

Ilderton ~ Denfield ~ Arva

Mayor Al Edmondson says 2011 has been a very exciting year for the township

by Caleb MacGillivray

MIDDLESEX CENTRE - Every year around this time we, the Middlesex Banner, dedicate an edition to a series of question and answer interviews with elected officials and school board Trustee Chairs. The following is our chat with the Mayor of Middlesex Centre, Al Edmondson.

Are you enjoying this job?

The answer is definitely "yes." The main reason is that I am a part of team that is interested in making our community a better place to live and has already taken some innovative steps to do just that.

Do you think you are compensated enough for the time you put in and for what's involved?

This is the type of job that is that it is a honour to have, but probably would not attract anyone looking for a high five-figure salary, but like any job, if you like what you are doing and you feel you are making a difference it isn't always about the money.

Overall, how did 2011 go as Mayor?

This has been a very exciting year. We have a new Council that seemed to pick up where the previous council left off in terms of moving forward. This was made easy due to a staff that had the same enthusiasm and direction. Some of our biggest projects were completed this past year and the blueprint for the future has already been set in motion.

What was the brightest moment for you in this job in 2011?

Personally, having the opportunity to serve the Middlesex Centre Community again would have to be my brightest moment in that it gave me the opportunity to carry forward the plans that had already been commenced by previous councils. It also allowed me to work with the people of the community and a Staff and Council that I have great respect for.

What was the darkest/most disappointing moment for you in this job in 2011?

A disappointing moment... well I must confess that we as a community and as a Council have been very fortunate in 2011 and in past years, and thus I can honestly say that there is nothing that comes to mind that I would say keeps me awake at night as Ellen can attest to. Based on 2011, what is the greatest challenge facing the municipality?

Clearly the greatest challenge for us was weighing the opportunities that we had placed in front of us against the financial risks that they could create. In short there had to be a long term view of what strategy would serve Middlesex Centre the best.

Does your government have enough revenue to do what needs doing?

When it concerns money, one never hears from a municipality

that it has lots, but as I said previously we have been fortunate. Yes we have spent considerable sums, but in partnerships that we feel will pay off as we move into the future. Our new Medical Centre in Ilderton could not have been accomplished without the University partnering with us, and the Ilderton Doctors being willing partners as well. The Water Pipeline from Arva to Komoka which is serving the Kilworth, Komoka, and Mount Brydges areas now, and will serve Delaware and perhaps Melbourne and Glencoe in the future was another example of communities working together with Government for the long term benefit of all. The Build Canada Fund presented us with the opportunity to partner with the other two levels of government in creating the Wellness Centre in Komoka and up grading our Public Works garages. Even our sports facilities have been upgraded through partnership such as the new compressors in the Ilderton Arena and the ball diamond in Delaware. It is of special interest to note that the Service Clubs throughout the community have contributed handsomely to many projects in partnership with Middlesex Centre and the Trillium Foundation.

The point here is simply that we can accomplish much more through partnerships, and as we move forward we will continue to look for the same in the private sector as well. The money that has been spent puts us in a position that we have infrastructure ready to support growth as well as a plan as to how that growth will take place in an orderly fashion. In the big picture this benefits Middlesex Centre, Ontario and Canada.



What is the best opportunity to improve services for taxpayers?

I think the best opportunity is through government and private partnerships as explained in detail in the previous answer.

INVOLVED (from page 11)

involved in the budget process to ensure our ability to invest in student learning.

We are monitoring shortfalls in some areas such as Full Day Kindergarten, and working within our budget to meet Ministry and community expectations.

What is the best opportunity to improve services for taxpayers?

Parent and community involvement in education is proven to be very important to student success.

We rely on our families and communities to be involved in our schools and support our students.

Our literacy and numeracy initiatives, and investments in technology will help to ensure that our students gain the proficiencies needed for success in life.

BEST (from page 12)

What is the best opportunity to improve services for taxpayers?

Anything that improves communication and access to our system will make the system better and provide a greater return to taxpayers. We should use online courses and communication to allow for easier access by members of our school community.

What are your top three priorities for the year ahead?

First I would like the board to communicate with public better and dispel some of the misconceptions out there. Our schools are much open than most people think, we are

Was there one thing you personally championed and got approval for in 2011?

As I have pointed out in previous years, very little gets accomplished by individuals. Things

Was there one thing you personally championed and got approval for in 2011?

We are embarking on a new strategic plan that will involve input from all of our partners in education. It is my hope that our vision will reflect the hopes and dreams we all have for public education in our communities.

What are your top three priorities in this position?

Meeting the needs of all students - seeking and supporting improvements in programs and services to ensure equity, fairness, and accessibility of programs students need to realize their goals.

Improving communications - we have worked to create and honour agreements with our municipal partners, as well as working toward improvements in input processes and

not a closed system. It is up to us to get that message out.

Second I hope we will be able to get through our budget and contract negotiations with as little pain as possible. This year we have to renew our collective bargaining agreements with all the various teacher and staff this is always a challenging time.

Thirdly I would like us to increase communication channels with everyone in the system, especially the parents.

The local school in Lucan, St. Patrick's is celebrating its' 50th Anniversary in 2012, any plans to renovate or replace it or any other schools in the County?

I am not aware of any plans for

happen when there is a strong team and members listen to each other and draw on the intelligence of others outside our realm.

That being said I am very proud that we have made great strides in moving towards a sustainable green community. Thus I would point out that it is amazing what can get accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit.

Do you have anything you'd like to add for our readers?

Thank you for the opportunity to answer these questions, and on behalf of our Council, Staff and myself I would wish everyone much health and Happiness in the New Year.

We would like to thank the Mayor, Al Edmondson, for taking the time to address our readers on this past year.

community engagement.

Working with our staff, students and communities in creating a visionary strategic plan for the Board.

Do you have anything you'd like to add for our readers?

I would like to thank members of the community, our staff and students for everything they do to make our schools vibrant, nurturing places to learn and grow. It was an honour to serve our students, communities, and the Board as the 2011 Chairperson.

We would like to thank Tracy Grant for taking the time to address our readers, and would also like to congratulate Tracy on her time served as Chair as she steps away from the position.

new construction in the county, but I have not been in the job for very long. We have a committee that looks at all schools on an individual basis, and of course money is always a major factor in the decision.

Do you have anything you would like to add for our readers?

I would like everyone to know that the Catholic school system is more open than most people think. All students are welcome from all faiths and non-Catholics account for 30% of our student population. Our schools are an option for everyone. We are not strictly faith based, and offer a very good education to all students who may be interested.

Kick it into high gear.

The YMCA has it all:
group exercise, swimming, boot camp, yoga, zumba, pilates and strength training. The time is now. There's no reason not to be your best in 2012.

We've been waiting for you.

ymcaswo.ca

Building healthy communities