s social services administration board and the Temiskaming Health Unit. Both organizations have yet to approve their 2021 budgets.

Another unknown is the education tax rate, which is set by the province.

Budget discussions by city staff and in committees began several months ago.

At a meeting earlier this month to discuss the operating budget, treasurer Laura Lee MacLeod said staff used the 2020 budget that council had planned to approve as basis for a year-to-year comparison.

That spending plan was revised this spring in the wake of COVID-19.

Pandemic-related measures saw revenues from municipal facility rentals, user fees and transit drop. It has received some funding from under a federal-provincial Safe Restart program to offset those losses and is applying for second-phase funding.

Under the budget in principle, the city will raise \$1.3 million this year for capital projects. (See related story, “City approves \$11.5-million capital plan.”)

### OPERATIONS

The city’s operations budget, which covers day-to-day costs and some smaller projects, is down \$112,550, or almost one per cent, to about \$12.6 million.

But the operations budget covers more than municipal activities alone.

Looking at city spending alone, the budget is projected to drop \$370,000 to almost \$9.68 million. The municipality saved money in part through organizational changes in staffing and collected additional taxes from new development.

However, costs for policing are increasing, and the cost of social services and

Continued on 11a

# DID YOU GET The Speaker THIS WEEK?

Here are some of the stories in our December 16 edition...



- This week it was reported that the Temiskaming region has five active COVID-19 cases. One individual remains in Temiskaming Hospital.
- A new Highway 11 billboard promoting the Ontario Forestry Industry was unveiled to help the public better understand modern harvesting techniques.
- The district’s ability to test for the coronavirus has been given a boost, says Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Glenn Corneil.
- A giant 50-foot canoe landmark is being built for Temagami. The canoe project is being steered by Dave Wilfong.
- Donald Antler, the long-time public works superintendent with Armstrong Township, has retired after decades of service.
- Aviation fans will soar with delight when they turn the pages of Ron Mitchell’s new book about his father, bush pilot Gordon Mitchell.
- The Temiskaming Hospital Foundation Care Close To Home will offer monthly 50-50 draws to raise funds for new equipment purchases.
- A community arts project with a Rising Phoenix will take place in Temagami on December 21, the longest night of the year.
- Pat Buck was described as quiet and accomplished and now there is a bench installed at the Temiskaming Nordic Ski Club in her honour.



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**Congratulations to all the WINNERS from the 12 Days of Christmas Event!**

# GRAND PRIZE WINNER

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**\$100 GIFT CARD WINNERS:**

1. Alyssa Leonard
2. Rachel Hall
3. Martial Girard
4. Peggy Alexander
5. Bertha Hartzke
6. Betty Schuessler
7. Anna Tiltonel
8. Roland Schryer
9. Valerien Cyr
10. Jane Cameron
11. Annie Bourassa
12. Gloria Packard

*(Please reach out to Penny Durrant from the BIA to claim your prize!)*

A BIG thank you goes out to the BIA for sponsoring the event, Rhiannah Pinkerton for organizing the event, Temiskaming Printing for all the ballots, ballot boxes and news paper advertising, CJTT for the radio ads, Active One Source for Sports for creating the poster, and most importantly all of the local businesses that jumped on board to partake.

We hope you all have a wonderful holiday season!



## DOWNTOWN STORIES

New Liskeard Business Improvement Area coordinator Sharren Reil prepared to post a page from a family-friendly story at Chat Noir Books. The story walk combines literature and shopping, as readers make their way through a story window-by-window in downtown New Liskeard. It begins at the Match Factory. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)

# Cobalt refinery receives \$10 million in government funding

TEMISKAMING SHORES (Staff) - First Cobalt Corporation will receive a total of \$10 million in financial support from the federal and provincial governments.

The investments include a \$5 million interest-free loan through the federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor)

and a \$5 million non-repayable grant through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC).

First Cobalt Corporation stated in a press release that the combined strategic investment will enable First Cobalt to recommission and expand its cobalt refinery located east of North Cobalt.

“Once complete, the facility will be the first of its kind in North America, capable of producing 25,000 tonnes of battery-grade cobalt sulfate annually, which could represent five percent of the global market for refined cobalt.”

First Cobalt Corporation added that the refinery project has an estimated capital cost of \$77 million, including federal and provincial contributions totaling \$10 million.

A press release from FedNor and the NOHFC says the investments will help to improve Canada’s supply chain and reduce import dependency for electric vehicle battery production.

The federal and provincial funding announcement was made on Wednesday, December 16.

The press release stated that the objective is “to accelerate domestic production of battery-grade cobalt sulfate, a required element needed to produce long-range electric vehicles (EVs).

First Cobalt Corporation present and CEO Trent Mill stated, “The electric vehicle revolution is powered by cobalt and we are thrilled to partner with the Governments of Canada and Ontario to expand and recommission our Northern Ontario refinery bringing long-term, well-paying jobs to the community. Global demand for cobalt is increasing as EVs become more widely adopted. Once fully operational, our refinery will be the only source of domestic cobalt for the North American EV industry. Our value-added processing facility will support the North American and European auto sector with ethically-sourced, low carbon cobalt that will power electric vehicles now and into the future.”



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SALES REPRESENTATIVE  
(c) 705-648-1653  
[jeremyothmer@royallepage.ca](mailto:jeremyothmer@royallepage.ca)



The Rotary Club of Englehart has been giving Santa's elves a helping hand this Christmas season, as they have every Christmas for over 40 years. From the left are Rotarians Irene Bond, Burnie Walker, Lorie Allin and Lynne Hueston, pictured here with gifts that are part of Christmas hampers for Englehart and Earleton area people in need of support this year. Also part of the Christmas Box Committee are Charlie Warner and Sandy Austin. (Staff photo by Darlene Wroe)

# Santa's Rotary elves getting ready for Christmas

**Darlene Wroe**  
Speaker Reporter

ENGLEHART - The Rotary Club of Englehart has once again been busy checking lists and bundling food and toys for families in need of extra support this Christmas.

This season the Rotary Club of Englehart is providing something extra to families throughout the Englehart and Earleton areas, with a total of 53 families on their list. There are approximately 80 children among those families.

The Christmas Box Committee was on hand at the Englehart and Area Historical Museum to use the main floor as a sorting area

and on Monday, December 14, they were in full swing.

This year, the pandemic made it less possible for people to give actual donations of goods and toys, but monetary donations were about the same as last year, it was noted.

The committee includes Lynne Hueston, Lorie Allin, Irene Bond, Burnie Walker, Sandy Austin, and Charlie Warner.

All members of the Rotary Club of Englehart pitched in to assist with the annual project that has been taking place for at least 40 years.

The names of the recipients are not shared, explained Hueston.

"It is all kept very discreet."

She said the Rotary Club of Englehart tries "to do what we can" to help ensure everyone has a good Christmas.

## Temagami Family Health Team

Submitted by Ellen Ibey

# Season of Kindness

Kindness is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. Affection, gentleness, warmth, concern, and care are words that are associated with kindness.

One way to be kind is to open your eyes and be active when you see people in need. Do you notice when people could use a helping hand? A sense of community is created when people are kind to those who need help. A kind word or a smile can be simple acts of kindness.

For so many of us the world seems pretty dark and hopeless right now. We are glued to our screens, hoping for good news, but more often than not we end up reading reports or seeing news clips that fill us with anger, fear, or a sense of helplessness.

We're going to come in contact with a lot of people who are at their absolute breaking point this month. Friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, teachers, strangers in the grocery store, retail workers. While it may be the merriest time of year for some, it may be the saddest, most stressful, loneliest, most heartbreaking for others.

We're all busy, but we're not too busy to be kind, caring and patient. Remember the best thing you can give someone this season is your kindness.

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Temagami

Family Health Team

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18 Wellington Street, P.O. Box 580, New Liskeard, Ont. P0J 1P0  
Phone: 705-647-6791 Fax: 705-647-9669  
speaker@northernontario.ca  
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# Sweet memories

I couldn't make a Christmas pudding or cake if my life depended on it, but my mother sure could.

I never liked fruitcake to be honest, I always found it too heavy, but my mother spent hours and hours making them.

Her fruitcake recipe came from her mother, my grandmother, Orpha Smith.

Mom's Christmas baking was absolutely amazing, especially her homemade shortbread cookies.

Generally, she started baking at the beginning of December and every cookie tin in the house was washed and used as the baking accumulated.

To say mom was a genius

in the kitchen would be an understatement.

She might not have stood for world peace or had a bronze statue in her name or discovered a planet, but she sure knew her way around a kitchen.

The kitchen was mom's domain and she was the master baker.

I'll never forget the year we lived on Baker Street (fittingly) and she made me a special birthday cake.

It was in the shape of a doll with money inside wrapped up in waxed paper.

I was absolutely blown away as a child by her gesture and her skill at baking.

My mother's death changed



Sue Nielsen

not only my life but also all of her children's lives.

We no longer have our mother's love and her wonderful baking and each Christmas we reach into our memory chest and pull out the stories from our childhood in Cobalt.

There was one year when mom had a little too much Baby Duck wine and she forgot about the potatoes cooking on the stove. They boiled over and thank goodness for my grandmother, all was saved.

Lena's cheeks would get rosy red when she enjoyed a rare sip or two of spirits and her smile became wide and warm.

Recently my daughter asked me for Lena's cookbook, she had a few, but the one with her hand-written notes all over the grease stained pages.

I sadly told her I had no idea where that precious cookbook was.

I love eating Christmas baking, especially shortbread cookies, and these days my cousin Janette gifts us a tray of her delicious Christmas baking.

And when I enjoy a shortbread cookie or two I am enjoying a cherished memory of my mother.

My mother was a beautiful person, not only on the outside, but the inside too.

She was a tiny woman, all of 5 feet 4 inches tall, much shorter than her children.

She was the magic that made the holidays feel like home for us.

If you have just lost your mother this past year, I offer my sympathies. If you are lucky enough to have your mother near this holiday season, relish the time you have together.

Give her a hug and then give her another one.

Thank you mom for all the memories!

## How to reach us...

705-647-6791

Toll Free: 1-800-461-8751  
Fax 705-647-9669

Email: speaker@northernontario.ca  
www.northernontario.ca

**LOIS PERRY**  
General Manager ext. 224  
Cell 705-648-5337  
loisperry@northernontario.ca

**ALAN ROY**  
Sales Manager ext. 225  
speaker.al@northernontario.ca

**ARIANNA CLASSIFIEDS/ CIRCULATION**  
ext. 227 or 228  
classifieds@northernontario.ca

**STEVEN LAROCQUE**  
Editor ext. 239  
speaker.steve@northernontario.ca

**DIANE JOHNSTON**  
Reporter ext. 241  
speaker.diane@northernontario.ca

**SUE NIELSEN**  
Reporter ext. 246  
speaker.sue@northernontario.ca

**DARLENE WROE**  
Reporter ext. 240  
speaker.darlene@northernontario.ca

**JAMIE MOUNTAIN, LJI Reporter** ext. 242  
speaker.jamie@northernontario.ca

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## EDITORIAL

# Safe disposal sites

More and more people in the Temiskaming region are finding discarded needles on our streets.

Needle disposal is a public health and safety issue that may be overlooked in our region.

Having safe places to dispose of needles is important.

Exposed, discarded needles can be a hazard to pets, children and anyone encountering them.

In the Temiskaming region sharps can be dropped off at Ontario Sharps Collection Program participants including pharmacies, doctors' offices, the Temiskaming Health Unit, fire departments and more.

Sharps are anything that can pierce the skin.

We need more community-based public drop-off sites for things such as needles, syringes and lancets.

We must take a serious look at the opioid crisis affecting our communities. We are long past a time when we

attach any stigma to the people in crisis, but rather work together to solve the problem.

There are few families that have not been impacted by the opioid crisis and we need to find a way forward in a respectful, non-judgmental fashion.

The opioid crisis is claiming the lives of people across our region and province at an alarming rate.

It is also impacting many more lives across our community where people are realizing the impact drugs are having on families, workplaces and health care agencies.

Addiction is a misunderstood condition and one that requires all of our understanding, care and compassion.

We've successfully banded together to address the COVID-19 crisis, and we should use those same resources to better manage the opioid crisis.



# Committee to be formed for Temagami Dry trademark use

**By Jamie Mountain**  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

TEMAGAMI – Temagami Mayor Dan O’Mara has been given the go-ahead to form an ad hoc committee that will provide recommendations on the future use of the Temagami Dry trademark and product lines.

Council approved a motion at the December 10 regular meeting that authorizes O’Mara to do so.

After the municipality purchased the trademark earlier this year, there have been numerous unsolicited offers and advice received on what the town should do with it.

“As we move into 2021, it would be prudent to have a more complete discussion on what the future of the trademark could be,” treasurer-administrator Craig Davidson wrote in his report to council.

“An ad hoc committee, headed by the mayor to lead this discussion, appears to be a good model to use to review and critique different options. Recommendations from this ad hoc committee could be received by council for action.”

The second part of the motion that also was agreed on by council was that the size and composition of the committee can be determined by the mayor.

“Depending on what is being discussed, the size of the ad hoc committee may need to be expanded or contracted,” explained Davidson.

“To make this process more streamlined, the second part of the recommendation would allow the mayor to make these adjustments in a streamlined fashion, rather than waiting for the next meeting of council

where size and composition can be adjusted.”

O’Mara commented that there has been “quite some interest out there” when it comes to the

use of the Temagami Dry trademark and that he was hopeful that “we could pull something together in the next little while and we’ll go from there.”



**A LIGHT-HEARTED CHRISTMAS**

Six-year-old Fenton Harrison was among the handful of Latchford residents who watched as a tree facing the Latchford Community Centre was illuminated. Because of COVID-19 precautions, festivities were outdoors and brief – as the lights blinked on, a couple of drivers honked their horns and there was a round of applause and a chorus of We Wish You a Merry Christmas before the families dispersed. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)



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**COMMUNITY NEWS**

**Council Meeting:** The next Regular Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The meetings are being held in the Community Complex Hall to allow for proper social distancing to take place. Prior to attending any meetings, please screen yourself in accordance with public health guidelines and if you feel unwell, please stay home. Changes to gathering restrictions due to COVID-19 may impact how meetings are conducted so if you wish to attend, please contact the Municipal Office in advance to find out how the meeting will be conducted and to register as a guest as there is limited capacity in the Complex Hall.

**Coleman Holiday Hours:**

1. The Municipal Office and Public Works Department will be closed from Thursday, December 24, 2020, beginning at 12:00 noon and will reopen with regular hours on Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021;
2. The Municipal Waste site will be closed Saturday, December 26, 2020 and will then resume regular hours;
3. No Change to the Garbage or Recycling Collection Schedules.

**Municipal Waste Site: Hours of Operation**

Tuesday and Saturday - 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed: Statutory Holidays  
All garbage deposited at the Municipal Waste Site is subject to applicable tipping fees.

**Garbage:** A maximum of three (3) regular sized garbage bags of household garbage will be picked-up weekly. Please ensure your garbage is out by 7 am.

**Recycling:** Next collection date is Tuesday, December 29, 2020. Reminder to residents – **All recyclable material must be bagged in clear bags (30”X 32”), with the exception of cardboard. All cardboard must be flattened for pick up. Please have recycling out before 9 am to ensure pick up.**

**Municipal Office:** The municipal office is open to the public for in-person transactions. Please screen yourself in accordance with public health guidelines, review the signs and then ring the door bell for service.

If you feel unwell, stay home! Please minimize non-essential in-person visits to the office. The Township continues to encourage the use of internet payments through your financial institution, or by mailing cheques to the Municipal office.

**Building Permits** are required for all construction in the Township of Coleman. Please allow sufficient processing time for your application.

**By-law Enforcement:** To report a property standards issue or if you want to report some illegal dumping, please contact Pete Gilboe at 705-648-3750.

**Animal Control:** For emergency animal control services, please contact the Animal Control Service Provider at 705-648-4583.

A reminder to Coleman Residents now that Winter is here, in accordance with By-law 12-15, as amended, it is an offence to deposit snow on or across a township road, on township or other private property that doesn’t belong to you. It is also an offence to deposit and/or re-deposit or move snow in such a way that interferes with or obstructs normal visibility or obstructs vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the street and to deposit or re-deposit snow in a way that encroaches on the cleared portion of the street. We thank everyone in advance for your assistance and cooperation.

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# This holiday season needs to be different.

The safest way to celebrate indoors is only with the people who live in your home. People who live alone can get together only with one other home.

Gatherings with friends and extended family can carry an increased risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Consider celebrating outdoors or virtually with others that are not part of your household.

Know the gathering limits in your area before you choose to entertain with family and friends indoors. Indoor gatherings are not permitted in regions in Grey-Lockdown.

For all gatherings with anyone you do not live with:

- maintain 2 metres physical distance
- wear a face covering
- avoid potlucks or shared utensils
- ensure everyone washes hands regularly, including before and after meals

Self-isolate if you are sick, even if your symptoms are mild and ask guests to stay home if they feel unwell.

Follow provincial and local public health advice to keep you and your loved ones safe this holiday.

Stopping the spread, starts with you.

Visit [ontario.ca/celebratesafely](https://ontario.ca/celebratesafely) to learn more.

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# NEOFACS shares mental wellness tips for the holidays

**Sue Nielsen**  
Speaker Reporter

DISTRICT — The holidays can be a stressful time, but throw in the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic and you are talking about possible added stress loads on mental wellness.

In order to handle the stresses and strains of the busy holiday season successfully, the North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services (NEOFACS) is offering tips from child and youth mental health professionals.



"The holidays can be stressful for all families but are an especially trying time for children and youth who have previously, or who currently, struggle with behaviour or mental health issues. If you think your child might need more support, I encourage you to check in with one of our child and youth mental health clinicians. Let us help you manage this stressful time," said NEOFACS executive director John Raymond in an email message.

They would like families in the region to think about their children's mental wellness and to reach out if help is needed by contacting the agency day or night at 705-360-7100 or toll free in the Temiskaming district at 1-866-229-5437.

### TIPS

Here are seven tips to place family wellness first and to be ready when the holidays do become busy and stressful:

- Prioritize mental health during the holidays when things get busy by prioritizing children's mental health and doing what works best for your family. As a parent, consider the things that feel realistic for you to do and then offer those choices to kids/youth to pick from.
- Plan early to start having conversations with children about what the holidays may look like so they understand things will be different this year due to the pandemic so they know what to expect.
- Focus on what's under your control. When it comes to traditions of the holiday season, consider how to incorporate the traditions or at least parts of those traditions that are most important to your family.
- Managing disappointment can be crucial during the holidays as we realize the holidays won't be the same as other years. This will be disappointing for many and acknowledging that disappointment is important for children.
- Supporting children through grief during the holidays is important. Families can work together to work through their grief by supporting each other with ideas of memorializing their loved ones over the holidays, remembering that it's okay for children and youth to be upset as there have been varying types of loss this year.
- Take care of yourself. The holidays can be stressful and parents need to look after their own personal mental wellness. Planning a day where the family could play a game or watch a movie together is important while acknowledging parents need to take time for themselves.
- Don't underestimate your family's resilience concerning challenges. Looking back at the year remembering positive happenings is a good idea while making note of things that worked for your family. Each family's take on the year will look and feel particular to them.

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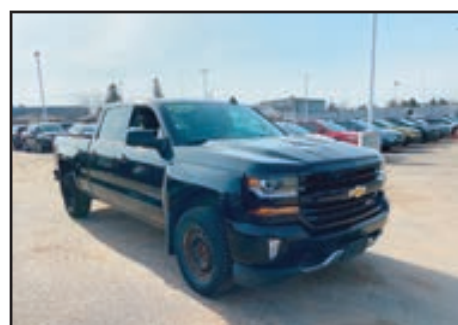
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# Christmas Bird Count takes flight in Temiskaming

**Sue Nielsen**  
Speaker Reporter

DISTRICT — People in the Temiskaming region may hopefully see more than a partridge in a pear tree when they participate in the 121st annual Christmas Bird Count.

Maybe bird enthusiasts will spot a northern cardinal, snowy owl, white-breasted nuthatch, evening and pine grosbeaks, common red polls, chickadee's or other interesting species that have been sighted in the region so far this winter.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is a way to collect information about bird sightings in this region and also across North America. It runs from

December 14 to January 5, says Hilliardton Marsh Research and Education Center bird expert Bruce Murphy in a telephone interview with *The Speaker*.

The local count happens within a 15-mile radius with Haileybury being at the center.

Anyone is welcome to participate, says Murphy, but they must do it on their own, in their own vehicle as the Marsh is not coordinating the bird count this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Normally the counts happen in groups but not during the pandemic.

The data collected during the count will be sent to the National Audubon Society to study bird populations.

"The count will give us a snapshot of birds in the area. We are seeing snowy owls, cardinals, northern gulls across the north," said Murphy. "If people don't see birds on the days of the counts, but they are seeing them regularly at their feeders, they can still be counted that way."

Murphy said if people have questions about the Christmas Bird Count, how to go about it or any other related questions they can reach out to him at the Marsh's Facebook page.

"We seem to be between migrations, with people spotting lots of field birds."

He said it was a good hatch year for some species like cardinals, warblers and wrens, especially those who feed on the spruce budworm.

"We are seeing red bellied woodpeckers which is a cool bird we normally only see every five or six years at the Marsh. Overall our numbers of species is down."

Murphy has just been accepted as a new committee member representing Northern Ontario on the Ontario Field Ornithologist board of directors.

He sees this as a positive for northern birders and the Marsh in particular.

While the public cannot access the Marsh and its programs, Murphy reminds area birders to



## GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

*There was plenty of excitement and eager hands as Temagami children set about making ornaments at the Temagami Train Station December 5. Alyssah Grant, 6, was one of those, and quickly set out tracing a Christmas tree design for her project. The activity was hosted by Living Temagami. (Staff photo by Darlene Wroe)*

keep track of the birds they are seeing and take part in the annual count.

"We are seeing people who have become interested in birding because of what we are doing at the Marsh, unfortunately we are closed due to the pandemic for now," he said.

The Christmas Bird Count

begins Sunday, December 20, in Haileybury. It extends to December 27 in the Elk Lake area and on January 3 counting takes place in Hilliardton.

A map of the count and relevant information can be accessed from the National Audubon website.



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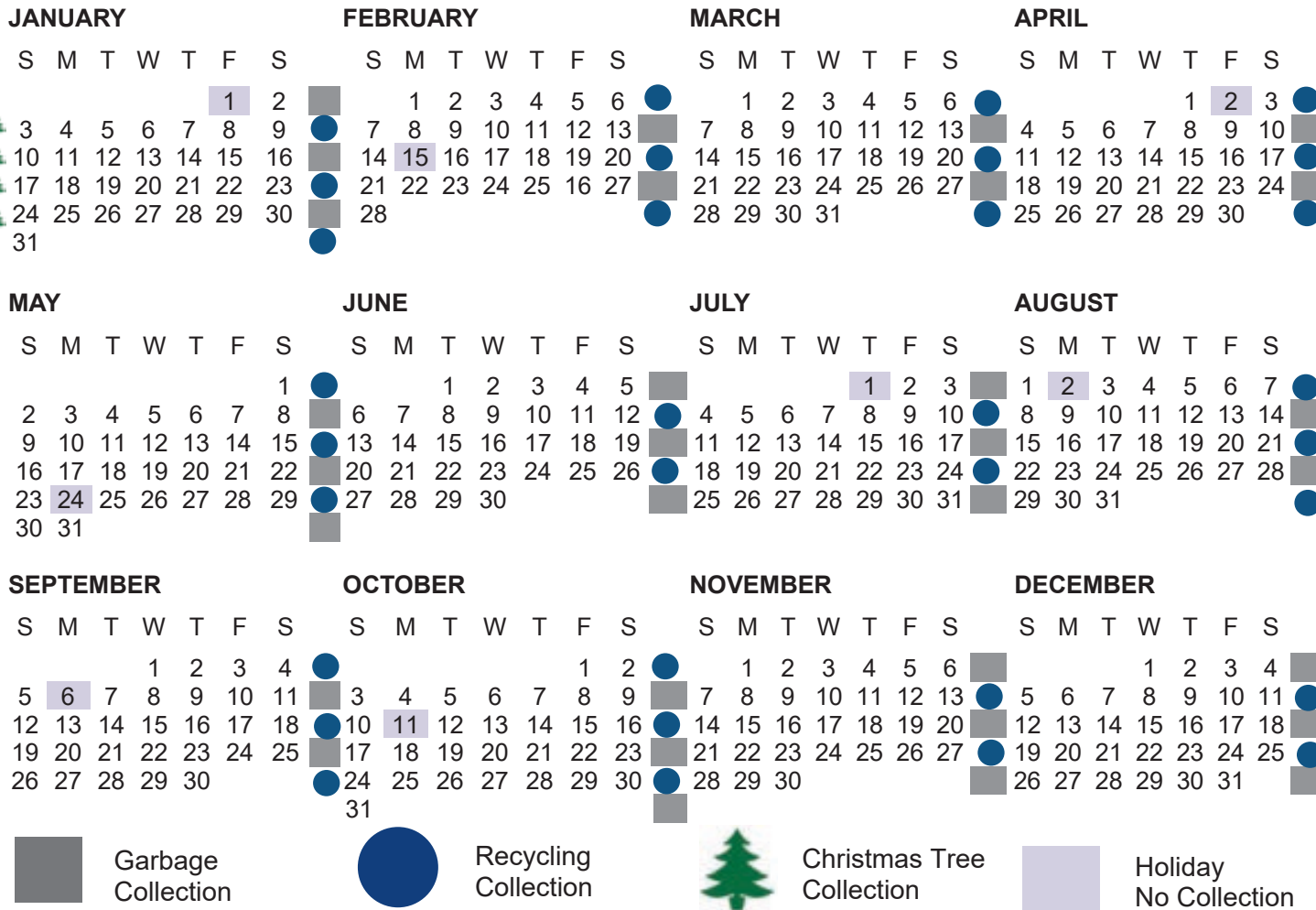


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- Christmas Tree Collection
- Holiday No Collection

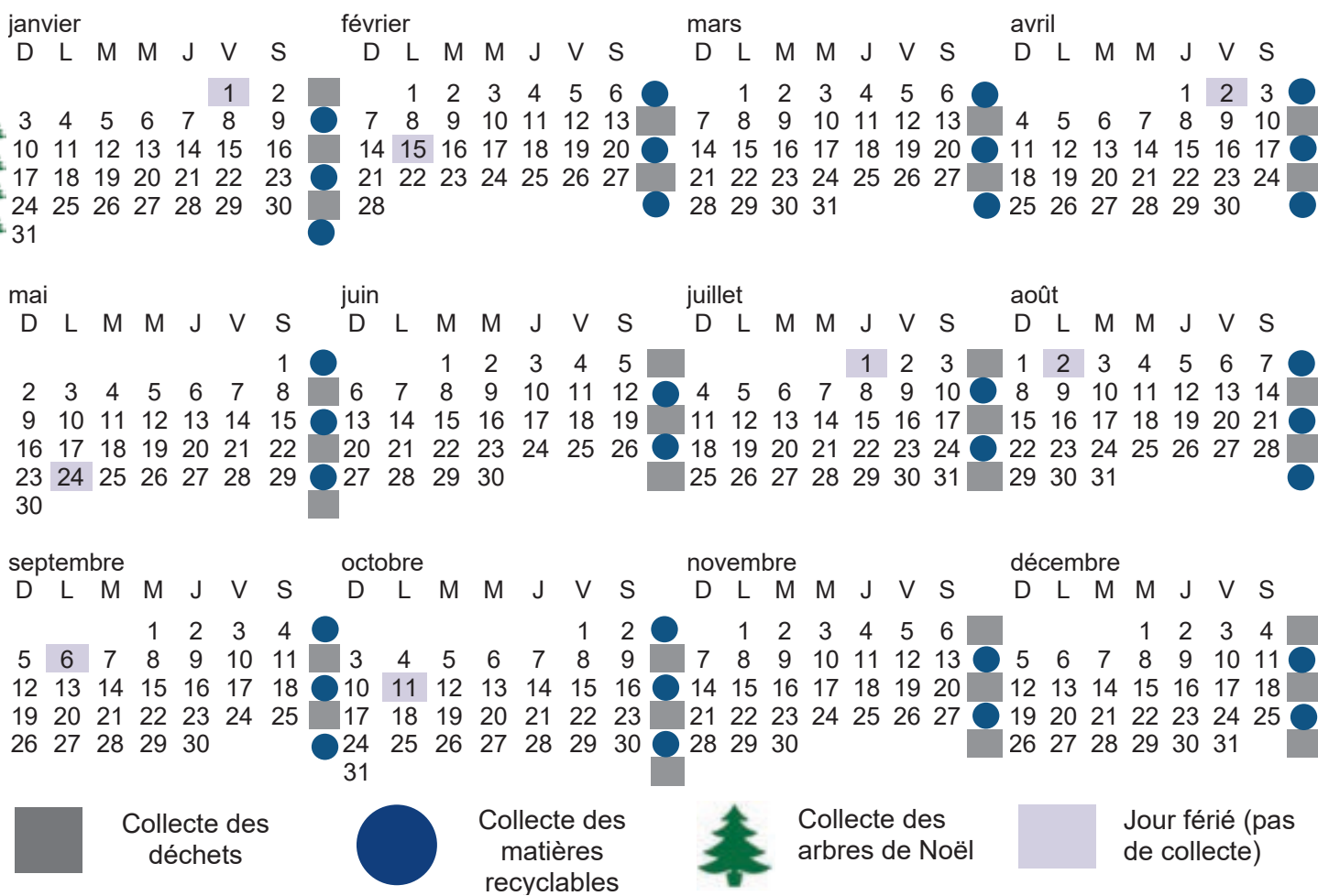


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# Calendrier de collecte sélective 2021



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# Driving under the influence: YOU HAVE EVERYTHING TO LOSE



## 5 things you could lose as a result of impaired driving



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Getting behind the wheel after consuming drugs or alcohol can have dire consequences. Here are five things you may lose as a result of this choice.

**1. YOUR LICENCE**

One potential penalty for driving under the influence is that your licence may get revoked. In some regions, first-time offenders are prohibited from driving for a period ranging from several months to a year.

**2. YOUR MONEY**

In addition to getting fined for the infraction, you'll need to pay for a lawyer. You can also expect to spend more on car insurance for many years to come. Additional expenses may be involved too. Depending on the circumstances, you may have to settle up with a victim or pay into a compensation fund. You may also need to pay for a breath alcohol ignition interlock device.

**3. YOUR CLEAN CRIMINAL RECORD**

If you're found guilty of driving under the influence, you'll end up with a criminal record, which could complicate many facets of your life, from landing a job to travelling.

**4. YOUR JOB**

If your job requires you to operate a vehicle (for example, if you're a trucker, delivery person or taxi driver) you may be forced to leave it. This may also be the case if your employer demands that you have a clean criminal record.

**5. YOUR LIFE**

Impaired driving heightens your risk of being in an accident, and if you add poor road conditions to the equation, it could make matters worse. If you get into a car crash, you could be seriously injured or killed, or you could injure or kill your passengers or other road users.



If you plan to consume drugs or alcohol, make sure you have a safe way to get home. Call a taxi, hire an Uber or catch a ride with a friend.



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# City approves \$11.5-million capital plan

**Diane Johnston**  
Speaker Reporter

**TEMISKAMING SHORES** – The city has drafted a capital spending plan of almost \$11.5 million for 2021.

A little over \$1.3 million of that sum will come directly from general taxes paid by ratepayers in 2021.

The city will borrow about \$4.58 million, and it'll pull almost \$2.77 million from reserves.

A variety of provincial and federal programs and other organiz-

ations will cover the remaining \$2.7 million.

On the water and sewer side, it'll transfer \$883,700 from operations for capital projects and reserves.

The city is managing to stay within a one per cent tax levy increase while planning "a lot of work," said Mayor Carman Kidd December 15 as council approved in principle the capital spending estimates.

## ROADS

The single biggest commitment is \$5 million over two years for road work.

Specific roads have not yet been selected, but high-traffic areas, transit routes, and roads around the new splash pad to be built in New Liskeard have been identified as priorities.

Given that an estimated \$50 million in road work is needed across the municipality, "we're not going to be able to repair everybody's roads for that \$5 million," said Mayor Carman Kidd when council discussed the first draft of the capital budget earlier this month.

About \$400,000 in upgrades would be done in 2021, with the largest share – \$4.6 million – in 2022.

Outside funding would cover almost \$1.3 million of the total cost, with the municipality borrowing \$3.7 million.

Under a 10-year financing plan presented to council, funding from a provincial infrastructure program would cover the bulk of principal and repayments for the first seven years.

At the December 9 meeting, Councillor Jeff Laferriere supported the overall capital plan for this year.

But Laferriere, who also chairs the corporate services committee, was concerned over the long-term impact of financing.

"The more we borrow and we start having to make principal and interest payments, the compounding impact that it's going to have on the budget is really going to put more pressure on the rates that our ratepayers are going to see."

If the current plan addresses only 10 per cent of road-related issues and the municipality chooses to do another 10 per cent, it'll double its borrowing costs for roads alone, he said.

The municipality needs a longer term strategy, he said.

The city does have access to ongoing gas tax funding and annual transfers from the operating budget, Kidd said.

It's also making progress on asset management planning, said city manager Chris Oslund.

"We know there's a lot of capital work that needs to be done and a lot of capital renewal that needs to take place as well," he said.

But the proposed plan provides a start, said Oslund.

## PROJECTS

Listed below are some of the projects in the capital budget that council adopted in principle December 15:

- a new fire station in Haileybury, \$1.68 million. It had originally been included in this year's budget, but was dropped as council slashed spending in the uncertainty created by COVID-19.
- construction of a splash pad in New Liskeard, \$522,000.
- new vehicles, including a fire rescue vehicle for the New Liskeard station at \$415,000, a tri-axle dump truck at \$225,000,

and a loader at \$350,000.

- accessibility upgrades at the Don Shepherdson Memorial Arena, \$450,000.

- reconstruction of the Roy Bridge on Uno Park Road. It's a shared project with Harley Township, with the city's portion set at \$195,000.

- a trailer-mounted generator and a trailer-mounted trash pump for the Robert-Elm street pumping station in New Liskeard, \$190,000.

- street lights on Grant Drive, \$130,000.

- upgrades to the New Liskeard marina building, based on an engineer's structural analysis, \$120,000.

- the relocation of the crosswalk lights at Northdale Manor in New Liskeard to École catholique Ste-Croix in Haileybury,

and the installation at the Manor of a new pedestrian crossing similar to that on John Street in New Liskeard, \$85,000.

- resurfacing of the New Liskeard tennis courts, with one of the four courts converted into a basketball court and the addition of permanent lines for Pickleball, \$70,000.

- two new bus shelters and a software app that transit users can access, \$40,000.

- a StairMaster for the Pool-Fitness Centre, \$11,000.

At a meeting earlier this month, treasurer Laura Lee MacLeod noted that the projects list is not set in stone.

But by approving the capital spending estimates now, she said staff will be able to tender the projects and bring the results back to council for a final decision.

## One plus one

*Continued from A Front*

public health is also expected to rise. Borrowing costs for municipal projects will also increase.

General annual support from the province through the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) also continues to decline.

In 2021, it'll drop by almost \$80,000 to about \$3.19 million.

In light of its lower operating budget, the city could have skipped any tax levy increase, said Councillor Jeff Laferriere, who chairs the city's corporate services committee, at the December 8 meeting when the operations budget was discussed.

But when the committee looked at the list of big-ticket projects, it recommended a one per cent increase "to get a handle on what we can afford, from a capital perspective," he said.

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