

# The Paris Independent

Issue #225

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025

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## 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



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# Council denies noise exemption for Paris Drinks Fest, forcing venue change

CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

County of Brant council has voted against granting a noise bylaw exemption for Paris Drinks Fest at the Syl Apps Community Centre, a decision that prevents the popular summer festival from returning to its current location in 2026.

Council defeated the exemption request in a 6-3 vote during its Dec. 16 meeting, with Mayor David Bailey and councillors Steve Howes, John Bell, John Peirce, David Miller and Brian Coleman voting against the exemption. Councillors Jennifer Kyle, John MacAlpine and Lukas Oakley supported the request, while Coun. Robert Chambers was absent.

Without the exemption, amplified music would not be permitted at Two Rivers Stadium, effectively requiring organizers to find an alternative venue for the event.

Paris Drinks Fest has been held at Syl Apps for the past two years after relocating from Lions Park due to flooding linked to nearby development. Council had previously designated the 2026 festival as a municipally significant event during a November meeting - a step required for a Special Occasion Permit - but stopped short of offering long-term support for the location.

A staff report presented to council noted that the 2025 event drew approximately 4,200 attendees and generated an estimated \$487,000 in economic impact for the region. Staff also acknowledged that complaints related to the event were "nominal compared to the number of attendees and residents who have not filed complaints," but referred the exemption decision to council due to ongoing concerns about the site's proximity to residential neighbourhoods.

Public feedback submitted during the exemption process raised concerns about noise levels, vibrations, public intoxication and late-night disturbances in surrounding neighbourhoods.

Several residents living near Syl Apps described music that rattled windows, disrupted sleep and forced families indoors or

away from their homes during the festival weekend, always held in mid August. Others cited loitering, litter, marijuana smoke and people congregating on private property after the event ended.

Coun. John Bell said complaints received during and after the 2025 festival influenced his decision.

"Council has a duty to consider the well-being of the impacted minority," Bell said in an emailed statement. "I give more weight to a complaint from a local resident than a fest attendee from out of town who disapproves of our decision."

Bell emphasized that his objection was to the location, not the event itself, and said he would support the festival at a site that minimizes impacts on nearby residents.

Coun. Steve Howes echoed that view, saying allowing amplified music at Syl Apps could set a precedent for future events.

"If it's good for Drinks Fest, it has to be good for any other events," Howes said. "Syl Apps is not the right location for big, loud events in today's community."

Coun. David Miller, who also voted against the exemption, said additional opposition emerged in the days leading up to the council meeting.

"There were a number of letters from nearby residents that came in just prior to the meeting in which they voiced their strong opposition to the event," Miller said. "Many did not know that they could even voice an objection, which leads me to believe that there is more than likely even more neighbours of Syl Apps that would be opposed."

Coun. John Peirce stated publicly that his vote was not a reflection of opposition to the festival, but rather concern over venue suitability. He said staff have been directed to continue working with organizers to explore alternative locations.

Mayor David Bailey said he supports the festival and hopes discussions will lead to a solution.

"I believe it brings economic and social benefits to our community," Bailey said. "I remain hopeful that through discussions



(MICHELLE MALVASSO PHOTO)

**Born in the Eighties** perform on stage at the Twin River Stadium beside the Syl Apps Community Centre during Paris Drinks Fest in August 2025. County of Brant council recently voted against granting a noise bylaw exemption for the festival to return to the site in 2026.

we can work with the event organizers to find a suitable solution."

Councillors who supported the exemption pointed to the festival's cultural and economic value.

Coun. Lukas Oakley said the event aligns with the County's Arts, Culture and Heritage strategy and highlighted that nearly five per cent of the County of Brant's population attended the festival in 2025.

"I was confident in what I had seen from the organizers," Oakley said, adding that efforts were made to minimize disruptions.

Festival organizers also expressed disappointment with council's decision, noting that the noise exemption had been approved administratively in previous years.

In a statement released after the vote, Paris Drinks Fest organizers said council's decision was based on six noise complaints and confirmed the event would not return to Syl Apps in 2026.

Organizers said the festival has generated an estimated \$2.5 million in economic impact since 2018 and emphasized its focus on local food and beverage producers. They confirmed they are now seeking a new venue and asked council for a list of public spaces that would be supported for future events.

The Paris Fairgrounds,

frequently suggested by residents, is not an option, organizers said, as it is private property and unavailable for events of that nature.

News of the decision sparked strong reaction online, with residents calling for council to overturn their vote.

An online petition calling for reconsideration gathered more than 1,300 signatures within 48 hours of the decision. Supporters questioned whether denying the exemption undermines the purpose of designating the event as municipally significant, particularly given its downtown economic impact during ongoing construction.

Other residents, including some living adjacent to the site, said they experienced minimal disruption and praised organizers for being responsive and organized.

Council has directed staff to continue working with organizers to explore alternative venues for future editions of Paris Drinks Fest.

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## 2025 Year In Review Trivia

By Stewart Grant

- What popular numeric-based phrase annoyed parents and teachers alike in 2025?
- Who led the Toronto Blue Jays in postseason hits and batting average?
- What movie won "Best Picture" at the 2025 Oscars?
- Canadian Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led what pro sports team to a championship in 2025?
- The G7 Summit in June was held where in Canada?
- Who is Robert Francis Prevost better known as?
- Who was elected as Mayor of New York City in November?
- What AI chip maker is the world's most valuable company at year end?
- What is the most populated country in the world as of year end?
- What was the name of the hero who tackled and disarmed one of the gunmen at Bondi Beach, Australia on Dec. 14?

This week's answers are found on pg. 19

# County of Brant receives \$185K in provincial funding to address legacy oil and gas well risks

## MEDIA RELEASE

The Ontario government is investing an additional \$4 million to protect communities from the risks of old and inactive oil and gas wells. Nine municipalities across southwestern Ontario will receive provincial funding to enhance emergency preparedness and response, as part of the government's \$23.6 million Legacy Oil and Gas Wells Action Plan.

"Today's announcement is yet another step our government is taking to help municipalities keep their communities safe from the risks of old and inactive oil and gas wells," said Mike Harris, Minister of Natural Resources. "This investment is helping us protect Ontario's communities today, while building a strong, safe and more resilient future."

Since 2023, Ontario has provided close to \$10 million to help municipalities purchase specialized equipment, deliver critical training programs, collaborate across municipal borders and enhance emergency response capacity to keep communities safe from oil and gas related emergencies. Funds have been used to purchase emergency response equipment, provide health and safety training to municipal staff and improve public education and awareness.

"This important investment reflects Ontario's commitment to protect families and communities across Ontario," said Jill Dunlop, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response. "Preventing oil and gas related emergencies is critical to ensuring public safety and is a key component of our government's plan to enhance Ontario's ability to be safe, practiced and prepared."

Minister Harris made the announcement in the County of Brant, which is receiving up to \$185,000 to support the purchase of new equipment such as a drone for hazardous gas detection, an inflatable emergency shelter and additional specialized gas detectors.

In addition to the County of Brant, eight other southwest municipalities are receiving funding, including the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Norfolk County, Lambton Coun-



(COUNTRY OF BRANT PHOTO)

Ontario Minister of Natural Resources Mike Harris was joined by local and provincial representatives in Paris for an announcement on December 16th confirming up to \$185,000 in provincial funding for the County of Brant as part of Ontario's Legacy Oil and Gas Wells Action Plan, supporting new emergency response equipment and enhanced public safety measures related to old and inactive oil and gas wells.

ty, Oxford County, Elgin County, Essex County, Haldimand County and the Regional Municipality of Niagara.

The province continues to make progress under the Action Plan and today's funding advances this commitment

to protecting communities and enhancing public safety. Ontario will continue to work closely with municipal partners to ensure the proper tools, training and resources are in place to keep people and communities safe.

# Significant bust removes guns and drugs from Paris home, four people charged

## CELESTE PERCEY-BEAUREGARD

*Local Journalism Initiative*

Four people face charges after a "significant" Ontario Provincial Police bust revealed drugs and an array of guns at a Paris home.

On December 16, the Brant County OPP community street crime unit, supported by neighbouring units, searched both a Paris home on Maple Crescent and a Brantford home on Sheridan Street.

At the house near the Paris Fairgrounds, police said officers found an unspecified amount of suspected cocaine, a loaded "bump" compact rifle, a ballistic vest, a 12-gauge shotgun, and two other rifles and ammunition.

One woman from Brantford, and two men and a woman from Paris, were charged with cocaine possession for the purpose of trafficking. One was also charged with unauthorized possession and careless storage of a firearm.

In the Brantford home, police said offi-

cers found suspected fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and hydromorphone pills, along with two handguns, ammunition, and more than \$50,000 in cash.

A man and woman from Brantford were charged with drug possession for the purpose of trafficking, unauthorized possession of a firearm, careless storage, and possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000.

The woman was additionally charged with failing to comply with a probation order.

The bust demonstrates the "ongoing commitment of OPP and partner units to combat drug trafficking and remove illegal firearms from our communities," police said in a release.

*Celeste Percy-Beauregard's reporting is funded by the Canadian government through its Local Journalism Initiative. The funding allows her to report on stories about Brant County.*



(BRANT COUNTY OPP PHOTO)

Guns, ammunition and suspected drugs were found at homes in Brant County and Brantford on Tuesday, police said.

# EDITORIAL

## More than a Hamper — A community's heart on display



Daneka Miller, Wilfred Elwell and Nick Hutchinson lend a hand unloading a vehicle packed with toy donations collected by The Fit Effect gym, supporting the Paris Community Christmas Hamper Program and helping spread holiday cheer to local families.



Members of the Paris Ringette U19B team were joined by coaches and family members as they rolled up their sleeves to unload, sort and organize food and toy donations for the Paris Community Christmas Hamper Program, lending a helping hand to ensure local families experience the magic of Christmas.

### CASANDRA TURNBULL

Managing Editor

There are many things that warm my heart during the holiday season, twinkling lights, familiar carols, and time spent with loved ones, but nothing captures the true spirit of Christmas quite like the Paris Community Christmas Hamper Program.

This remarkable, long-running initiative deserves far more than a single editorial of recognition. What began more than 30 years ago in the basement of local resident Marg Knill has grown into a cornerstone of our community, one that ensured 176 local families experienced the magic of Christmas in 2025.

Executing a program of this scale takes an army, and each December that army shows up. More than 150 like-minded volunteers roll up their sleeves to sort, organize and pack hampers during the week leading up to pickup day. If you've ever witnessed the operation firsthand, you'll know it's best described as organized chaos — a well-oiled machine fuelled by generosity, teamwork and good cheer.

Volunteers from all walks of life return year after year, service clubs, sports organizations, businesses and individuals, all working side by side with smiles on their faces, Santa hats on their heads and Christmas music filling the air. On more than one occasion, the scene could easily be mistaken for Santa's workshop on Christmas Eve.

At the heart of it all is the committee — the steady hands that ensure every detail is handled with care and dignity. It starts at the top with founding members Shirley Simons

and Marg Knill-Wilson, the true heart and soul of the program. For decades, they have quietly delivered countless Christmas blessings, guided by compassion and an unwavering commitment to making sure no one goes without.

As the program has grown, they've adapted, supported by a dedicated committee that gives generously of their time with no expectation of recognition or reward. Laura Bowlby, Cherish Gamble, Tawnia Martel, Lisa Lewis, Anne Rutt, Ken Johnston and Matt Amy; hats off to you for the meetings, the late-night planning sessions, the loading and unloading of donations, and the tireless behind-the-scenes work. There may be no financial reward, but the emotional payoff, knowing families will wake up to a joyful Christmas morning, is immeasurable.

Equally heartwarming is the broader community that sits at the centre of this program's success. To everyone who donated a toy, a canned good, a bike, a knitted hat, or made a financial contribution, your generosity does not go unnoticed. Because of you, 176 families went to bed on Christmas Eve without worry, knowing the magic of the season would greet them in the morning.

Our first responders once again showed why they are so deeply respected. The County of Brant OPP, paramedics and firefighters collected food and toy donations weekend after weekend — a tradition that has become synonymous with the holidays. The staff at the County of Brant's Paris Customer Service Office also played a crucial role, helping families submit applications and collecting donations with care and compassion.

And to every school, service club, volunteer organiza-

tion, sports team, church, health-care centre, grocery store and business owner who hosted a collection or spread the word, you are the very definition of what makes living in a small town so special. The Paris Community Christmas Hamper Program is more than a holiday initiative. It is a reflection of who we are when we come together — generous, caring, and determined to make sure everyone feels the warmth of Christmas.

That is something truly worth celebrating.



Members of the Paris Curling Club were on hand helping to organize the Paris Community Christmas Hamper Program gifts and donations.

# Street Beat

### GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Paris Independent Columnist

*Are you making any New Year's resolutions?*

Don Wilson  
Paris



None at all and I don't remember when I did one last!

Siena Visocchi  
Paris



Yes, but I usually break them after a month!

Kassandra Corran-Piccini,  
Paris



No not yet and probably not, as I can't think of any to make!

Meredith Trotter  
San Francisco



I haven't yet and most years I failed to keep them.

Will Copeman  
Paris



I plan to, but they never go to plan!

# HISTORIC PARIS

## PARIS PAST: 1969 a look back at a landmark year in review



By Chris Whelan

As we prepare to ring in 2026 tonight, our "Paris Past" segment takes us back exactly 56 years to the final day of 1969. It was a year that defined Paris as a hub for the province—most notably when over 110,000 visitors descended upon the Kelley farm for the International Plowing Match.

From the dramatic demolition of the old Grand River bridge to the high-stakes debates over school taxes (some things never change!), 1969 was a year of transition. We've recovered this report from our archives to see how the challenges and triumphs of a half-century ago shaped the town we walk through today.

To Parisians, the year 1969 meant many things—excitement, sorrow, hard work, and frustration. However, for the farming community, the year could be summed up with



three letters: IPM.

The IPM (International Plowing Match) was the climax of more than three years of planning, with 1969 being the busiest yet. In less than one week, more than 110,000 people flocked to Paris to view Canada's largest plowing match and farm machinery show.

Held on Ross Kelley's farm, about 1.5 miles north of Paris, the four-day event boasted the largest "Tented City" in the 56-year history of the match. More than 70 acres were used for the canvas city, while over 300 acres were required for parking and plowing.

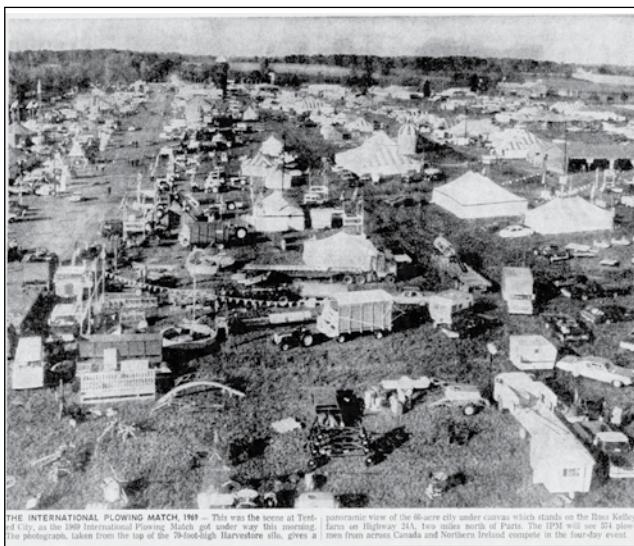
The match was a boon to local motels, hotels, and restaurants. By the second week of October, every available room and bed in the Paris area was reserved. The financial success was so great that grants provided by municipalities were actually returned by the local committee, chaired by Harold Telfer.

Town Council had a relatively quiet year, dealing mostly with the usual bylaws and animal control. However, a major dispute arose regarding the Brant County Board of Education budget.

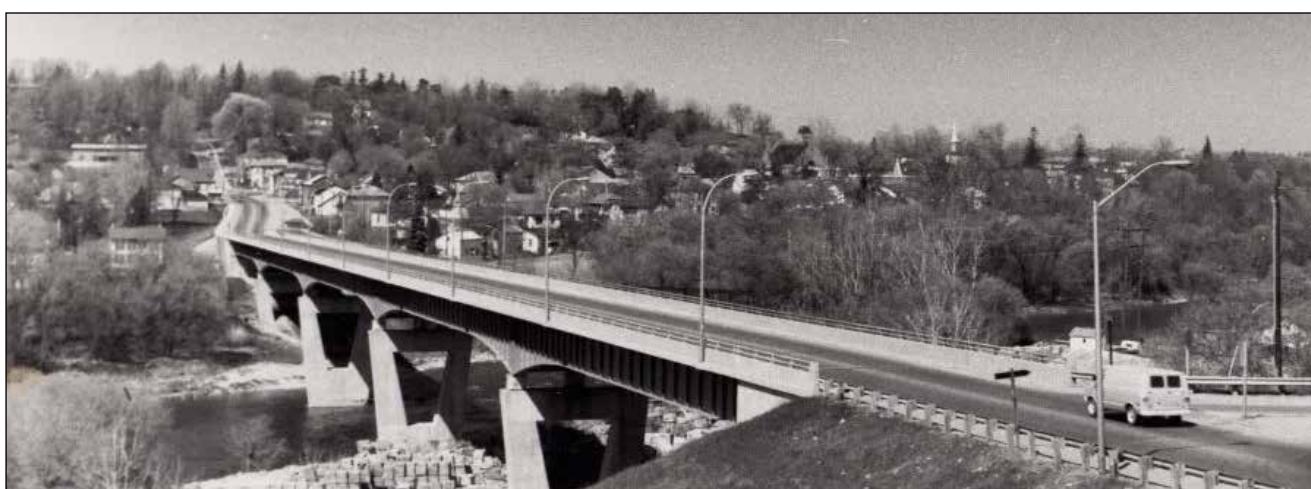
The board attempted to levy a \$130,000 deficit from the old high school board onto Paris taxpayers in a single year. Town Clerk William Haggard successfully protested the move as contrary to the School Act. Council ultimately reduced its school levy by over \$26,000, a move later supported by the Deputy Minister of Education.

Small animal control proved a headache in 1969. While the town had a contract with the Ontario Humane Society (OHS), the OHS threatened to cancel all contracts due to provincial legislation (Bills 73 and 194) that would have forced them to surrender animals for research—a practice the society opposed. Fortunately, a new agreement was signed in December, ensuring continued service.

By January 1969, tax arrears had reached over \$107,000.



THE INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH, 1969 — This was the scene at Terrell Hill, the site of the International Plowing Match, Oct. 15-18, 1969. The photograph, taken from the top of the 70-foot-high Harvester silo, gives a panoramic view of the 60-acre city under canvas which stands on the Ross Kelley farm. The IPM, the largest in Canada, attracts men from across Canada and Northern Ireland compete in the four-day event.



Mayor Sharpe and Council took action in December, authorizing a penalty of one per cent per month for late taxes. The Mayor noted it had become "cheaper for people to neglect their taxes" due to low interest rates, and the new penalties were designed to bring Paris in line with other borrowing agencies.

Motorists received a rare break in 1969 with no major road construction, a welcome change from the detours of 1968. However, "sidewalk superintendents" had plenty to watch as the old level bridge across the Grand River was systematically demolished.

Because explosives were prohibited, contractors used a unique "battering ram"—a massive chunk of an artillery gun fastened to a crane—to weaken the concrete piers. When the piers finally fell, the resulting splash was said to reach as high as the new bridge.

It was a somber year for local industry, with serious accidents reported at Austin Laboratories, Consolidated Sand and Gravel, and WABCO Equipment.

On a brighter note, Paris hockey fans found a new reason to cheer as the Bears made their home here. The town also honored its greatest fan, 88-year-old Wes White, for 40 years of loyal support. Meanwhile, the geography of the town changed in March when the Nith Dam washed away, forcing a bulldozer crew to reshape the river bed into a single channel.

The year ended with a shakeup at Town Hall. The December 1st municipal election saw three veteran councillors ousted and replaced by newcomers. While Mayor M.H. Sharpe and the Reeve were elected by acclamation, the Public Utilities Commission saw a major change as incumbent Ken Mills was defeated and Chairman Foster Scott retired.

Looking back from the vantage point of 2025, the events of 1969 feel both distant and strangely familiar. The "tent city" of the IPM is now a legendary piece of local lore, and the "new" bridge mentioned in the article has itself become a seasoned veteran of our daily commutes.

While the names on the ballots and the industries in our parks have changed, the spirit of Paris—from our dedicated sports fans like the legendary Wes White to our community's resilience in the face of industrial change—remains the constant thread. As we head into the new year, we tip our hats to the Parisians of 1969 who worked, debated, and cheered their way into history.

Happy New Year to all our readers!



FIRST STEP — Preliminary work at the site of the 1969 International Plowing Match has been started by the IPM committee. A large sign, designating the match site, has been erected. The sign is located on Ross Kelley's farm, about four miles north of Paris on Highway 24A and the Paris Plains Road.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## January

- Looking ahead to 2025, Mayor David Bailey says the County of Brant faces a year defined by major projects, difficult decisions and the need for unity, urging residents and council to remain open-minded and focused on working together. Topics on the 2025 agenda - future of Paris' Old Town Hall, now the Bawcutt Centre, the Downtown Dig, Long Term Finance Plan, expanded servicing in St. George, Scotland and Oakland and Brant Sports Complex expansion.
- Brantford Mayor Kevin Davis' push to amalgamate the city and county draws criticism from Mayor, councillors and County residents alike
- County announces new park, softball field and splash pad planned for Arlington Meadows Subdivision
- The Ontario government announces \$9,355,509.38 investment in critical infrastructure to facilitate the construction of up to 4,215 new homes in the County of Brant.

The funding is being delivered through the Housing-Enabling Core Servicing Stream under the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program

- Friends of the Paris Library celebrate 25 years of volunteerism and support.
- The County of Brant marked a highly productive week at the 2025 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference in Toronto, where council and staff secured key provincial meetings and advanced several priority files critical to the county's future. Of seven requested delegations, five were granted, allowing discussions with senior ministers on Indigenous partnership and economic reconciliation, major transportation infrastructure needed to unlock hundreds of acres of employment lands, safer highway crossings for agricultural producers, progress on the long-awaited new Brantford-Brant hospital, and funding pressures within Ontario Works.

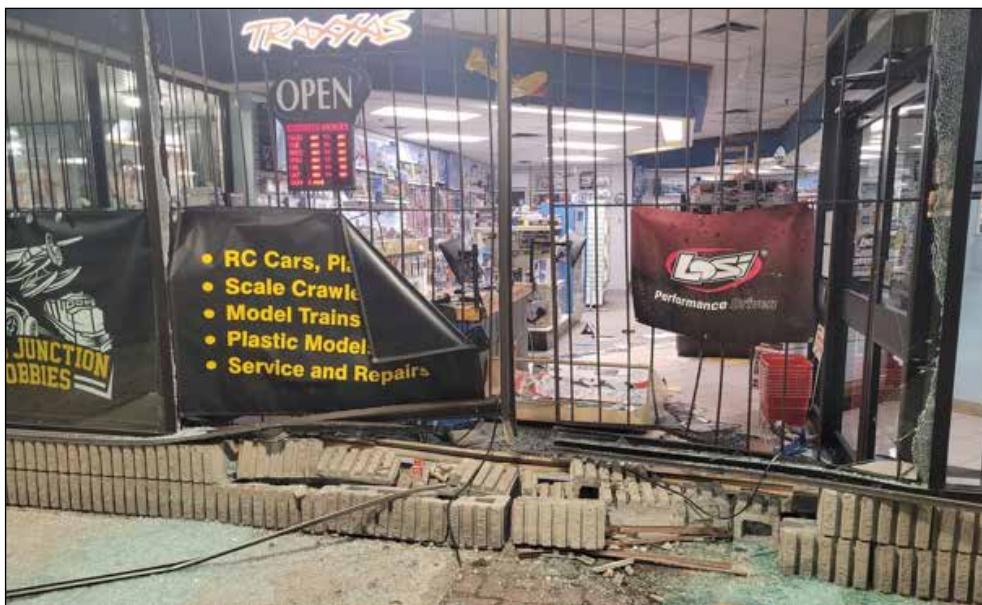


Longtime Paris resident and World War II Veteran Henry Foster cuts the cake during his 100th birthday celebration at the Paris Legion on February 22. Henry served in the Canadian Armed Forces during World War II. He enlisted in the Navy before his 18th birthday and served as a gunner on a Defensively Equipped Merchant Ship. He is the oldest living veteran in Paris, Ont.

- The Emergency Department Renovation reaches a milestone with the opening of the new B-Wing at the Brantford General Hospital.
- Sad news from long time community business – Home Hardware – as they announce the closure of their store located in the Rest Acres Road Plaza.
- Paris' social scene gets a big boost with the launch of the 'Saturdays in Paris' a program aimed to draw visitors to the downtown core to experience local shops and restaurants.

three new schools in the County of Brant – two of them located in Paris.

- Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic School Board is under fire for spending more than \$63,000 on PR related expenses stemming from a contentious trip to Italy involving four of its trustees.
- County of Brant announces the first speed camera goes live in February, located in front of North Ward School in Paris.
- Extra, extra, read all about it! The Paris Independent announces a new partnership with Grant Haven Media which brings the digital publication to life in print.
- Will Bouma cruised to re-election and secured his seat as MPP for Brantford-Brant after a provincial election on February 27, 2025. Voter participation was notably lower. There was a total of 118,761 registered electors, with 51,139 valid ballots cast, resulting in a voter turnout of 43.41 per cent. That figure was on par with the previous



Paris Junction Hobbies was left putting the pieces back together after an early morning smash and grab on February 15th, causing significant damage to the store. Thieves made off with more than \$3,000 of merchandise.

## Federal Election – April 28, 2025

Conservative incumbent Dan Muys was re-elected in the April 28 federal election, securing a second term as Member of Parliament for Flamborough-Glanbrook-Brant North.

While it marks his second term in office, it is effectively his first representing Brant North following recent riding boundary changes. The constituency now includes Paris, St. George and Glen Morris, in addition to Flamborough-Glanbrook.

In the Flamborough-Glanbrook-Brant North riding, 67,331 ballots were cast from 87,881 registered electors. With a total riding population of 103,836, voter turnout was calculated at 64.9 per cent.

In the neighbouring Brantford-Brant South-Six Nations riding, 66,150 voters cast ballots from a list of 103,074 registered electors. The riding's population stands at 121,511, resulting in a voter turnout of 54.4 per cent.

## Provincial Election – February 25, 2025

Voter participation was notably lower. Of the 118,761

registered electors, 51,139 valid ballot cast, resulting in a voter turnout of 43.41 per cent. That figure was on par with the previous election on June 2, 2022 when there was 42.05% voter turnout.

### 2025 Ontario General Election Results - February 27, 2025

#### ONTARIO RESULTS:

Party	Leader	Votes	% of Votes	Seats
Conservative	Doug Ford	2,158,452	43.0%	80
New Democratic	Marit Stiles	931,796	18.6%	27
Liberal	Bonnie Crombie	1,504,688	30.0%	14
Green	Mike Schreiner	242,822	4.8%	2

#### Brantford-Brant Results:

Party	Leader	Votes	% of Votes
Conservative	Will Bouma	24,169	47.3%
Liberal	Ron Fox	10,364	20.3%
New Democratic	Harvey Bischoff	12,002	23.5%
Green	Karleigh Csordas	2,567	5.0%
New Blue Party	Joshua Carron	1,138	2.2%

#### 2025 Canadian Federal Election Results - April 28, 2025

##### FEDERAL RESULTS:

Party	Leader	Votes	% of Votes	Seats
Liberal	Mark Carney	8,595,488	43.8%	169
Conservative	Pierre Poilievre	8,113,484	41.3%	144
Bloc Québécois	Yves-François Blanchet	1,236,349	6.3%	22
New Democratic	Jagmeet Singh	1,234,673	6.3%	7
Green	Jonathan Pedneault	238,892	1.2%	1
People's	Maxime Bernier	840,993	4.9%	0

##### Flamborough-Glanbrook-Brant North Results:

Party	Leader	Votes	% of Votes
Conservative	Dan Muys	35,246	52.7%
Liberal	Chuck Phillips	28,915	43.2%
New Democratic	Peter Werhun	1,630	2.4%
People's	Nikita Mahood	499	0.7%
Green Party	Anita Payne	594	0.9%

##### Brantford-Brant South-Six Nations Results:

Party	Leader	Votes	% of Votes
Conservative	Larry Brock	34,501	52.4%
Liberal	Joey O'Donnell	27,032	41.1%
New Democratic	Anne Gajerski-Cauley	2,410	3.7%
People's	Nicholas Xenos	392	0.6%
Green Party	Karleigh Csordas	1,110	1.70%

# YEAR IN REVIEW

election on June 2, 2022 when there was 42.05% voter turnout.

## March

The County of Brant approves 2025 budget resulting in a 5.3% property tax increase as well as a 1% property tax surcharge as a local contribution towards the New Hospital Project. The budget included a \$12 million investment in asset management capital, for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of existing infrastructure throughout the County; Revitalization of the downtown Paris core through completion

of the Grand River Street North Reconstruction Project; Investments in new business developments, including a Cainsville Secondary Plan and infrastructure in Southwest Paris.

- The Paris Legion is granted a noise bylaw exemption to play music on their patio in the summer. The Legion was unable to play live music on their patio in 2024 resulting in a loss of revenue for the non-profit organization, revenue that is in turn donated back to the community through various fundraisers, sponsorships and donations.

- The County of Brant must pay DPAI Architect \$143,000 to cover fees related to delays and changes in the Bawcutt Centre/Library project, despite a formal vote not to proceed with the project.
- U15B Battalions bring home Gold medals from Annual Falls Classic tournament in Buffalo, securing the trophy and a strong sense of patriotism. The B ranked Battalions took out the AA ranked Gensis team from Colmar Pennsylvania showing teams are not defined solely by ranking but by determination, focus and execution of game plays.
- Paris Canadian Tire ownership changes hands. Karel Vantol announces sale of store to new owners Angie Kim-Miskuski and Matt Miskuski.
- There was a combination of a chill and chili in the air on March 8th as community members warmed up with some of the town's best chili recipes at the 2nd Annual Cook Off at the Paris Legion. The 2025 chili champions were the Red-Hot Silly Peppers – Don and Rob Cruickshank and Jerry Hamor. Second place went to the Red-Hot Chili Peppers – Heidi and Derrick Ostner and Kelley and Kieran McPate. Rounding out the top three was a tie between the Kiwanis Club of Paris-Brant and Steve Howes and Lukas Oakley.
- Thirty-eight-year-old Jonathan Pooley was featured on season 4 of Canada's Got Talent(CGT) on March 25th on CityTV. "From thinking my time had passed to standing on the stage in front of Shania, Howie,

Katherine and Kardinal, it felt like a dream come true. Seeing the judges in person was unreal," he shared. Pooley also appeared in Canadian Idol in 2007 making it to the top 60.

- The first print Edition of the Paris Independent hits shelves on March 19th marking the return of print media to the community for the first time since the Paris Star print paper folded under Metroland Media.
- Residents noticed activity starting on the new road connecting Bendemere to the Grand River Street North intersection. Trees were removed in favour of the new road that will connect homes in the new Grand Estate Subdivision to Grand River St N. Bendemere Road will start at the traffic lights and extend about 550 meters east of Grand River Street North, running behind the homes on Paris Links Road, and will make a sharp right turn at a roundabout where new home construction begins.
- Once this connection is completed, by summer 2026, Paris Links Road will be terminated as a cul-de-sac east of the high school with no vehicle access to Bendemere Road. Pedestrian access will be maintained.
- March proved to be a golden month for the U10/Fun3 Paris Ringette Team that won Gold at the Lower Ontario Regional Tournament in London, beating tournament hosts, London, 4-2 in the final game. The U16B Ringette Team also claimed gold at the regional tournament going undefeated and beating Cambridge 3-0 in the finals.



The Paris Independent announces a new partnership with Grant Haven Media marking the start of a new journey, bringing the digital publication to print in town. Pictured left to right, front row, Paris Independent photographer Michelle Malvaso, Managing Editor Casandra Turnbull, (back row), Sports Reporter George Le Gresley, Grant Haven Media Publisher Stewart Grant and Paris Independent Editor Chris Whelan.



## Scott's Winter Special Senior's Special Breakfast

Choice of two eggs (scrambled, over-easy, or omelette), served with bacon, ham, and sausage, plus your choice of potatoes (hash browns, home fries, or deep-fried).



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**Catering available for 10-1,000 people (Canadian & Indian cuisine)**  
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The Paris Legion Branch 29 held its 56th Annual High Noon Golf Tournament beside the Syl Apps Community Centre on New Year's Day. This ongoing tradition started in 1968. Luckily the weather cooperated, and golfers didn't have to sludge through the snow with their clubs! President Roy Haggart and Robbie Wilson (pictured left) claiming the trophy.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## APRIL

- County announces its undertaking a Housing Needs Assessment to plan for smart growth. The assessment results will help the municipality to access appropriate funding from the Canadian government to support initiatives that provide solutions better fit for Brant County residents. Preliminary results showed concerns about affordability, diversity in housing types/sizes, a lack of available rentals and accessibility barriers surrounding transit for seniors, young people, persons with disabilities and car-free residents.
- Like or not, Canadians head back to the polls. After Justin Trudeau stepped down as Prime Minister, newly sworn Prime Minister Mark Carney calls a snap election.
- County of Brant Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Brant County Federation of Agriculture, the Paris Agricultural Society and the Grand Erie Elementary Teachers Federation, host an All Candidates Forum to allow residents the opportunity to meet the federal election candidates. Following changes to the election boundaries, Brant North was placed in a new electoral: Flamborough-Glanbrook-Brant North.
- Dan Muys has been re-elected as Member of Parliament for the Flamborough-Glanbrook-Brant North riding. While returning to office, this term marks his first time representing the Brant North area.
- Over 250 fans of Irish Canadian award-winning novelist Emma Donoghue packed into the #ForParisCentre on April 6th to listen to her share her love for literacy as part of One Book One Brant's 20th Anniversary celebration.
- Paris High School entered the National Theatre School Festival and earned three awards for its per-

formance of The Astonishing and Dangerous History of Mazefield the Frog.

- Thomas Whitney received an acting award for his portrayal of the meanest boy in the world. Micah Leitch, Student Director, accepted the Costuming Award and the entire ensemble was thrilled to accept the Spirit of the Festival Award.
- The County of Brant passes preliminary zoning changes to permit four residential units as-of-right in fully serviceable areas.
- The Lions Club of Paris' annual Maple Syrup Festival is a sweet success, drawing residents to the fairgrounds this year as the downtown was closed for the Big Dig.
- Paris Fire Stations 1&9 hosted the Airport/County Stations in a fundraiser game that brought just the right mix of competitiveness and recreation to the Brant Sports Complex. The fundraising game was in support of Community Living Brant.
- Around 1,000 enthusiastic Grade 5 students descended on the Burford Fairgrounds April 8th and 9th for the Annual Bite of Brant event that showcases the local agri-food industry.
- Michael Owen is named the new Chief Fire Prevention Officer for the County of Brant Fire Department
- After lots of debate, Brant County allows rural residents to keep their backyard chickens. Only those on agricultural zoned lots are permitted to house the chickens.
- The country mourns the passing of Pope Francis, the first Latin American pontiff known for his humble demeanor and advocacy for the underprivileged. He passed away on Easter Monday at the age of 88.

## MAY

- Grand River Street North closes to



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

The Banfield neighbourhood was buzzing with activity on May 10th as the 3rd Annual Art Crawl showcased artistic talent. Pictured purchasing a painted box from artist Jennifer Adams is Maeve Van Wylie and her family – Grace, Marcia, and Derek.

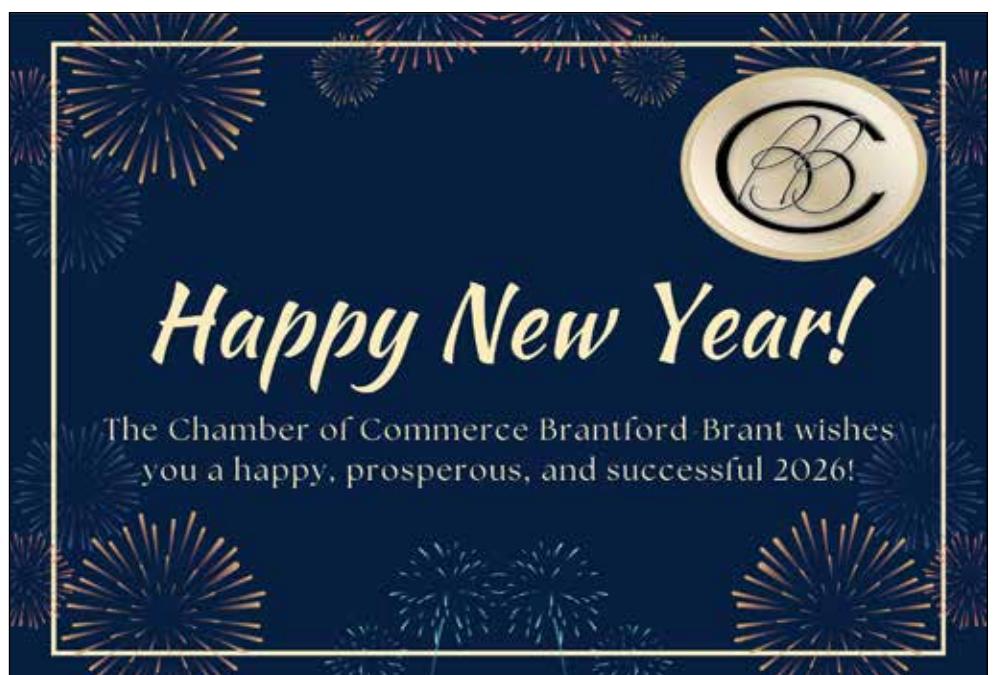
traffic on May 8th, marking the start of major construction to replace underground construction.

- The Banfield Art Crawl boogied into its third year with the same charm, excellence and expertise as previous years but on a grander scale with more than fifty artists participating in the May 10th event.
- County of Brant announces that David Mellor has accepted the role of General Manager of Operations, effective Thursday, May 1, 2025.
- In a bid to solidify efforts to protect and enhance forestry, the County of Brant has developed a formal policy that will focus on preventative maintenance and creates more incentives for developers to retain rather than remove trees in land development. The policy points to the existing Technical Tree Guidelines for detailed information. The goal is to support a growing community forest and ensure industry best practices are followed. It would also designate trees on municipally owned land as
- green infrastructure.
- The wait is over! After filming in our town last spring and summer, Motorheads, a captivating American coming-of-age drama series, made its grand debut on Amazon Prime Video on Tuesday, May 20, 2025.
- The Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) announces that the Ontario government's continued investment in local healthcare infrastructure includes an additional \$12.5 million planning grant to plan on a greenfield site. This funding will support the next phase of planning for a new hospital acute care tower and a non-acute ambulatory care building, a transformative project that will address capacity challenges and aging infrastructure at Brantford General Hospital and The Willett.
- Brant County OPP investigate the theft of the contentious speed camera located on Silver Street in Paris in front of North Ward School. The camera, valued at \$35,000 was the first camera implemented in the



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

With a pitcher of lemonade, a big heart, and the memory of her mom driving her efforts, seven-year-old Ava Mayhew raised \$7,300 for aHUS Canada on Saturday during a heartfelt community fundraiser outside Sobeys Paris. Pictured left to right, Lisa Boos (Ava's great aunt), Sobeys' Jackee Mills, Kathy van Konynenburg (Ava's grandma), Ava Mayhew, Chuck Cunningham (Ava's great uncle), Lesley Engell, Axel and Acelin Engell, Vicki Cunningham (Ava's great aunt) and Gerry van Konynenburg (Ava's grandpa).



# YEAR IN REVIEW



(JENNIFER KYLE PHOTO)

**The Paris District High School Girls Fastball team rallied for a bronze medal finish at an OFSAA tournament held in Paris June 12th.**

county's Automated Speed Enforcement program.

## JUNE

- The County of Brant, in partnership with the Brant Community Foundation approved 75 Community Grants totaling \$350,000. There were 109 grants submitted, valued at \$631,831 but a number of applications were deemed late, incomplete or otherwise ineligible for funding.
- The Brant Battalion's inaugural season on the ice was nothing short of exciting. As 13 new teams stepped into competitive A and BB hockey, they quickly established themselves with a mix of determination, skill, and teamwork. The end of the season marked the first time Paris, Burford and St. George associations amalgamated its rep programs.
- Paris residents are in awe with a remarkable glimpse in the Paris' industrial past, hidden deep below Grand River St N as the Downtown Dig project uncovers remnants of the original millrace that once powered the town's 19th-century mills. The Grand River Raceway, a pivotal source of power in the 19th century, sustained Paris' economy by driving water-powered mills that facilitated essential tasks like pounding gypsum into what became "Plaster of Paris", grain grinding, lumber sawing, and cloth production. The raceway, with its two dams in the Nith River and a subterranean passage beneath Grand River St. North, symbolized the town's industrious spirit and ingenuity. As the Downtown Dig progressed throughout 2025, Parisians are rekindling their connection with their town's industrial heritage. The revelation of the underground raceways has sparked conversations about Paris' mill town history and the innovative technologies that once thrived beneath the bustling streets.
- Local entrepreneur Janice Vilaca. Known for her popular Tasty Road
- Trips food tours, Vilaca launches a unique downtown experience: free guided walking tours designed to help guests sip, savour, shop, and discover the charm of the town during ongoing construction. Of the tour's concept, Vilaca shared, "We stop along the way, say hello, introduce visitors and shop owners, and then we move along," Vilaca explained. "The intention is to make guests familiar and comfortable navigating the barricades." The tours were a big hit throughout the summer months, drawing tourism and guests through downtown despite the construction challenges.
- Spearheaded by a group of dedicated community members—Chuck Prysuta, Mark Ford, Steve Pinkett, and Neil Edwards, the Homes of Heroes concept is launched in town, honouring military service of local men and women and raising awareness within the community about personal experiences and the cost of war. The project is a community-driven effort, that encouraged Paris residents to share their knowledge of veterans who have served in the military. The Paris Museum and Paris Legion were instrumental in the initial research.
- Paris Panthers Girls Fastball team caps off a stellar season with a bronze medal from the OFSAA championships on June 3rd.
- The community rallies around 7-year-old Ava Mayhew who set up a lemonade stand at Sobeys to raise money and awareness for Thrombotic Microangiopathy (TMA), including the rare variant aHUS that took the life of her mother, Amy. She, along with support from her family, raised \$7,300. "I wanted to show everyone that I love my mom," Ava said.
- The United Church of Canada celebrated a century of faith, fellowship, and spiritual evolution — and June 8, the milestone was joyfully marked by congregations across

Brant County at a special outdoor worship service hosted by Bethel United Church.

- The Brant Food For Thought Board of Directors has announced the retirement of long-time Program Director Gisèle Budgell. A Paris resident, Budgell was recognized for her 24 years of dedicated service and her lasting impact on local youth. Stepping into leadership roles are fellow Paris residents Judy Maidment, who will serve as the new Program Director, and Nancy Waldschmidt, the new Senior Community Development Coordinator. Both have been with the organization for 18 years as Community Development Coordinators.
- Mayor David Bailey helped Kinderbrook Montessori School cut the ribbon on its Grand Opening! The new facility is located in Paris' north end at Pinehurst Road and Watts Pond Road. The school offers a Montessori-based curriculum for children from toddler to elementary age, aiming to foster independence, creativity and a lifelong love of learning. Community members, staff, and families gathered to celebrate the milestone and tour the purpose-built educational space.
- Renowned author and professor James Cairns mesmerized the audience at the Riverside Bookshelf on June 14th with the launch of his latest book, "In Crisis, On Crisis: Essays in Troubled Times."
- Ward 2 Councillor Lukas Oakley introduces a motion at County of Brant council opposing provisions in Ontario's controversial Bill 5, Protecting Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025, citing concerns about reduced environmental protections, the erosion of municipal planning authority, and inadequate consultation with Indigenous nations. The motion aims to send a strong message to the province in favour of responsible growth that balances infrastructure development with environmental stewardship and

Indigenous rights.

- Four months after its launch county staff report that the Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) pilot is already yielding results, slashing speeding by nearly half and raising \$170,000 in revenue to support future road safety improvements. In its first four months of operation, \$271,000 of fines were issued. The program expenses to date are roughly \$100,000 and this includes the victim surcharge collected by the county and remitted to the Ministry of Transportation, as well as technology fees, and expenses like mailing, materials, etc.
- The county announces that the Wilkin Family Community Centre project exceeds its \$400,000 community fundraising goal, bolstered by an announcement of grant funding to support the \$1.6 million project. "There are so many people in the community that we would like to thank for helping with this project," said Mayor David Bailey. "Thank you to all the donors for their incredible generosity. The support you have shown demonstrates why the County of Brant is such a wonderful place to call home."



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)  
Callan Seamone, of Paris, stops to chat with the Easter Bunny in downtown Paris.



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)  
Emma Johnston, Adult Program and Outreach Services for the County of Brant Public Library, interviews Irish Canadian award-winning novelist Emma Donoghue during One Book One Brant's 20th Anniversary Author event at the #ForParisCentre on April 6th.

# DOWNTOWN DIG IN REVIEW



(CASANDRA TURNBULL PHOTO)

Grand River Street North is eerily quiet on a Thursday morning as the road was officially closed to traffic on May 8th.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

Excavators dig into the street, signifying the start of the project.



Hiram Capron Collection, 2001.0005.468, Paris Museum and Historical Society. This photo captures the essence of evolution in the heart of Paris during the reconstruction of Grand River Street. The exact date of this photo is unknown but it would likely be circa 1900 after the Great Fire.



(MICHELLE MALVASSO PHOTO)

Construction crews watch as new infrastructure is lowered deep below Grand River St North.



(PARIS MUSEUM &amp; HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO)

The photo from circa 1885 shows workers by the structural support of the raceway under Grand River Street. These semi-circular structures they're working on served as the foundation for the brickwork over the raceway, supporting the street above. The recent photo, taken on June 3, 2025, shows remnants of the old millrace that once powered the thriving industrial mills beneath Grand River St. North.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

Those who have lived in Paris their entire life can probably tell you a story about the Mill Races that ran under downtown and propelled the mills that powered the town's industrial landscape. Last week excavators uncovered proof of those Mill Races, marking another significant day in Paris' history. Photos and even pieces of bricks were taken to preserve the history.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

The County of Brant's Accessibility Advisory Committee would like to extend heartfelt appreciation to the Navacon Construction Crew for their ongoing efforts to maintain barrier-free paths of travel, prioritize safety, and offer assistance throughout the Downtown Dig.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

A detailed photographic record of the Downtown Dig was provided by the County of Brant – including these great aerial shots.



(MICHELLE MALVASSO PHOTO)

A worker is pictured deep below Grand River Street North, highlighting the extensive efforts required to replace underground infrastructure.



(COUNTY OF BRANT PHOTO)

On November 21st, following a very successful Jingle Bell Night, the Downtown Dig officially announced the reopening of Grand River Street North – marking the end of this phase of the multi-year project.



The newly opened Grand River St N downtown Paris.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## JULY

- The Brant arts scene has lost a bright light. The community is reeling after learning of the death of Martin Smith, an actor, director, playwright and local arts champion in Brantford-Brant and beyond. He was 67.
- The County of Brant Fire Department has named Mark Robinson as its new Deputy District Fire Chief, continuing a proud family tradition that spans generations of service to the local community.
- After cycling through multiple temporary medical leaders, Grand Erie Public Health (GEPH) has named Dr. Jason Malenfant as its new medical officer of health.
- The Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, visited the County of Brant on July 11th for a prestigious High Tea event hosted by Mayor David Bailey at the historic Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead. It brought together community leaders, elected officials and honoured guests for an afternoon of celebration and reflection on civic engagement and local heritage.
- Temporary stop signs were installed at the intersection of Keg Lane and Brant-Oxford Road on Thursday, July 10, in response to mounting safety concerns and traffic delays along the West Paris Bypass. The move follows months of complaints from motorists navigating alternate routes during the Downtown Dig construction, which has significantly impacted traffic flow through Paris' core.
- Despite bouts of challenging weather, the 2025 Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Summer Games concluded as a resounding success in Brantford and Brant County from July 10 to 13. Softball games were hosted at Paris' Green Lane Sports Complex. Former Paris resident



(MICHELLE MALVASSO PHOTO)

**Sam Roberts Band closed out Friday night of the Paris Drinks Fest in August. Organizers called it the biggest crowd in festival history. The Sam Roberts Band followed up that stellar performance with a trip to Elora for the Riverfest doing YukonBlonde a solid and substituting for them after they were unable to make it because of the Air Canada strike.**

- Zac Dalpe, an honorary chair of the Games, also participated in the opening ceremony by leading the crowd in the Special Olympics cheer and encouraging participants to stay dedicated but most of all, to have fun.
- A proposed 71-unit townhouse development on West River Road sparked significant concern from some residents during a County of Brant Council Planning meeting held July 8. The development, proposed by Pinevest Homes through MHBC Planning on behalf of West River Developments Inc., rezones the vacant property at 73 West River Road from R1-58 to a site-specific RM1 zone. The plan also includes a public park zoned OS1, a new private street network, and visitor parking. During the public meeting, resident Laura Ruuska-MacKay of 81 West River Road spoke on behalf

of concerned neighbours. She raised serious environmental concerns related to the development, particularly the impact on a woodlot located on the property.

- What began as a hopeful idea a decade ago has grown into one of Southern Ontario's most beloved summer events. The Paris Night Market returned to the Paris Fairgrounds on July 18 and 19, marking its 10th anniversary.
- The Ontario government invests an additional \$12.5 million to support the planning and development of a new hospital under the Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS), paving the way for expanded health services in Brantford, Brant County, Six Nations of the Grand River, and surrounding communities. The funding, announced July 17 at the Brantford General Hospital by Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, will help move the project into advanced planning stages, bringing a new, state-of-the-art hospital one step closer to reality.
- Fourteen-year-old Paris teen, Brooklyn O'Kafka, proudly represented Canada at the 2025 PDGA Junior Disc Golf World Championships in Emporia, Kansas, where she placed second overall in the girls' 15-and-under division.
- The Paris community has once again proven the power of collective generosity, raising \$5,628 during Canadian Tire Jumpstart Month to help local children access sports and recreation. Canadian Tire Paris finished second in the entire Hamilton-Niagara and Greater Toronto Area region for donation conversion—an impressive feat that highlights the town's overwhelming support for the cause.
- Two longtime Girl Guide leaders are preparing to retire after an extraordinary combined 75 years of service

to the Paris District, leaving behind a legacy of mentorship, adventure and unwavering community spirit. Shirley Simons and Marleen Cooper—affectionately known as the "Paris Neighbouring Guiders"—have each dedicated decades to empowering generations of girls through the Girl Guides of Canada.

- Young women from across Brant County and surrounding areas suited up and stepped into the boots of real firefighters at Camp Phoenix, an immersive, five-day firefighting camp designed to inspire the next generation of female fire professionals.
- Brant County Council has approved a dual framework that will shape the future of development in St. George, endorsing both a new Water and Wastewater Allocation Policy and a landmark Infrastructure Front-Ending Agreement with key developers, Losani, Empire, Riverview, Pinevest and Stremma—who have committed to financing and constructing up to \$85 million in critical water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure.
- A train derailment involving approximately 24 railcars in Paris prompted a swift response from emergency crews but resulted in no injuries or hazardous spills. The derailment happened shortly before 6:00 a.m. along the CN Railway near the Dundas Street bridge by No Frills. CN Rail initially reported the incident as two derailed container cars, but the OPP later confirmed that roughly two dozen railcars were affected. CN Railway said that all cars remained upright and that no road crossings were blocked. "There are no reports of injuries, leaks, spills or fires," CN said in a statement. "The cause of the incident is under investigation."

## AUGUST

- Grand River Estates, formerly known as Penmarvian, announced in early August that it will cease operations Nov. 28, giving residents the minimum 120 days' notice required under Ontario's Retirement Homes Act.
- Burford Lions Art Cadman Park is named the 2025 champion of the County of Brant's Park vs. Park showdown. The Park vs. Park campaign encouraged residents to show support for their favourite spots while also inspiring people to explore Brant's wide range of recreational areas — from hidden gems tucked into neighbourhoods to well-known community landmarks.
- Sydney Adams, a longtime volunteer with the Paris Agricultural Society, has been named one of the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (CAFE) Top 10 Under 40 for 2025.
- In a bold step forward for regional healthcare, the Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) formal-



(MICHELLE MALVASSO PHOTO)

**During a special High Tea event hosted by Brant County Mayor David Bailey at the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead, guests were invited to hear the Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, speak about her visit to the Brant County and her experience at the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics Summer Games. Dumont took the time to visit each table and speak with guests.**

# YEAR IN REVIEW



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

**Members of the Paris Lions Club and Paris Optimist Club present a cheque for \$6,800 to Campfire Circle staff during a recent visit to the camp's Waterford site. The donation will help provide camp experiences for children and families affected by childhood cancer. Pictured: Optimist Wendy Bear, Lion Rod Laframboise, Lion David Arsenault, Amy Tahmizian with Campfire Circle, Optimist Andrée Lamarche and Penny Banks with Campfire Circle.**

ly announces there will be a search for a new hospital site to support the growing Brantford-Brant community, and simultaneously advanced critical renovations to its aging emergency department.

- The Paris Red Hatters have been proving that friendship, laughter and a splash of flair never go out of style. Known locally as the “Paris Red Hat Winers,” the 17-member group celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2025.
- The City of Brantford and County of Brant officially cut the ribbon at 174 Trillium Way, a 49-unit affordable housing development aimed at easing the region’s growing housing crisis. The one- and two-bedroom units are available to singles, couples, small families and seniors. The building is a key deliverable of the Mayors’ Housing Partnerships Task Force Affordable Housing Action Plan — a joint effort between the two municipalities to address what both say is an urgent need for affordable housing. More than 1,100 households are currently on the centralized housing waitlist, with more than 65 per cent seeking one- or two-bedroom units.
- The Kiwanis Club of Paris-Brant awarded its second annual Paul Thomson Service Scholarship to Paris high school students Sherin Dedo and Trudeau Gulati, recognizing outstanding service and leadership, with each recipient receiving a \$1,000 scholarship.
- the 167th Annual Paris Fair returned with all the charm, energy, and small-town warmth that’s made it a beloved tradition. Running from August 27 to September 1, the fair transformed the Paris Fairgrounds into a five-day extravaganza brimming with heart-pounding excitement and community spirit. Live concerts by headline acts like the

Hunter Brothers and The Reklaws ignited the stage with Ontario’s best beats. Grace Auslebrook-Smith was crowned the 2025 Paris Fair Ambassador. The Paris Agricultural Society announced that the 2025 Paris Fair was an overwhelming success, welcoming a record-breaking 70,000+ visitors over Labour Day weekend

## SEPTEMBER

- After two decades serving the local hobby community, Bill and Joan Henwood, along with their son David announced that Paris Junction Hobbies will close its doors.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources has 269 well records for Brant County. Some go as far back as the early-1900s, but many are from the 1930s through 50s. Nicole Michalchuk, a ministry employee, told county residents and staff at a town hall earlier this summer. Of them, only 10 are active, commercially producing wells. The remainder are “legacy wells,” meaning they’re inactive.
- The Afro-CariBrant Festival returned to Lion’s Park, bigger and stronger than ever, expanding from a one-day celebration in its first two years to a two-day cultural showcase in 2025. Organizers say the growth is proof of the community’s embrace of the event, which celebrates the African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) culture through music, food, art and storytelling. In 2024, the festival drew 4,022 attendees. This year, attendance records were broken on opening day alone.
- A St. George ball player has struck gold at the national level and earned a spot on Team Canada. Nate Wylie, a Grade 11 student at Paris District High School, helped the U17 Napanee Express capture the U17 Men’s

Canadian Fast Pitch Championship in August. Napanee closed out the tournament with a 13-2 win over their rival Wilmot Thunder, powered by a relentless offensive attack and steady work on the mound from Wylie.

- A good old fashioned Paris Block Party brought new energy to the downtown core in September, celebrating the near completion of the Downtown Dig while drawing crowds back to local businesses along Mechanic Street. The evening featured live music, late-night shopping, a Legion-run beer garden and BBQ, and community activities that filled the street. Performances by local musician Michael Bryan and Urban Cowboy Line Dancing set the tone, before the night’s highlight—a highly anticipated hometown reunion by 40 Daze—capped off a successful celebration of downtown renewal and community spirit.
- County of Brant council received its first look at a new Growth Tracking Model, an interactive planning tool developed with Watson and Associates Ltd. to better track and manage development across the municipality. The model centralizes data on planning applications, housing permits, population forecasts and servicing capacity, allowing staff and council to test future growth scenarios and improve transparency around how the community is expanding. County Manager of Policy Planning Brandon Kortleve said the tool will support more evidence-based decision-making and help residents better understand how growth is being analyzed behind the scenes.
- The County of Brant and Paris Youth Softball Association (PYSA) celebrated the grand opening of the Brenda Bishop and Family Batting Cage on September 18. The \$26,000 facility was made possible entirely through the fundraising efforts of PYSA and the generosity of sole donor Brenda Bishop and family. While the association spearheaded the vision and raised the funds, the batting cage will become a County-owned and operated amenity.
- The Paris Lions Club and Paris Optimist Club partnered to support Campfire Circle (formerly Camp Trillium), raising \$6,800 through a joint fundraising effort. Club members later visited the charity’s Waterford camp for a tour in September, shared a meal, and formally presented the donation, highlighting the ongoing impact of local service clubs working together to support children affected by childhood cancer.
- Ahead of Truth and Reconciliation Day, The Woodland Cultural Centre (WCC) announces the official reopening of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School as an Interpretive Historic Site and Educa-

tional Resource

- The County of Brant is moving ahead with plans to lower speed limits on neighbourhood roads, with Paris set to see significant changes over the next three years. As part of the County’s Brant Safe Streets Strategy and Transportation Master Plan, late last year council approved a phased reduction of speed limits on local and collector roads from 50 km/h to 40 km/h.
- What began in 1975 as a small church fundraiser to repair the Parish Hall has grown into a beloved, bustling community tradition. This year, the St. James Festival celebrates its 50th anniversary—an unexpected milestone that organizers say is the product of countless hands and hearts over five decades.
- “Reaching 50 years is totally unexpected,” said church representative Scott Millward. “So many people over the years have contributed to this event. Those who have passed on would be shocked likely to know that we are still moving this event forward.”
- The County of Brant is among 169 municipalities in Ontario granted expanded strong mayor powers by the provincial government as of May 1, 2025. While the legislation gives mayors more authority in areas such as budget and staffing, Mayor David Bailey has announced his intention to maintain a collaborative, council-driven approach, delegating many of the new powers to County staff and Council.



**Brooklyn O’Krafska, 14, of Paris, Ont., proudly carries the Canadian flag during the opening ceremonies of the 2025 PDGA Junior Disc Golf World Championships in Emporia, Kansas.**

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## OCTOBER

- County of Brant Fire Department promotes Fire Prevention Week 2025 to shine a spotlight on one of the fastest-growing fire risks in Ontario homes — lithium-ion batteries. This year's national theme, "Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home," was chosen after the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) acknowledged a sharp rise in lithium-ion battery-related fires.
- Paris resident Sandra Piccoli pedalled more than 850 kilometres to Quebec City as part of the R4 Campfire Circle Challenge, raising over \$5,700 to help children living with cancer and serious illness.
- Paris hockey fans have a new reason to cheer for the Seattle Kraken. Hometown favourite Zac Dalpe, announced his retired from professional hockey this year, has landed a new role with the NHL club as a Player Development Consultant.
- A vibrant Havana-themed evening turned into a record-setting success for local healthcare, as the Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) Foundation's Annual Ignite Gala raised more than \$480,000 to support diagnostic imaging upgrades at the Willett and Brantford General Hospital.
- Community grant program updates approved: Brant County councillors supported one-time changes for 2026 that give applicants a second chance if they miss submission requirements and add a new question measuring the quantitative benefit to residents, aimed at improving fairness and access to up to \$10,000 in grant funding.
- The County of Brant is taking a stand against the provincial government's plan to ban automated speed enforcement (ASE) cameras, saying the local program has already delivered measurable safety benefits and should not be scrapped.
- Record Terry Fox fundraiser at

Paris Central School: Students raised more than \$7,200 for cancer research—surpassing their \$6,400 goal—with the school's 256 students demonstrating exceptional generosity and community spirit.

- During an October open house, Alectra Energy Solutions, a division of Alectra Utilities, proposed a 75-megawatt Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the County of Brant's municipally owned lands at the Paris Waste Transfer Station. The proposal must go to council for approval and support.
- Local superstition joins the playoff story: During the Toronto Blue Jays' amazing playoff run, sourdough cinnamon buns from Paris' Little Paris Bread Co. became a clubhouse good-luck charm—delivered by a Paris-born member of the team's medical staff as the Jays chased a playoff berth.
- Dundas Street East / Green Lane project update: The County of Brant confirmed L82 Construction Ltd. remains the original contractor awarded the tender at \$7.84 million, as construction continues and timelines extend beyond initial expectations.
- Brant County faces significant budget pressures ahead of 2026 property tax discussions and predicts a 13.6% tax increase.
- The County of Brant has confirmed that Amazon will construct a 200,000-square-foot delivery station in the Rest Acres Road and Highway 403 corridor adding a major addition to the community's growing logistics and industrial sector.
- County of Brant Councillor Christine Garneau has announced her resignation from council, citing an "irreconcilable conflict" between her duties as an elected official and her professional responsibilities.
- Planning framework under review: Brant County council is exploring the introduction of a Community



The Brant Battalions U11BB celebrate their championship win at the 53rd Annual Guelph Power Play Tournament, gathering with the Power Play Cup (and their proud fans in the stands) after a dominant undefeated weekend.

Planning Permit System (CPPS), a new land-use planning tool that would streamline zoning, site-plan and minor variance approvals into a single process.

## NOVEMBER

- The Blue Jays' pursuit of the World Series Championship title comes to an end in a heart breaking extra inning loss to the LA Dodgers in the seventh game of the World Series.
- New 911 medical dispatch system approved: Brant-Brantford Paramedic Services, in partnership with the Hamilton Central Ambulance Communications Centre, approved the introduction of the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), an evidence-based system used internationally to ensure the most critically ill and injured patients received the fastest response.
- Cleaver Road bridge controversy: Brant County councillors grappled

with strong community opposition after the abrupt closure of the century-old Cleaver Road bridge, as residents pushed for reopening it to vehicles while staff recommended permanent pedestrian-only conversion, citing safety concerns, environmental constraints and high repair costs—ultimately referring the issue to long-term financial planning discussions.

- A group of local writers who first came together through a County of Brant Library program celebrate a major milestone with the release of their first published collection, Tapestry of Tales & Poetry – A Collection by the Writers of Brant.
- The County of Brant is bracing for another significant year of construction in 2026, with a major multi-year road reconstruction project planned for the East Flats neighbourhood in Paris, adding to an already long list of infrastructure work that has tested residents'



The first Homes of Heros sign is placed, marking months of successful research and story sharing. Pictured left to right: Lidia Kitchen, Vickey Patel, Kelly Baker, Jason Hotte, Sweety Ahlawat, Amanda Mason and Kara Thomas take part in the unveiling of the first Homes of Heroes sign in Paris — a community initiative recognizing the homes of local veterans past and present.

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# YEAR IN REVIEW

patience in recent years.

- A new Primary Care Access Clinic opened in Paris on Nov. 10, marking the latest step in a regional effort to help residents without a family doctor or nurse practitioner receive timely, team-based care.
- After nine long months of construction, residents poured into Grand River Street North on November 21st for the unveiling of the refreshed streetscape and the 17th Annual Jingle Bell Night, an evening that sparkled with the same joyful energy you'd expect from a classic Christmas movie.
- Downtown road reopens! Following Jingle Bell Night, locals were delighted to once again drive through downtown Paris – the first time since the road was closed in May.

## DECEMBER

- A long-awaited new grocery option is officially on its way to Paris, with construction now underway for a FreshCo store at 10 Markel Drive, just off Rest Acres Road. The development comes as many residents express growing frustration over limited local grocery choices and increasing traffic congestion around routes to existing stores.
- County of Brant officials say a newly released amalgamation report,

commissioned and authorized by Brantford Mayor Kevin Davis under Strong Mayor Powers, reinforces what County residents have long argued: merging the two municipalities is not in the County's best interest.

- Emma Woods honoured in Burford: The Burford Community Centre hosted a jersey-retirement ceremony recognizing hometown hockey star Emma Woods, celebrating her journey from Burford Minor Hockey to the professional ranks with the Toronto Sceptres, with a commemorative jersey presentation and community autograph session.
- Thanks to the hard work and efforts of the Paris Firefighters Club, the Paris Santa Claus parade cruised through town to the delight of the young and old alike. With nearly 50 floats registered this year, the committee had a little fun by offering a \$250 Canadian Tire gift card to the best decorated float, as judged by the Paris Independent. It was a tough decision, but in the end Chris Whelan, Cindy Whelan and Jeff Johnston decided the Rotary Satellite Club of Paris to be the winner.
- North Cedar Development approved: The Ontario Land Tribunal approved a major north-end Paris subdivision at 184 Pinehurst Rd. following a



Sacred Heart students fill the downtown air with festive cheer as they perform Christmas classics during Jingle Bell Night.

negotiated settlement, clearing the way for the Cordon Farm project to proceed with conditions after the developer appealed a lack of decision by the County of Brant.

- Downtown Paris parking study launched: County of Brant councillors reviewed a preliminary parking needs assessment outlining long-term parking pressures in downtown Paris, projecting that more than 400 additional public parking

spaces could be required over the next 25 years as redevelopment continues.

- County of Brant celebrated the contributions of local volunteers on Friday, December 5, during its third annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony at the TF Warren Group Cainsville Community Centre. This year's event recognized 57 individual volunteers along with five community groups for their service.

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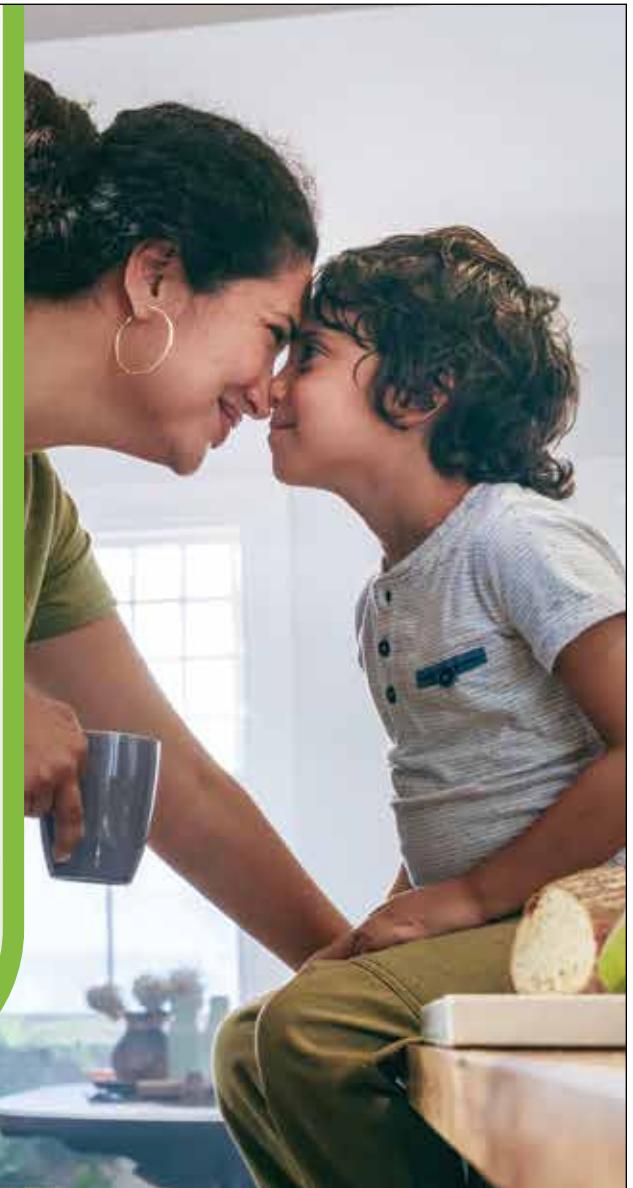
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# The Paris Independent SPORTS



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## From bullseyes to food bank wins at Paris Legion Ladies Darts

The Paris Legion was glowing December 18th - and not just from the holiday spirit. On December 19, the Ladies Darts League hit a historic milestone with a record-breaking 14 teams stepping up to the boards for the final session of the year.

The atmosphere was electric as players dressed in their best "Ugly Christmas Sweaters," turning the hall into a sea of twinkling lights and festive ornaments. Between rounds of competitive play, members shared a massive spread of holiday treats and festive food brought in by the players.

The evening was punctuated by a very special announcement: Annie celebrated her engagement to Rick. While a playful rumor had been circulating that Rick might be the "Thigh Master 2000," Annie was happy to set the record straight amidst

cheers from her fellow players.

In the spirit of giving, the league demonstrated the true meaning of the season. Players arrived with bags of food donations for the local food bank. The night's biggest winner, Bonnie, who claimed the \$100 prize generously gifted by Nancy to the player pool, immediately donated the entire sum to the food bank. Meanwhile, Gail was the night's lucky 50/50 winner.

The competition remained fierce despite the festivities. Debbie K. led the pack with a high score of 116, followed closely by Mary Ann, who notched a 101.

The "Double Out" honors were plentiful:

Katy, Bonnie, and Jennifer all secured two double outs for their respective teams.

Linda, Marg, Gail, Nancy, Kim, Lori, and Arlene each doubled out once to clinch their wins.



The precision continued with a flurry of bullseyes, recorded by Cynthia, Jennifer, Trish, Liz, and Kim.

The Paris Legion Ladies Darts League

is now on a well-deserved holiday break. Players are encouraged to keep their arms limber over the holidays, as league play is set to resume on January 8.

## Panthers hockey squads pour in goals ahead of holiday break

GEORGE LE GRESLEY

Sports Correspondent

### Boys Hockey

The Panthers had two games the last week of school against two of the weakest teams in the AABHN Boys Contact League. First up last Monday, the winless North Park Trojans came to BSC to face the Panthers and were defeated 8-2.

Next up was the yet-to-win Simcoe Composite School last Thursday. This second one-sided affair of the week featured goals aplenty for the Panthers, who defeated Simcoe 14-1. With this type of score, there was a full score sheet: Jack Lovelock and Josh Pizzrey both had three goals and two assists, Jacob Woloshin two goals and three assists, Jack Ward scored one goal, Hayden Sparks one goal and two assists, Quinn Carpenter one goal and an assist, Noah Bosnjak one goal and three assists, Cam Cawell with two goals, Ryker Hoekman with two assists and Carson DeMunk

with an assist.

These Panthers return to action on January 6 against Delhi Secondary at the Brant Sports Centre, with a two o'clock Puck drop.

### Girls Hockey

The Panthers faced the BCI Mustangs in the final game of the calendar year and had another one-sided 9-1 win. Also scoring goals were Harley Shuart with five and Rowan Worrall with three and an assist. Raegan Charter assisted on five goals and Sydney Kipp was credited with an assist. With most scoring occurring in the first two periods, the coaching staff wanted the team to focus on defense. Next up for the Panthers will be a rematch against BCI on January 12 at the Brant Sports Complex at 2:30 pm.

### Boys Basketball

The Junior team had only one game left before the holiday break and took a loss to St John's. Leading scorers for the Panthers were Rex Savage, Blake Cruickshank and

Calvin Passos. Their season continues after the break, with two games: January 6 at BCI and January 8 against Assumption at home.

The Senior team also travelled to St John's and defeated the Eagles 66-54. Canaan Sherbino, the leading candidate for the team's MVP, led the way with 37 points, with Elliot Shiedel scoring 11 and Jacob Kreager with 6. The team is on the rise, sitting tied for second place with St John's and North Park.

The team is back in action with a trip to BCI on January 6 and a home game on January 8 at 5:30 pm against Assumption.

### Girls Volleyball

Coming off a win the previous week against North Park, the Panthers played St. John's and lost their match in three straight games. Coach Jacob is doing a great job with this young, perhaps inexperienced, team. By working on winning points on their serves and communicating more effectively on the court, they should improve

as the season continues at home on January 6.

The Senior Panthers also faced St John's at home. The first game was close, with the Panthers trailing and then leading. Tied at 24 and 26 points each, the Eagles took the tie-breaking 27th point to win game one. The team earned points on Nora Kovacs's nine serves, and Aliah Kingswood did great work blocking and spiking shots.

The second game was all Paris, leading from the moment the teams were tied at 13 points each, cruising to a 25-21 win. In Game three, the Panthers lost momentum from the first two games and lost 25-14. In Game four, the Panthers started slowly, trailing by nine points as the Eagles led 19-10. From that point, the Paris girls put on a show and eventually tied the score at 24. Unfortunately, the remarkable comeback in points ended with the Eagles taking the game 26-24 and a 3-game-to-1 match win.

The seniors return to action at home on January 6 at 3:30 pm against BCI.



### House League Standings - December 16th & 17th

#### 7-8 Year-Old (House League)

Warriors defeat Fruit, 20-10

Lakers tied King Pineapple, 6-6

##### This week's top scorers:

Ryder, Warriors, 10 points, Archer, Warriors, 10 points.

Jaime, Fruit, 10 points

#### 9-11 Year-Old (House League)

Raptors defeat Tigers, 20-9

Warriors defeat Lakers, 46-13

##### This week's top scorers:

Buster, Warriors, 18 points, Benson, Warriors, 12 points, Owen, Warriors, 12 points

#### 12-14 Year-Old (House League)

Fever defeat Hoopers, 33-10, Lakers defeat Raptors, 20-0 (forfeit)

##### This week's top scorers:

Averi, Fever, 18 points, Gen, Fever, 13 points, Kieran, Hoopers, 4 points.

# Ayr Farmers Mutual signs 40-year naming rights deal for North Dumfries community centre

Partnership supports fundraising goals for net Zero twin pad expansion and boost ice time for growing community

## MEDIA RELEASE

Ayr Farmers Mutual Insurance Company (AFM) and the Township of North Dumfries have entered into a 40-year naming rights partnership for the community centre building at the North Dumfries Community Complex. The building will now be known as the Ayr Farmers Mutual Community Centre. It currently houses The North Dumfries Community Health Centre, MacNeil Hall, programming rooms, and the existing Ayr Farmers Mutual Arena, and will include a new Net Zero Arena and two large community rooms when expansion is complete in Spring 2027.

The expansion will not only serve the growing community of Ayr, but also athletes who play on Ayr teams from the surrounding communities in the County of Brant.

The partnership represents an annual investment of \$15,000 over 40 years, for a total of

\$600,000, to support the Centre for the Community Group's Live & Play 2 Fundraising Campaign. The campaign is raising \$2.2 million for a Net Zero Twin Pad and Community Programming Expansion to address the Township of North Dumfries and surrounding areas' growing need for additional ice time, recreational and community facilities.

"While we serve many communities across Southwestern Ontario, Ayr has been our home for more than 130 years," said



Township of North Dumfries Mayor Sue Foxton and Ayr Farmers Mutual President & CEO Jeff Whiting with the AFMCC sign mock-up as part of the naming rights agreement.

Jeff Whiting, President & CEO of Ayr

Farmers Mutual. "This community has supported us through generations, and as a mutual and purpose-driven company, it's our honour to give back to the communities we serve when we can. This 40-year commitment is a privilege and a testament to our confidence in Ayr's future. As this community grows and builds infrastructure that so many will benefit from, we're proud to play a meaningful role in that development."

The upfront investment structure allows the Township of North Dumfries to accelerate critical facility improvements while AFM's 40-year commitment demonstrates long-term partnership with the Township and community.

"It all comes down to community and this is where the Township of North Dumfries, Ayr Farmers Mutual, the CCG and the people of this community draw together with a common goal to enhance our facility," said Sue Foxton, Mayor of North Dumfries Township. "Major facilities draw people together. This is the heartbeat of our small but mighty town. Thank you Ayr Farmers Mutual, a company entwined in our history while building our future."

The North Dumfries Community Complex will continue to identify the 22-hectare property, which includes outdoor resources such as Cowan Park, beach volleyball

courts, and community gardens. The Ayr Farmers Mutual Community Centre designation refers specifically to the building that serves as a hub for recreation, health services, and Township operations.

"AFM's contribution is transformational for our Live & Play 2 campaign and for this community. Raising \$2.2 million for the Township's Net Zero Expansion Project is an ambitious goal, and AFM's commitment has brought us significantly closer to our target to help deliver this critical infrastructure. Ice time is at a premium in our community, and this expansion will have an immediate impact on youth sports, family recreation, and community connection. We're deeply grateful to AFM for their vision and their willingness to invest in something that will benefit so many families for decades to come," said Michael Pley, Co-Chair of the Live & Play 2 Campaign for the Centre for the Community Group of North Dumfries.

Ayr Farmers Mutual has a long history of community investment in the region, including a previous contribution toward the ice rink at this facility, previous contribution to the County of Brant Sports Complex, and contributions in 2025 to more than 60 community organizations across its service area.

## MacNeil and Dodd Pharmacy makes \$150,000 donation



Live & Play 2 Campaign organizers were also thrilled to announce the recent \$150,000 donation from Patrick and Linda MacNeil on behalf of MacNeil and Dodd Pharmacy. Pictured are Councillor Rod Rolleman, Mayor Sue Foxton, Patrick MacNeil, Linda MacNeil, Councillor Derrick Ostner, Councillor Alida Wilms, CCG Chair Mike Pley.

# RIDDLES

I'm something you make but hope you won't break by February. What am I?

*A New Year's resolution*

I tick, I chime, I mark the moment a year ends in time. What am I?

*A clock*

I fall at midnight but I'm not rain or snow. What am I?

*The ball (Times Square ball drop)*

I make noise without words and celebrate without singing. What am I?

*A party horn*

I show up every year but am never the same twice. What am I?

*A year*

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## PET OF THE WEEK



### MONTY

#### Meet our Pet of the Week:

We are very proud of Monty as he is successfully navigating his weight loss journey. He has lost 1/2 kg in the first month of his new diet. Congratulations Monty, you are an inspiration to the rest of us with New Years resolutions to manage our weight.

*Stay tuned for more heartwarming stories every week from Paris Veterinary Clinic.*



## Sudoku

1	3		9	4			5	8
	9	2		8	7			1
						7	6	
8	5		9		1			
	1					9	7	
				4	5			
	3					1	5	
2	1	9	3	6			7	4
5			4	7			3	

Solutions on page 19



## WORD SEARCH

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

L	K	N	Y	Q	G	C	R	S	T	F	G	P	M	V	P	T	J	A	R
K	N	P	W	U	Y	H	N	O	T	C	A	V	G	N	P	P	C	K	E
X	N	Z	J	S	J	A	T	T	T	O	A	S	T	V	W	Q	V	Y	N
P	O	Z	J	P	T	M	M	L	X	L	U	N	F	L	D	B	V	I	I
B	I	U	N	F	Y	P	Q	B	T	O	X	H	U	F	Q	C	E	C	K
W	T	H	K	C	T	A	Z	A	R	J	G	C	Y	I	F	O	T	H	N
S	I	O	M	R	G	G	P	L	E	Z	H	Y	F	R	V	U	A	E	E
R	D	M	H	D	N	N	S	L	N	P	W	N	P	E	B	N	R	E	M
E	A	N	F	Z	M	E	P	D	E	A	H	U	U	W	F	T	B	R	A
M	R	X	U	R	P	S	T	R	W	R	B	C	P	O	R	D	E	S	C
A	T	M	P	I	P	J	R	O	A	T	O	O	Y	R	E	O	L	Q	M
E	O	G	J	Y	B	S	A	P	L	Y	O	N	R	K	S	W	E	Q	I
R	V	S	O	O	D	O	E	N	A	N	G	F	A	S	O	N	C	S	D
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S	V	R	V	D	W	V	W	M	O	N	N	T	N	N	U	M	G	A	I
I	A	O	D	P	S	X	E	B	T	Z	O	T	A	J	T	H	O	O	G
I	V	E	P	Z	G	N	N	X	V	A	S	I	J	B	I	E	W	G	H
Q	I	G	D	Y	E	B	D	W	W	X	O	M	I	D	O	V	T	X	T
R	C	L	O	C	K	X	S	P	A	R	K	L	E	S	N	E	Z	D	Q
O	G	D	V	B	J	B	Y	M	F	Y	V	A	V	M	G	T	Y	M	

New Year  
Countdown  
Midnight  
Fireworks  
Resolution  
Celebrate  
Party  
Confetti  
Champagne  
Toast  
Cheers  
Sparkle  
Clock  
Eve  
January  
Ball Drop  
Goals  
Streamers  
Tradition  
Renewal

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EMAIL TO INQUIRE [INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM](mailto:INFO@THEPARISINDEPENDENT.COM)

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 8

**Women Inspiring Women, Women's Institute Monthly Meeting** - Thursday, January 8th, 7-9 PM at the Paris Fairgrounds, Community Room. A Discussion with Local Author and Professor Dr. James Cairns & County of Brant Library Updates with Emma Johnston. Bring a mug for tea!

## 1 & 3 TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

**The Brantford Stamp Club** - In Support of the Food Bank - The Brantford Stamp Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday September to December and January to May as well as the 1st Tuesday in June and December. Meetings are held at The Branlyn Community Centre 238 Brantwood Park Drive in Brantford. Doors open at 7pm and meetings start at 8pm.

## EVERY OTHER FRIDAY

**Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree Meeting** - In 2026 it's your fix! Ingersoll Country Music Jamboree meeting every other Friday 1-4 p.m. at Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St. S. Ingersoll. Join us, walk ins welcome. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Perform, listen, dance & enjoy! January 16 & 30, February 13 & 27, March 6 & 20, April 10 & 17, May 1, 15 & 29, June 5 & 19.



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# WEEKLY Horoscope

December 31- January 6, 2026

## ARIES

Mar 21 - Apr 20

Renewed focus takes shape, Aries. A timely decision sharpens direction and boosts assurance. Keep moving—it's aligning in your favor.



## TAURUS

Apr 21 - May 21

Calm stability remains close, Taurus. Simple pleasures restore ease and familiarity. Stay patient—your consistency continues to reward you.



## GEMINI

May 22 - Jun 21

Ideas flow freely, Gemini. An engaging exchange sparks inspiration and useful perspective. Follow your curiosity—it opens doors to exciting possibilities ahead.



## CANCER

Jun 22 - Jul 22

Emotional clarity strengthens. Supportive energy appears just when it matters most. Proceed gently and trust your nurturing instincts.



## LEO

Jul 23 - Aug 23

Your presence stands out, Leo. Confidence grows as you act with intention, warmth, and creativity. Embrace your moment—it's well deserved and unmistakable.



## VIRGO

Aug 24 - Sept 22

Organization brings comfort, Virgo. Finishing a detail restores balance and confidence. Rely on your process—it keeps everything aligned.



## FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

### DECEMBER 31

Anthony Hopkins, Actor (88)

### JANUARY 1

Noah Kahan, Musician (29)

### JANUARY 2

Dax Shepard, Actor (51)

### JANUARY 3

Mel Gibson, Actor (70)

### JANUARY 4

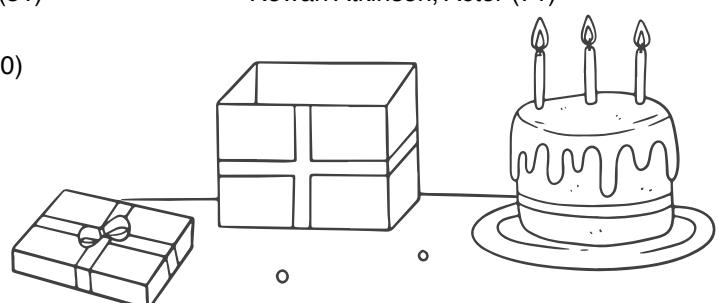
Dave Foley, Comedian (63)

### JANUARY 5

Bradley Cooper, Actor (51)

### JANUARY 6

Rowan Atkinson, Actor (71)



# CLASSIFIEDS

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JAN 2-31, 2026

## JANUARY 3-WAY MENU

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### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Six seven	5. Kananaskis, AB
2. Ernie Clement	6. Pope Leo XIV
3. Anora	7. Zohran Mamdani
4. Oklahoma City Thunder (basketball)	8. NVIDIA
	9. India
	10. Ahmed al-Ahmed



### HOMES OF HEROES:

If you have a story about a Paris Veteran, please email the committee at [info@homesofheroes.ca](mailto:info@homesofheroes.ca). Let's work together to give all our veterans, living and fallen, in war and in peace, the recognition and honour they deserve. If you have any questions about the project, please email Neil Edwards at [neiledwards51@gmail.com](mailto:neiledwards51@gmail.com).

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### SUDOKU ANSWERS

1	3	7	9	4	6	2	5	8
6	9	2	5	8	7	3	4	1
8	5	4	1	3	2	7	6	9
4	8	5	7	9	3	1	2	6
3	2	1	6	5	8	4	9	7
9	7	6	2	1	4	5	8	3
7	4	3	8	2	9	6	1	5
2	1	9	3	6	5	8	7	4
5	6	8	4	7	1	9	3	2

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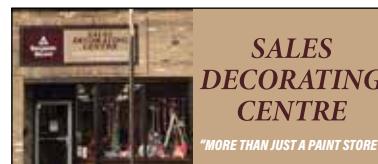


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# Put energy efficiency to work.

## Every watt saved is a boost to your bottom line.

From building retrofits to equipment upgrades to professional training, we're here to help Ontario businesses thrive.

### Programs, Incentives and Expert Advice for Every Business

Get financial and technical support to achieve your energy-efficiency goals.

#### Small Business Programs

Receive financial incentives for saving energy. Becoming more energy efficient doesn't take a lot of time, even for the busiest business owners.

#### Retrofit Program

Get financial incentives to upgrade equipment that will lower energy costs, improve productivity and support your business's sustainability goals.

#### XLerate Program

Receive up to \$15 million in funding and comprehensive support for large-scale energy efficiency projects through a streamlined pay-for-performance initiative.

#### Instant Discounts Program

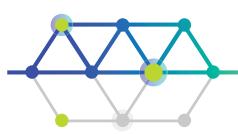
Receive upfront discounts from participating distributors on the purchase of energy-efficient lighting products that will help to lower your business's energy consumption, improve your bottom line and transform your space.

#### Expanded Energy Management Program

The expanded Energy Management program offers financial support for industrial facilities as part of Natural Resources Canada's Green Industrial Facilities and Manufacturing Program.

### FIND OUT MORE

Scan the QR code or email [saveonenergy@grandbridgeenergy.com](mailto:saveonenergy@grandbridgeenergy.com)



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