



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Newsletter – December 2020

This newsletter provides updates regarding recent activities and advocacy of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC). The intended audience includes Wardens, Mayors, CAOs, upper-tier and lower-tier municipal councils, municipal staff, and the media. EOWC members are encouraged to circulate this newsletter within their County networks.

For complete details about the EOWC, including priorities, membership, meeting schedules, minutes, and press releases, please visit www.eowc.org, or via [Twitter](#).

2020 Priorities: A Year in Review

In May, EOWC members reset their priorities for 2020 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pandemic specific priorities included municipal recovery and economic recovery. The caucus' collaborative advocacy over the past months around the pandemic has helped to secure regional support and funds from the upper orders of government, such as the Federal-Provincial Safe Restart Agreement and the Province's Social Services Relief Fund, among others. Medium and long-standing priorities in addition to the above pandemic priorities include: EORN Cell Gap Project and Broadband Gap Strategy, Long-Term Care and Housing Affordability.

Short and long-term strategies and intergovernmental relationships that the EOWC has fostered continue to ensure that eastern Ontario and the EOWC is a valuable voice that informs the government's decision-making tables. As the pandemic continues, the work and commitment of caucus members remains strong, pragmatic and goal-oriented based on the chosen priorities. The EOWC continues to meet regularly and virtually. The caucus, its members and staff have pivoted and continue to represent the region's needs and interests.

To learn more, visit the [EOWC website](#).

Meeting with the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

On October 19, the EOWC Chair and staff met with the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) Chair, Huron County Warden Jim Ginn, and staff. The meeting consisted of discussion around mutual priorities, pandemic responses, and current and future advocacy alignment. It

was decided that EOWC - WOWC Chair and staff level meetings will occur on an annual basis or as-needed.

To learn more about the WOWC, visit the [WOWC website](#) and [Twitter](#).

Meeting with FCM's New CEO

During the November EOWC CAOs' Group Meeting, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) new CEO, Carole Saab, joined the discussion. As part of the EOWC's proactive advocacy, alignment with the federal order of government, and the federal association that represents municipal governments, FCM, is critical. The conversation consisted of mutual introductions, learning about FCM's policy direction and priorities, as well as COVID-19 specific actions at the federal level to support municipalities. The EOWC looks forward to welcoming the FCM President and staff to the March EOWC meeting in 2021.

To learn more, visit the [FCM website](#) and [Twitter](#).

Thanks to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary Treasurer

EOWC Chair, Kawartha Lakes Mayor, Andy Letham, Vice-Chair, Hastings County Warden, Rick Phillips, and Secretary Treasurer, CAO Ron Taylor lead the caucus throughout an unprecedented year. 2020 brought forward a number of challenges and the inability to meet in-person to have collaborative, wholesome conversations. The EOWC met nine times during 2020, in addition to the ongoing meeting with priority working groups and among staff. The leadership of these three individuals, caucus Wardens and Mayors, CAOs and the support staff made it possible to continue advocacy, policy and work that will benefit the region's communities.

Comprehensive Review of Eastern Ontario Long-Term Care Facilities

One of the EOWC's priorities, made even more urgent by the pandemic, is long-term care. As part of this priority, the EOWC embarked on a comprehensive regional review aimed at improving long-standing systemic issues in the long-term care sector. The review is made up of two phases led by the long-term care working group and KPMG. Phase 1 of the review was presented to CAOs during the December 4, 2020 CAOs' Group Meeting and will soon be finalized. Phase 2 will consist of recommendations for the sector, which will be completed in the new year. The EOWC looks forward to sharing the regional data, information and policy recommendations on behalf of the eastern region's municipal sector at the upcoming 2021 ROMA Conference.

Upcoming Events

EOWC Meeting

The next EOWC meeting is the Inaugural Annual General Meeting, which will take place on January 7 and 8, 2021 via Zoom Videoconference. The EOWC looks forward to welcoming new members, the AMO President and Executive Director, and provincial and federal ministers from across the region.

2021 Virtual ROMA Conference

The EOWC is excited to be participating in the 2020 ROMA Conference taking place from January 25 to 26, 2021. Over the past many years, the EOWC and Ministers of the Provincial Government have met during the conference to discuss issues and challenges faced by member municipalities across rural eastern Ontario. EOWC members once again look forward to the multi-ministerial delegation and learning about timely rural municipal issues and ideas during the upcoming ROMA Conference.

To learn more, visit the [ROMA Conference](#) website.