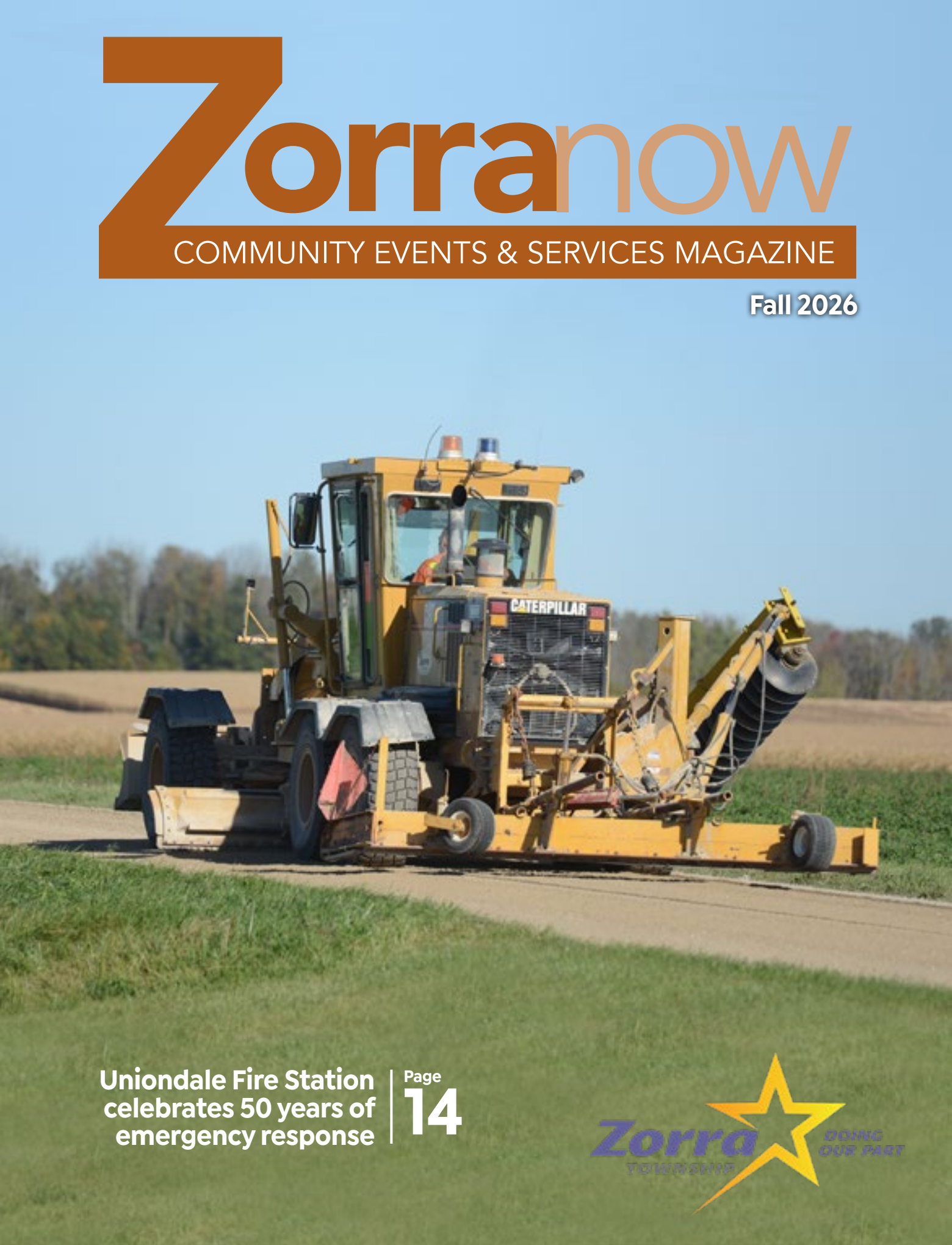
Zorranow

COMMUNITY EVENTS & SERVICES MAGAZINE

Fall 2026



Uniondale Fire Station celebrates 50 years of emergency response

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Zorra TOWNSHIP DOING OUR PART

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Message from the Mayor

Thank you all for giving me the honour and the privilege to serve as Ward Three Councillor, Zorra Mayor, Oxford Warden, and the Chair of the Western Ontario Wardens and raise rural and small town issues with the Provincial and Federal governments. When I set out with people to keep AJ Baker P.S. open I never imagined it would lead to this.

- Stopping High Speed Rail
- Stopping Dump
- Thamesford and Embro Splash pads
- Managing through COVID
- Protecting farmland
- 100% renewable buildings
- The Maple Leaf redevelopment in Thamesford
- Childcare
- New road safety policies
- Keeping schools open or building a new one
- Keeping tax pressure low (there were three years where Council(s) delivered a reduction in tax rate, and two more where the increase was less than inflation)
- Getting housing, and particularly affordable housing and a Homelessness Support Centre, built
- Protecting farmland and green spaces with a new Official Plan
- A Climate Action Plan
- An Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan

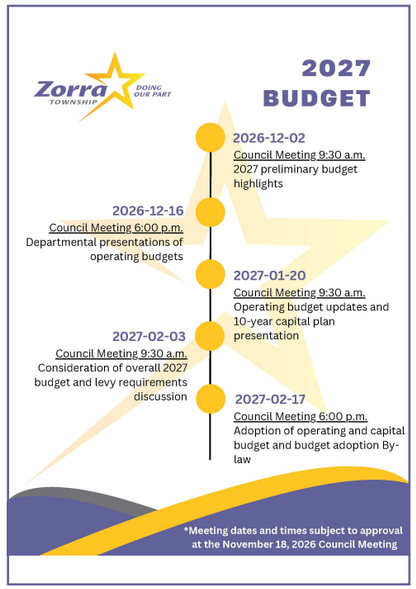
The goal was always to leave my community, Zorra, Oxford, better.

Without a doubt this has been the most challenging, satisfying, and rewarding job I have ever had.

And by far the best people I have ever worked with.

When you get this issue of Zorra Now the municipal election will be the next month. I strongly encourage you to engage with candidates and vote. Council matters, and it matters more when residents engage with it. Visit Zorra.ca for election information and how to vote.

And when the election is over, support your new Council. They are your representatives. They are your friends, neighbours, and family. Support them in doing their part for all of us to grow stronger together.



I really hope they find ways to do better than I did. I'm still going to be a resident, I'm still going to use the services, and I'm still going to pay taxes. I wish them all the best.

Marcus Ryan
Mayor, Zorra Township (and Warden, Oxford County)
email: mryan@zorra.ca
Phone: 1.519.425.2338

Zorra Now Magazine is published electronically and paper copies are available at all Township Facilities. If you have any questions or comments or would like to advertise in the magazine, please contact:

Zorranow COMMUNITY EVENTS & SERVICES MAGAZINE

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DISCOVER YOUR OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY

Oxford Reads: The 2026 winning title is *How to Survive a Bear Attack: A Memoir* by Claire Cameron. This memoir weaves together a real-life tragedy and the author's own experiences to explore grief, fear, and our relationship with the wild. Visit **www.oxfordreads.ca** for a full list of Oxford Reads programs.

Brainfuse: An online homework help resource for students in grades K-12. Brainfuse also offers practice tests and support for adult learners, writing assistance, skills building and more! Access this resource with your library card number and PIN.

Ox on the Run: A year-round service. As the weather turns cold, find the bookmobile indoors at community spaces. For more information and to see the schedule of Zorra stops, visit **www.ocl.net/our-services/ox-on-the-run**

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Unbook Book Club
When: First Wednesday of every month, 3:00-4:00 p.m.
Where: Embro Branch
Free adult program. Drop-in and share books, shows, films, podcasts and articles in a community-led conversation.

Cooking demonstration with Chef Jed Lau
When: Tuesday, October 6 at 6:00 p.m.
Where: Thamesford Branch
Adult program and space is limited. Live cooking demonstration of German cuisine. Registration is required; visit www.ocl.net or call the branch at 519-285-3219.

For up-to-date library information, program details and hours, call your local branch or visit **www.ocl.net**

OxfordCounty Library
connect. discover. share. ***become.***

Public Works Department

Share the Road

Farm operations are always extremely active in the fall with harvest season. Please pay special attention to the large equipment moving about on Zorra roads. Especially during this busy time of the year, we like everyone to share the road equally, be aware, and be courteous. We know farmers are extremely busy during harvest time and it is important to take that extra care regardless of which vehicle they are using.

Brush, Leaf and Yard Waste Depot

Zorra has a Depot for brush, leaf, and yard waste. Located across the road from the Kintore Public Works Shop at 783045 Road 78, just east of Highway 19.

- **Acceptable materials include:** fruits and vegetables, garden hedge and tree trimmings, grass, leaves, Halloween pumpkins, house and garden plants, brush (no longer than 6ft). and Christmas trees.
- **Unacceptable materials include:** garbage, old fencing, plastic bags, hazardous waste, top soil, rocks, and stumps.

This depot is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is no charge for this service.

Construction Zone Sign Classification

In a Construction Zone, “Local Traffic Only” means you are accessing a property inside the section of road that is closed. It does NOT mean that you live in the area adjacent to the construction and the closed road is the shortest distance to your destination. It is a Highway Traffic Act Offence to misuse this privilege.

Steve Oliver,
Director of Public Services
519-425-2302 or
soliver@zorra.ca

Building Department

Building Permit

A building permit is the written authorization which grants legal permission to begin demolition or construction of any structure, addition, or renovation. It is reviewed and issued when a complete application has been submitted and the plans comply with the Ontario Building Code, the Township of Zorra Zoning By-Law and other applicable laws and regulations.

Building Permit Applications

To apply for a building, demolition or septic permit, please visit the Building & Drainage section of the Township website for full details and instructions.

All permit applications must be submitted online through Cloudpermit. First-time users will need to create an account before starting an application. Step-by-step instructions on how to register and use Cloudpermit are also available on our website to guide you through the process.

Building Resources

Visit the Building Department webpage for helpful guides on decks, temporary tents, and additional residential units. These guides have been developed to help property owners understand applicable building requirements. While they are a useful resource, it is important to consult the Ontario Building Code to ensure your project complies with all applicable regulations and requirements.

Building Permits and Property Assessment

Improvements to your property may impact your property assessment. Changes such as additions, renovations, or new construction can affect the assessment value of your property as determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). This may affect your property taxes. For more information on property assessment, please refer directly to MPAC’s website: http://www.mpac.ca/en/UnderstandingYourAssessment.

Drainage

Legal Outlets
With the pressure of too much work and not enough time, there may be a temptation to take shortcuts. This is a reminder that the following are NOT legal outlets:

- *Roadside Ditches:* You can only use roadside ditches as an outlet if permission is granted by the road authority. If permission is granted, we recommend that you secure the permission in WRITING.
- *Private Ditches*: Private ditches are private infrastructure and unless permission is given, another property owner has no right to connect a newly installed tile drainage system to a private ditch that flows across a neighbouring property. Similar to using a roadside ditch as an outlet, if permission is given, make sure it is in WRITING. If work needs to be done on the neighbouring property, make sure all parties are clear on cost-sharing and also that all parties are clear on the extent of work and the potential disruption of land.
- *Municipal Drains:* Municipal drains have a defined watershed; the lands within that watershed have paid for the construction and management of that drain and only these lands have the right to connect to the municipal drain. If you are installing tile drainage on a property, it is possible that only a portion of that property has the legal right to connect into that drain. If you are not sure, check with the local drainage superintendent before undertaking the work. If there is a section of land that is outside the limits of the watershed, you must ask for permission to connect those lands to the drain.
- *Wetland or low area:* Sometimes it’s tempting to outlet a tile drainage system into a wetland area, particularly if the wetland is located on your client’s property. However, before doing so, you should examine the area to determine if the out letting of the tile drainage system could be any impact on other property owners. If there could be, don’t do it without first acquiring permission.

If a property owner is unable to secure an outlet, that owner has the right to petition their municipality under the Drainage Act for an outlet. Although it takes longer to get the outlet using the Drainage Act, when it is done, you can have confidence that the tile drainage work you perform will not result in legal action. If you still decide to take shortcuts on legal outlets, remember that the courts consider the tile drainage contractor to be an expert. You may want to check out the liability risk of you and your business.

See Drainage FAQ on next page

Any building or drainage questions should be addressed to
Mike Hughes, Chief Building Official/Drainage Superintendent
519-425-2306 or mhughes@zorra.ca

TOWNSHIP DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Drainage: Frequently Asked Questions

Why am I being charged under the Drainage Act?

In rural Ontario, drainage systems—such as municipal drains, ditches, tiles, and culverts—are essential infrastructure. They help remove excess water from farmland, roads, and properties to prevent flooding, protect buildings, and keep land usable.

The Ontario Drainage Act is provincial legislation that allows municipalities to:

- Construct and maintain these drainage systems, and
- Recover the cost from the properties that benefit from them.

How are the costs determined?

When a municipal drain is created or improved, an engineer prepares a report that:

- Identifies all properties that benefit from the drain
- Assigns a share of the cost to each property based on benefit, outlet use, and responsibility

This process ensures that:

- Properties that benefit more from the drain pay a larger share
- Costs are distributed fairly, rather than paid by all taxpayers equally

Why am I paying if the Drain is not on my property?

You may still benefit from the drainage system even if its not located directly on your land.

For example:

- Your property may drain into the system (called an “outlet")
- The drain may reduce flooding risks in your area
- Municipal roads you use are protected by the drainage system

Because of these indirect benefits, the Act allows costs to be shared among all affected properties.

What are the charges for?

Charges under the Drainage Act typically cover:

- Regular maintenance (cleaning, repairs, vegetation removal)
- Major repairs or improvements to aging systems
- New drainage works (if applicable)

Maintenance costs are usually smaller and occur periodically, while construction or major upgrades may result in one-time or financed charges.

Many of the reports used for drain maintenance are over 50 years old

How are maintenance costs charged?

Municipal drains require ongoing maintenance to continue functioning properly.
This includes:

- Cleaning out sediment and debris
- Removing vegetation and blockages
- Repairing erosion or damaged sections Under the Drainage Act
- Maintenance is arranged by the municipality when needed
- The cost of this work is charged out to the properties listed in the original engineer's report
- Each property pays its assigned percentage (assessment) of the total cost

Unlike new construction projects, maintenance does not require a new engineer's
report each time. Instead, costs are distributed using the existing schedule of assessment already in place for that drain.

This means:

- Charges may appear periodically, depending on when maintenance is required
- Smaller maintenance activities will still be billed proportionally
- The municipality is responsible for coordinating the work, but not for absorbing the cost

Why can't the Municipality pay for it?

Drainage systems are different from general municipal services. Under the Drainage Act:

- Costs must be assigned to benefiting landowners
- Municipal taxpayers at large are not responsible for privately benefiting drainage works

This ensures fairness—those who receive the benefit contribute to the cost.

The Municipality pays for the drains that run within municipal-owned property (roads, parks, etc.)

Drainage Questions?

For drainage and drainage related questions, please contact the Drainage Superintendent, Mike Hughes, by phone 519-485-2490 x7224 or by email at mhughes@zorra.ca

Zorra TOWNSHIP DOING OUR PART

Any building or drainage questions should be addressed to
Mike Hughes, Chief Building Official/Drainage Superintendent
519-425-2306 or mhughes@zorra.ca

Fire & Emergency Services Department

On behalf of the Townships of Zorra and South-West Oxford, we are pleased to announce the promotion of Jeremy Wallace to the position of Shared Deputy Fire Chief, serving both municipalities.

Deputy Chief Wallace brings more than 20 years of fire service experience and a strong commitment to leadership, firefighter safety, training, and community service. As part of a proud multi-generational fire service family, he is well known for his collaborative approach, professionalism, and dedication to continuous improvement.

In addition to his municipal fire service experience, Deputy Chief Wallace also serves with the London International Airport as a Firefighter and Team Lead, bringing valuable expertise in specialized and high-risk emergency response operations.

The establishment of the Shared Deputy Fire Chief position represents a continued commitment by both Townships to enhancing fire service leadership, operational resilience, and long-term succession planning.

We are excited to see Deputy Chief Wallace step into this important role and are confident he will make a positive impact in both Zorra and South-West Oxford.

Congratulations, Deputy Chief Wallace!

Thamesford Fire
75th Anniversary Open House
Saturday September 12, 2026
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Presentation at 2pm)
Thamesford Fire Station
682820 Road 68, Thamesford

Keep up to date on news and events in Zorra Township

www.zorra.ca

Find us on Facebook!
Township of Zorra

Follow us on LinkedIn!
Township of Zorra

Follow us on Instagram!
@ZorraTwp

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact
Shane Caskanette firechief@zorra.ca

Get Prepared
Back to School

BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY AND PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

REVIEW YOUR PLAN AND CHECK YOUR SUPPLIES

Sit down as a family to talk about different kinds of emergencies and review your family emergency plan. Does everyone know what to do and where you will meet if you are not together when an emergency takes place? Work as a family to prepare an emergency kit if you don't already have one or use the time to check your emergency supplies to make sure you have key items on hand and that the items inside are not expired.

BE AWARE OF SCHOOL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Make sure you read information from the school about their plan for emergencies, emergency procedures and alternate locations should an emergency take place. Check that the school has current emergency contact information for your children. This includes work, mobile and home telephone numbers.

DO YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

It will take you about 20 minutes to make a family emergency plan. Work as a family to discuss the following, then record them as part of your plan:

- Safe exits from home and neighbourhood
- Meeting places to reunite with family or roommates
- Designated person to pick up children should you be unavailable
- Contact persons close-by and out-of-town
- Health and insurance information
- Places for your pet to stay
- Risks in your region
- Location of your fire extinguisher, water valve, electrical panel, gas valve and floor drain

Zorra Fire & Emergency Services
Township of Zorra Fire Chief Shane Caskanette
519-535-7408

By-Law Enforcement

Recreation Vehicle (RV) Parking:

Notice to all RV/boat owners. Our Zoning By-law allows front driveway storage of RVs and boats from May 1 – October 31. After October 31, front driveway storage of these vehicles shall be removed and stored elsewhere. After October 31, the vehicles may be stored on your side lot or rear lot provided that they meet the 5-foot setback from adjacent properties.

Winter Parking

Please be advised that the winter parking restrictions will be enforced starting November 15th and remain in place until March 31, 2027 in accordance with By-law 48-20. For snow removal purposes, parking is not permitted on any road or street from 1:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. 7 days a week during this period. Any vehicle owner found in violation of this by-law could be fined or have their vehicle removed/towed at owners' expense. The set fine for this violation is set at $50. No unauthorized overnight parking is permitted at the Thamesford District Recreation Centre.

Leaves/snow removal on to Roadways

The autumn season is quickly approaching and therefore the leaves will begin to fall. As a reminder to all residents, depositing your leaves onto the roadway and sidewalk is dangerous and is a contravention of the Clearing Refuse from Land By-law No. 16-18. If you wish to drop off your yard waste, visit the County of Oxford website to view all brush, leaf, and yard waste depot locations. Pushing or placing any leaves, snow or ice on to roadway, or any other obstruction of a roadway is an offence that carries a Provincial Offences Fine of $200.00.

Keeping Properties Clean and Clear

In the Township of Zorra, all grass and weeds must be maintained at a height less than 8 inches. This is done to promote safety in the Township, including pest-control, as well as to maintain the appearance of Zorra. Further, property owners and tenants shall keep their land free from industrial and domestic wastes, inoperable motorized vehicles (both licensed or unlicensed), vehicle parts, construction materials, and other refuse. If refuse has started to accumulate on your property, you are required to place it in appropriate containers, stored at the side or rear of your lot, and placed curbside within 14 days.

Dave Robertson, By-law Enforcement Officer
226-374-6795 drobertson@zorra.ca

Keep up to date on news and events in Zorra Township

www.zorra.ca

Find us on Facebook!
Township of Zorra

Follow us on LinkedIn!
Township of Zorra

Follow us on Instagram!
@ZorraTwp

Tax Department

2026 TAX NEWS

Property Tax Billing

Your 2026 final tax bill is enclosed. If you are set up on a pre-authorized plan over 10 or 12 months, you will receive notice of the payments that will be withdrawn from your bank account on the last business day of each month from July to October or July to December. Of your total tax bill, 44% goes to services provided by the Township, while the other 56% goes to service delivery partners including local conservation authorities, the Ontario Provincial Police, the County of Oxford, and local school boards.

Payment Due Dates:
August 31, 2026
October 30, 2026
By End of Business Day

***** PLEASE KEEP YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL FOR YOUR RECORDS *****
There is a $10 fee for an Annual Statement of your account or for a replacement property tax bill (paper or electronic)

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Pre-Authorized Payment (PAP) Plan
We offer various PAP Plans to make it easier to pay your tax bill and to help avoid late fees. There is no cost for this service. If you pay by PAP Plan you will receive a final tax bill for your records. Visit zorra.ca/our-services/forms/ to sign up for PAP or e-billing.

Internet Banking
We are set up with most major banks to accept payments using internet banking. You must use your Property Roll Number indicated on your tax bill to register. To setup your property taxes as a bill payment through your online banking, go to "add a bill" and search for "Zorra". Select Zorra Township Tax and enter the Roll Number from your tax bill as your account number. Use your 15-digit roll number, excluding the dashes. Please allow **3 business days** for the payment to reach the municipality.

Mail
If you are mailing a cheque (payable to Township of Zorra) allow sufficient time for delivery.

Visit / Drop-Box at the Municipal Office
Payment may be made in-person by cash, cheque, or debit at the Municipal Office during business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). If paying in person, be sure to bring your bill with you. Payment may also be made via the drop box at the municipal office, beside the main door. Cheques only!

Penalty and Interest Charges
Payments are not applied to accounts until the funds are received by the Township. Payment through a financial institution can take up to 3 business days to reach us and mail delivery may be delayed. Penalty and interest charges of 1.25% will be added to instalments not paid (and received by the Township) by the due date. Interest charges are applied on the first day of each month until the balance is paid. Failure to receive a tax bill does not exempt the taxpayer from late payment charges.

Did You Know?

Please be advised that improvements to your property may impact your property assessment. Changes such as additions, renovations, or new construction can affect the assessed value of your property as determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). This may affect your property taxes.
For more information, please refer directly to MPAC's website: https://www.mpac.ca/en/UnderstandingYourAssessment

For tax inquiries, contact Melissa De Luca, Tax Collector
mdeluca@zorra.ca 519-425-2304 www.zorra.ca

Recreation Department

Township Community Partnership Projects

ZORRA MULTI-USE COURTS COMMITTEE

The outdoor multi-use courts are coming! The new parkland will be staked out soon with construction mobilizing in September. We'd like to acknowledge the many years of dedication of our committee: Andrew Goodwin, Katie Grigg, Kate Lockhart, Julie Riley, Rebecca Ruddy, Brenda Carnahan and Libby Wilkinson. Thanks also to every resident and business that made a donation, volunteered their time or participated in an event. The Zorra community made this project happen.

Visual concept only:

Thank you to our generous donors who made this possible.

Partner Sponsor ($50,000+)

Doug & Patti Bell Family Foundation
Thamesford Lions Club
Township of Zorra

Platinum Sponsor ($10,000+)

Power Workers Union

Gold Sponsor ($5,000+)

Carmuese - Beachville Operation
Semuniuk Farms Inc
Tim Hortons

Bronze Sponsor ($1,000+)

Brunny's Sports Bar & Grill
Dr. Sandhu Dentistry
Familia Homes
Heartland Insurance
Kate Lockhart
Nox Concrete
Ray Keddie c/o Barbara Keddie
Staff of Children's Aid Society of Oxford County
Thamesford Beach Volleyball Club

Thank you to the many other community donors who pledged their support to this project!

ZORRA DROP-IN PROGAMS

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
PICKLEBALL DROP-IN SCHEDULE REGISTER TO PLAY ON PICKUP HUB	9:00 A.M.- 12:00 P.M. EZCC 6:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M. TDRC* EXCLUDING THE 1ST MONDAY OF THE MONTH	8:00 A.M.- 11:00 A.M. TDRC 6:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M. EZCC*	9:00 A.M.- 12:00 P.M. EZCC 6:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M. TDRC	8:00 A.M.- 11:00 A.M. TDRC 6:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M. EZCC

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
SKATING DROP-IN SCHEDULE	1:00 P.M.- 2:00 P.M. SHINNY EZCC 2:00 P.M.- 3:00 P.M. PUBLIC SKATE EZCC & TDRC	9:30 A.M.- 10:30 A.M. ADULT SHINNY TDRC **NEW** 4:00 P.M.- 5:00 P.M. STUDENT (13+) SHINNY TDRC	9:30 A.M.- 10:30 A.M. ADULT SKATE EZCC 10:30 A.M.- 11:30 A.M. PARENT & TOT SKATE EZCC	5:00 P.M.- 6:00 P.M. SHINNY TDRC	9:30 A.M.- 10:30 A.M. ADULT SKATE TDRC 10:30 A.M.- 11:30 A.M. PARENT & TOT SKATE TDRC

	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY
YOGA DROP-IN SCHEDULE REGISTER ON PICKUP HUB	FLOW YOGA 7:00 P.M.- 8:00 P.M. BEATY RM	FLOW YOGA 9:30 A.M.- 10:30 A.M. BEATY RM FLOW YOGA 7:00 P.M.- 8:00 P.M. EZCC	**LINE DANCING DROP-IN SCHEDULE** REGISTER ON PICKUP HUB	7:00 P.M.- 8:00 P.M. BEATY RM SEPT 17 OCT 15 NOV 19

EZCC- EMBRO-ZORRA COMMUNITY CENTRE
TDRC - THAMESFORD DISTRICT RECREATION CENTRE
BEATY ROOM - LOCATED IN THE THAMESFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Recipients of 2026 Capital Grant Funding

EMBRO MINOR BASEBALL - MATHESON PARK MINI PITCH

The mini pitch has been constructed thanks to the in-kind work of our Public Works staff. Current efforts are focused on outfield rehabilitation with in-kind help from Levy Trucking and D & M Services. Embro Minor Baseball Association is funding and coordinating installation of the backstop.

The new diamond will be ready for play for the 2027 baseball season!

EMBRO DOG PARK COMMITTEE

The Dog Park committee selected the location and received Council approval for Matheson Park. The committee formally evaluated two locations, Embro Community Centre and Matheson Park, based on accessibility, park amenities (washrooms and water fountains), community impact and other criteria.

Did you know it is common for municipalities to create multi-use park spaces? This approach creates community hubs, where residents of all ages can enjoy a variety of recreation activities in a single, accessible location!

The committee has officially reached their fundraising goal - thanks to the community for their generous support. Stay tuned for construction timelines and details!

For more information follow the Embro Dog Park page on Facebook or visit the website: https://www.zorra.ca/our-township/committees/

Updates to our Grant Policy

STREAM 1: GENERAL OPERATION
STREAM 2: LOCAL MINOR SPORTS GRANT
STREAM 3: LAKESIDE TRIATHALON FUND

DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SEPTEMBER 15TH.

LEARN MORE BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.ZORRA.CA/OUR-SERVICES/FINANCE-AND-TAXATION/GRANTS

STAY UPDATED!
Visit www.zorra.ca/our-township/committees or contact Sofia Caldwell, Manager of Recreation and Facilities, at scaldwell@zorra.ca.

xplor nextRec

Zorra TOWNSHIP DOING OUR PART

YOUR HUB FOR SOCIAL, ACTIVE LIVING

We have moved to a NEW recreation platform called nextRec (Xplor)

- View Facility Availability and Rent Facilities
- View Ice Availability and Book Ice
- Register for Day Camps, Activities and Aquatics Programs
- Receive Email Communications from the Recreation Department

NOTE: Drop-in Programs (Yoga, Pickleball) will still be registered through PickupHub

https://zorra.perfectmind.com

1. Click the sign up button
2. Get your temporary password
3. Create your new password
4. Login to your account and XPLOR

Uniondale Fire Station celebrates 50 years of emergency response

By Stew Slater

The Fire Hall building on Oxford Road 96 – and the emergency response crew it's home to whose activities in the community are so appreciated – seem now like so much a part of the fabric of the Uniondale/Medina/Lakeside/Harrington district that it might be hard to believe there was a time none of that existed.

But it was just over 50 years ago, on Jan. 1, 1976, that the Uniondale Fire Department officially came into being under the direction of inaugural Fire Chief Frank Rietmeyer. Until then, fire protection service for the area was provided by volunteer departments in St. Marys, Thamesford and Embro.

Former District Fire Chief and current Zorra Township Councillor Paul Mitchell wrote a history of the department for the 2012 history book "East Nissouri Township: People, Perseverance, Progress." He recalled how a decision was made at the township level to establish a volunteer Uniondale force and construct a new fire hall, with then ward Councillor Dave Slater "assigned the task of recruiting a group of people interested in and capable of becoming firefighters."

Those "Original 16" – as they're referred to in an exhaustive scrapbook kept by the man who became the longest-serving among them, Ron King – spent the fall of 1975 training under the direction of Chief Joe Wallace of the Thamesford Fire Department.

"Their first truck, a 1974 pumper with a 650-gallon tank," Mitchell's account relates, "was purchased from King Seagrave at a cost of $40,000. Keys to the new truck were presented to Rietmeyer at a ceremony on Oct. 25, 1975."

For six months, until the fire hall was completed in June of 1976, the force operated out of the yard and dispatch office of Hutton Transport across the road. During a recent interview, King recalled a Sunday morning fire call when a parked transport truck inadvertently blocked the Uniondale fire truck from exiting the yard.

"(Hutton Transport President) Wallace Hutton didn't get mad very often but he was pretty upset when he learned the fire truck had been blocked in," King recalled. "It was a good job (Fire Chief) Frank was there because none of the rest of us knew how to drive truck."

The original fire hall had a flat asphalt roof.

Current Uniondale District Fire Chief Scott Matheson, left, alongside the longest-serving member of the Uniondale Fire Department, Ron King, who retired from the force in 2021

Subsequent improvements included a sloped steel roof, a radio repeater tower and a 5,000-gallon underwater water tank. But for the most part, the double-bay building has remained unchanged.

Mitchell's account in the East Nissouri history book states that the department's "first official call was to a chimney fire at the farmhouse of Chester and Joyce West on Highway 19 south of Medina. The second call was to a shop fire at the home of Melville and Win Vannatter in Lakeside."

King remembers that, at the time, the department had two Scott Air-Paks (a self-contained breathing apparatus manufactured by Scott Safety, a company now owned by 3M) and four of the oxygen cylinders needed for their use.

The Uniondale station now has 12 Air-Paks and at least two cylinders for every Air-Pak.

Mitchell wrote in 2012 that "the first personal protective equipment for the firefighters consisted of the traditional long black coats, thigh-high rubber boots and thin plastic helmets. These not only provided a minimum of protection but they were clumsy to work in and cold in the winter." In 1989, a transition began to outfitting the firefighters with more modern gear including helmets made of Kevlar.

"Everything to do with the fire department has an expiry date," current Uniondale Station District Chief Scott Matheson explained during a recent conversation at the fire hall. "That's something you've always got to keep your eye on so that you know there's a budget for inspections and upgrades and new equipment."

The biggest budget items, of course, are the vehicles.

Mitchell wrote in his history book account that the Uniondale "fleet was soon doubled with the addition of a 1947 tanker which had just been replaced at the Thamesford hall. Despite having to replace the 500-gallon water tank, which sprang a huge leak going over some railway tracks, this antique remained in service until 1985 when it was replaced by a new tanker."

Lakeside News correspondent to the St. Marys Journal Argus Ruth Skillings provided some details about this story when she wrote about the retirement in 1996 of inaugural Fire Chief Frank Rietmeyer. "On the very first call (with the newly-acquired, then 31-year-old tanker truck), to a car fire east of Lakeside, while going over the tracks at Lakeside, a big chunk of rust fell off the bottom of the tank. By the time they got to the car, there wasn't one drop of water left in the tank."

"The original pumper was replaced in 1997 and the second tanker was replaced in 2008 by a 2,000-gallon tandem truck," Mitchell wrote in 2012. "They were both custom-built for Uniondale by the Metalfab Fire Apparatus Co. in New Brunswick."

Protective equipment definitely has improved since 1976, but King and Matheson agree that the biggest transformation since the Uniondale Fire Department formed is definitely the paging system.

Fifty years ago, the 911 emergency dispatch system wasn't yet in place in rural Ontario. As part of its launch, the department secured a dedicated seven-digit fire-call number in the Uniondale telephone exchange. If someone dialed that number, the phone rang simultaneously in the homes of four firefighters – Marjorie and George Whittaker, Gail and Don Adams, Fieke and Frank Rietmeyer, Teresa and Bill Rouvers – plus the dispatch office of Hutton Transport. In an era before voicemail, there had to be someone present in one of those locations at all times to ensure not just a timely response but a response at all.

This bit of trivia speaks to the valuable support provided in those early days to the fire department by two groups of people: management and employees of Hutton Transport; and the wives and family members of the original Uniondale firefighters.

King remembers one Sunday morning call when the men in whose homes the first-call telephones were located were either attending a worship service or toiling in their dairy barn. Hutton Transport would also typically have been pretty quiet but employee Bill McKay just happened to be in the vicinity of the dispatch office and heard and answered the call.

He also remembers it was always the women in the households receiving the initial fire call who immediately initiated a "telephone pyramid"

to inform the rest of the department about the situation – not just that it was happening, but what type of call it was and where it was unfolding.

Rietmeyer, interviewed for the St. Marys Journal Argus at the time of his retirement, stated, "the whole family was needed to make the system run smoothly and they never let us down."

It goes without saying, of course, that the dedication and support from spouses and family members of firefighters – and all first responders – continues today as a major factor in the ability of Ontario residents to be confident of timely and professional response to emergencies.

In 1983, a pager system was purchased to alert each firefighter when a call came in, through a dispatch service based in Woodstock. They

would then have to call the fire dispatch number to find out the details.

"Response times were further improved in 1997 with the introduction of the 911 system in Oxford County," Mitchell wrote in his history book account. As part of the transition, "the roads and sideroads were renamed or renumbered to make locating the emergency scene faster and easier."

Updated versions of the pagers are still in use today. Because the radio frequency technology of the pagers is much more reliable across the Uniondale Station service area than any cellphone network, they still provide the initial signal to firefighters that they're needed. Once a page is detected, firefighters use their smartphone to check the app and find out call details.

Another big change is the coordination that now takes place between the three fire stations in Zorra Township. For many years, Embro, Thamesford and Uniondale operated as separate fire departments, competing in some ways for the attention and resources of the municipal government upon which they largely rely for funding.

Throughout that time, it was a big thing if one department had to call upon another for support. For structure fires, it became common to send out a call to a neighbouring department for additional water in the form of a tanker truck. But actually putting out the call for additional help in the form of firefighters was rare.

"Even when I started in 2011, it was a lot of 'us' and 'them'," current Uniondale District Chief Matheson said. Because there wasn't regular interaction between members of the three departments and they had separate chiefs, there was a reluctance to call for additional help. The mindset persisted that the core Uniondale firefighters – or, correspondingly, the Embro and Thamesford crews in their service areas – should be able to handle it themselves.

"In October 2009, the largest change to the fire service in Zorra Township in over 30 years took place when Council hired Jeff Smith from the Norfolk Fire Service as the first ever Fire Chief for the Zorra Fire and Emergency Services," Mitchell wrote in his history book account. "With this re-organization, the individual fire departments in Thamesford, Embro and Uniondale became known as Station #1 Thamesford, Station #2 Embro, and Station #3 Uniondale."

Matheson says that since the amalgamation, thanks in large part to three successive Zorra Fire Chiefs who bought into and wholeheartedly supported the new model, the "us versus them" feeling is a thing of the past. A call to Embro or Thamesford for additional water is now "instantaneous" if it's a structural fire call, he said. As for additional firefighters, "nobody's afraid to call anybody else for help."

When a 911 call is directed Uniondale's way and the firefighters' pagers go off, their responses to the dispatch app on their smartphones informs Matheson how many crew members are available at that time. For those arriving at the fire station first who take on the task of loading the trucks with gear, a screen on the wall beside the big rolling doors shows where exactly each firefighter is in relation to the emergency site.

"If I see that we might be short-staffed, I'll call (the other Zorra stations) right away. If they come and it turns out they're not needed, that's fine. We can send them home."

Although this isn't universal across Ontario or even across Zorra Township, Uniondale's protocol has always been to load the trucks with gear then

Examining their dads' new truck - the Uniondale Fire Department new pumper truck - are Kate Renkema and Tanya Mair. Fire chief Ron Greason gave the girls a tour of the truck at the department's open house. Exemplary service medals (20 years) were presented to both past and present members. (Laura Green Photo)

New pumper in Uniondale

By LAURA GREEN
for The Ingersoll Times

The kick-off for five presentations week in the community of Uniondale in the northwest corner of Zorra Township was in the form of an open house to display the new pumper truck for the fire department.

The new 1998 FL-80 Freightliner Pumper was in the budget for Zorra Council during the past three years. The volunteer firefighters from Uniondale have gone over the truck with "a fine-tooth comb to make sure everything is in perfect working order before going on the road," said fire chief Ron Greason. The truck arrived in the late spring.

The fire safety house was also in action at the open house for kids and adults to try it out. Chief Greason and his department want everyone to set up and practice an escape route in their homes Oct. 7.

The house was examined by a large crowd.

Exemplary service medals for 20 years of service to the Uniondale Fire Department were presented with a special ceremony during the open house. Recipients were past members: Frank Rietmeyer, John Muir and Ken Taylor and present members, John Hutton, Jim Muir, Ken Kilmer, Bob Greason, George Whitesides, Perry Robinson, Ron King and Ron Greason.

The firefighters have provided the community with 25 years of service. There are 15 men and one woman on the 1998 roster.

Ingersoll Times Oct 7/98

proceed to the emergency site with firefighters who arrived early to the station on the trucks. Any crew member too far away to respond that quickly proceeds to the call location on their own.

Before the smartphone app, King recalls, the protocol was to proceed to the end of the firehall driveway, wait a few seconds to see if any other crew members were on their way to the station, then hurry to the emergency site.

A version of that protocol remains in place today. Matheson notes that he's currently the Uniondale firefighter residing furthest from the station and, often, he'll know from his smartphone app that several firefighters are already en route to the station and he can instead proceed directly to the call location to assess the situation and establish a response plan.

Training has also changed dramatically. Matheson was one of the first Uniondale firefighters hired under a training regimen introduced in 2010 requiring eight months of sessions held during weekends prior to the new recruits officially joining the force.

"Before that it was basically 'here's your helmet. We'll train you as we go'."

In the years since, training requirements have become even more rigorous. Liability – for the firefighters themselves and for the township for which they serve – is a major driver but so is the increasing complexity of the scenarios to which volunteer fire departments might find themselves summoned.

"In the late 1970s and early 1980s the Uniondale Fire Department might respond to 10-15 emergency calls per year, almost all of which were some type of fire," Mitchell wrote in his East Nissouri history book account. "Throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s the role of the fire department evolved to include attending more motor vehicle collisions (MVCs) as well as medical emergencies."

"Currently the local station responds to 25-30 calls per year including assisting Embro and Thamesford at larger fires." Matheson confirmed that number is still roughly accurate today, referring to the Uniondale crew as "an average 30-to-40 call hall" – significantly fewer than some volunteer fire departments in Ontario that are located close to 400-series highways with a high number of MVC calls.

Matheson explains that, nowadays, the training required of anyone joining a volunteer fire department in Ontario makes them fully qualified to apply for professional firefighter positions on any city force. That's great for building a crew that can focus entirely on putting that training into action without hesitation, but he also knows that "some departments struggle" finding replacements when firefighters retire.

So far, Uniondale has not faced that challenge. "For any of our new recruits, (the training regimen) is a huge ask in terms of commitment . . . And it always amazes me that, every time we need new recruits, we always find them."

Reflecting on this, and looking back at photos of "The original 16" in Ron King's scrapbook, Matheson

Celebrating
25 Years
Of Service
To Our Community

THANKS
FOR YOUR
SUPPORT !

Welcome to the
UNIONDALE
FIRE FIGHTERS
25TH ANNIVERSARY
OPEN HOUSE
CELEBRATION
September 30, 2001
25 years
of Service
in our
Community

notes that the face of volunteer fire protection in the Uniondale area has changed in 50 years.

Back then, a few of the men who answered Councillor Dave Slater's call hadn't yet begun having kids but most had young families at home. New recruits now, the current Uniondale District Chief says, tend to be younger with no kids and the availability to commit every weekend for several months for training.

Plus, almost all of those "Original 16" worked – either on their farm or for an employer nearby – within the Uniondale force's service area. "That's part of the thinking in wanting to have a few more people recruited (Uniondale now has 18 firefighters and would like to recruit one more) or in putting out the call to another station for help."

"Because when you get to a fire scene, when things start rolling, you can sometimes need a lot of people."

One thing that certainly hasn't changed is the camaraderie that forms the basis of every well-executed emergency response. From the beginning on Jan. 1, 1976, the firefighters from the Uniondale hall have been able to trust they have back-up from everyone else on the force.

"The guys are like a big family," King stated, while Matheson added that "you never worry about whether you're making the right decision in the moment because you always know there are a bunch of other firefighters right there with you, looking at the same situation and supporting you."

Senior of the Year 2026

At a recent Council meeting, Doug Turvey was presented with the Senior of the Year Award! Doug is a true cornerstone of our community. For many years, he has dedicated his time and talents to Thistle Theatre and the Embro-Zorra Agricultural Society, by serving on their respective boards, ensuring our local culture remains vibrant. As the owner of The Country Geek, Doug didn't just run a business; he served Oxford County with essential technical skills and a generous heart - most notably through his electronics recycling initiative, which turned scrap into funds for our local 4-H group. Whether he is leading the way as our Town Crier, performing with the Ingersoll Pipe Band, or calling a square dance, Doug brings joy and tradition wherever he goes. We wish him a very happy retirement and thank him for his years of selfless service.

Volunteer of the Year 2026

Doris Weir is the winner of the 2026 Volunteer of the Year award! Doris uses her photography skills to give back to our community in so many ways. She has been the official photographer for the Thamesford Trojans for several years and her photos have helped to elevate the teams social media presence in a huge way. She provides team photos, individual head shots, game photos, event photos, and even takes special requests from family members of the team! She does not ask for any money, and provides her services entirely for free! She attends most home games and many road games engaging with our players and their families and capturing action photos. Doris can be found at every Lions event with her camera in hand, capturing community events all year round. You can also find her at the Beachville Museum car shows and other events snapping photos. These are just a few ways that Doris gives back to our community using her gift of photography. Doris was instrumental in creating the Harvey Beaty Memoirs book which captured the life of Thamesford's Harvey Beaty using his own stories and those of many people who knew and worked with him. Doris continued the work of keeping the memory of Harvey Beaty alive with the creation of the Harvey Beaty Memorial Garden at the Lions River Park in Thamesford, which features a sign, two benches, walkway, and plants in Harvey's memory. Doris is a strong part of the community and shows this in all the ways she gives back!

Update on Zorra Awards

Council made a decision to combine the Senior of the Year award with the Volunteer of the Year award. Beginning in 2027, there will be one award given out for Volunteerism each year. Nominations for this Award can be made at anytime using the online form found on our website.

Looking for a Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner?

If you or someone you know does not have a Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner (NP), the Health Care Connect program can help.

This free Ontario program connects residents with a valid Ontario Health Card to a Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner who is accepting new patients in their community. Registration is simple and available in multiple languages.

How to register:
- Online: Ontario.ca/HealthCareConnect
- By phone: Call 8-1-1 (available 24 hours a day/7 days a week)

You will be asked to provide your name, address, health card number, and some basic health information that will help determine your health needs.

What to expect:
A care connector in your community will work to match you with the right Family Doctor or NP that is accepting new patients. While a match cannot be guaranteed right away, registering is the best first step to finding ongoing Primary Care.
While you wait, you can visit this site to find health care services locally.

Why register?
When you register, you're not just taking a step toward finding a family doctor or NP – you are also helping your community. The information helps the municipality and health system partners better understand local needs and plan for the services people need most.

Oxford Ontario Health Team is supported by funding from the Government of Ontario.

NEED A FAMILY DOCTOR OR NURSE PRACTITIONER?

Health Care Connect helps you find primary care close to home.

Register today and get connected.

Register online at ontario.ca/healthcareconnect

Or call 8-1-1 — available anytime

Health Care Connect

Oxford ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Public Skating Sponsorship

Looking to advertise your business or community group? We are looking for Public Skating Sponsors in both arenas on Sundays, Holidays and March Break
$204.00/hour

Email booking@zorra.ca for available dates to sponsor!

- Social Media Advertising
- On-site Advertising

More Information
booking@zorra.ca

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Zorra Fire Department Visits Summer Camp!

This summer, the Zorra Fire Department visited camp for a fun-filled morning all about fire prevention and safety! Our campers had a blast tackling an obstacle course, learning how firefighters put on their protective gear, and getting an up-close tour of the fire truck.

A huge thank you to the Zorra Fire Department for taking time out of your day to visit us and teach our campers some important fire safety skills! We had so much fun learning with you!

Thank you to our 2026 Summer Students!

2026 ELECTION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2026

Elected Offices

Municipal elections are held every four years, with the next municipal election being held on **Monday, October 26, 2026.** Eligible electors will cast their votes for Township of Zorra Council and School Board Trustee offices.

Zorra Council Offices: Mayor, Four (4) Ward Councillors (Ward 1 Councillor, Ward 2 Councillor, Ward 3 Councillor, and Ward 4 Councillor).

School Board Trustee Offices: Thames Valley District School Board Trustee (2); London District Catholic School Board Trustee (1); Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence (1) for the Counties of Oxford, Perth & Grey; Conseil Scolaire Viamonde (1) for the Counties of Oxford, Elgin, Lambton, Municipalities of Haldimand-Norfolk & Chatham-Kent.

Are you on the Voters' List?

If you haven't already, please ensure that you are on the Voters' List and your information is correct. From now until July 31, 2026, you may check if you are on the Voters' List by visiting RegisterToVoteON.ca

From August 1 to Election Day, please visit the Township website and submit a "Am I on the Voters' List?" request.

Voting Methods

The Township of Zorra will be using internet and telephone voting for the 2026 election. Zorra used the same voting method for the 2022 election. Eligible voters will be able to cast their vote by internet OR telephone. A Voting PIN Letter will be mailed to those that are on the Voters' List in early October. The Voting PIN Letter will contain an individualized PIN for the voter to use to cast their vote. The voter simply follows the instructions in their kit and chooses between telephone voting or internet voting.

To vote by telephone, the voter will call the number provided in the voting kit, enter the individualized PIN number and the voter's birth day, and then the voter will cast their vote (and use the '#' button to confirm the selections).

To vote by internet, the voter will visit the voting website provided in the Voting PIN letter. The voter will enter their individualized PIN number and the voters' birth date. The voter will follow the prompts through all contests and complete their ballot by pressing 'Cast Ballot'.

Beginning on **Tuesday, October 13** until the end of Voting Day on **Monday, October 26**, eligible voters may attend the Zorra Municipal Centre during office hours to use the computer/tablet, internet access, or touch-tone telephone for voting purposes.

Voting will open on Tuesday, October 13 at 9:00a.m. & close on Monday, October 26 at 8:00p.m.

For election inquiries, contact the Township of Zorra Clerk

clerk@zorra.ca 519-425-2305 www.zorra.ca

ZORRA PARKS SCAVENGER HUNT

INSTRUCTIONS

Ever wanted to explore all of what Zorra has to offer? Well, now you can! Zorra is offering free bag tags (3) or free public skate passes to families or individuals who explore Zorra. To participate, you and/or your family must take a picture in front of each park sign in Zorra Township. To claim your prize, email your photos, name, and address to contest@zorra.ca and stop by the Zorra Municipal Centre in Thamesford.

While you are exploring Zorra, why not check out some locally owned businesses?

Prizes are available to the first 5 families or individuals to participate. Three bag tags per entry, or one free public skate pass per individual (eg. a family with 3 kids and two adults gets 5 passes).

Harrington Community Park	Matheson Park	Memorial Park
Wallace Park	Dr. Kosmal Park	Grace Patterson Park
Lions River Park	Lions South Park	North Park
Robert Fisher Soccer Field	Terry Fox Park	Have FUN!!

TOWNSHIP DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

VILLAGES OF ZORRA

WORD SEARCH

Find and circle the names of the villages hidden in the grid below.

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

BANNER	COBBLE HILLS	FAIRVIEW	KINTORE	NEW EDEN	YOUNGSVILLE
BENNINGTON	CODY' S CORNERS	GOLSPIE	LAKESIDE	OLIVER	ZORRA STATION
BRAEMAR	DICKSONS CORNER	GRANTHURST	MAPLEWOOD	PASADENA	
BROOKSDALE	DUNN' S CORNERS	HARRINGTON	McCONKEY	RAYSIDE	UNIONDALE
BROWN' S CORNERS	EMBRO	HOLIDAY	MEDINA	THAMESFORD	

Township Contacts

Council

Mayor Marcus Ryan
Email: mryan@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-425-2338

Ward 1 Councillor
Kevin Stewart
Email: kstewart@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-808-7839

Ward 2 Councillor/ Deputy Mayor
Katie Grigg
Email: kgrigg@zorra.ca
Tel: 226-268-4495

Ward 3 Councillor
Paul Mitchell
Email: pmitchell@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-349-2271

Ward 4 Councillor
Crystal Finch
Email: cfinch@zorra.ca
Tel: 519-532-9037

Upcoming Council Meetings

Council meetings are held the first WEDNESDAY of the month at 9:30 a.m. and the third WEDNESDAY of the month at 6:00 p.m.

September 16, 9:30am
October 7, 9:30am
November 4, 9:30am
November 16, 7:00pm - *Inaugural Meeting*

Employees

Building/Drainage Department
Chief Building Official/ Drainage Superintendent - Mike Hughes
Phone: 519-425-2306
Email: mhughes@zorra.ca

Deputy Chief Building Official/ Building Inspector - Mathew Paul
Phone: 519-425-2309
Email: mpaul@zorra.ca

Building Services Coordinator
Nicole
Phone: 519-425-2308
Email: nicole@zorra.ca

Corporate Services
Chief Administrative Officer - Diane Larder
Phone: 519-425-2303
Email: dlarder@zorra.ca

Director of Corporate and Protective Services/Clerk - Karen Martin
Phone: 519-425-2305
Email: kmartin@zorra.ca

Planner - Spencer McDonald
Phone: 519-539-0015 ext. 3205
Email: jsmcdonald@oxfordcounty.ca

By-law Enforcement Officer - Dave Robertson
Phone: 226-374-6795
Email: drobertson@zorra.ca

Records Management Coordinator/ Executive Assistant - Lisa Teeple
Phone: 519-425-2314
Email: lteeple@zorra.ca

Corporate and Strategic Strategic Initiatives & Government Relations Officer
Jacob Sookraj
Phone: 519-425-2340
Email: jsookraj@zorra.ca

Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Maggie McLaughlin
Phone: 519-485-5125
Email: mmclaughlin@zorra.ca

Legislative Coordinator/Deputy Clerk
Alycia Wettlaufer
Phone: 519-425-2313
Email: awettlaufer@zorra.ca

Customer Service Representative
Michelle McLellan
Phone: 519-425-2307
Email: mmclellan@zorra.ca

Finance Department
Manager of Finance - Kim Grogan
Phone: 519-425-2329
Email: kgrogan@zorra.ca

Financial Analyst/Deputy Treasurer
Aleksander Lindskoog
Phone: 519-425-2245
Email: alindskoog@zorra.ca

Tax Collector
Melissa De Luca
Phone 519-425-2304
Email: mdeluca@zorra.ca

Financial Services Clerk
Jenna Gallman
Phone: 519-485-0784
Email: jgallman@zorra.ca

Public Works Department
Director of Public Services - Steve Oliver
Phone: 519-425-2302
Email: soliver@zorra.ca

Zorra Maintenance Facility - Construction & Fleet Supervisor
Derek Collins
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7260
Email: dcollins@zorra.ca

Operations Supervisor – Josh McKay
Phone: 519-485-2490 ext. 7265
Email: jmckay@zorra.ca

Protective Services
Manager of Emergency Services/Fire Chief
Shane Caskanette
Email: firechief@swox.org

Deputy Fire Chief - Jeremy Wallace
Email: jwallace@zorra.ca 519-425-2301

Fire Prevention Officer - Paige Ford
Email: fireprevention@zorra.ca

Embro District Chief - Matthew Cockle
Email: fire@zorra.ca

Thamesford District Chief - Andy Martin
Email: fire@zorra.ca

Uniondale District Chief – Scott Matheson
Email: fire@zorra.ca

Recreation Department
Manager of Recreation and Facilities
Sofia Caldwell
Phone: 519-425-2311
Email: scaldwell@zorra.ca

Recreation and Facilities Supervisor
Jason McEachnie
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7244
Email: jmceachnie@zorra.ca

Recreation Programs & Services Coordinator
Ally Thompson
Phone: 519-425-2310
Email: athompson@zorra.ca

Facility Booking
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7223
Email: booking@zorra.ca

Recreation Facilities
Thamesford District Recreation Centre
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7245
Email: tdrc@zorra.ca

Embro Zorra Community Centre
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7251

Thamesford Area Swimming Pool
Phone: 519-485-2490 Ext. 7285

Community Contact Listing

Minor Sports
Embro Minor Hockey Club www.embrohockey.com
Zorra Skating Club www.zorraskatingclub.ca
Embro Minor Baseball Association www.embrominorbaseball.com
Embro Minor Soccer Association www.embrosoccer.ca
Kintore Optimist Soccer League www.leaguelineup.com/kintoresoccer
Thamesford Area Minor Hockey Association www.tamha.net
Zorra Skating Club (Thamesford) www.zorraskatingclub.ca
Thamesford Minor Baseball Association www.thamesfordminorbaseball.ca
Thamesford Minor Soccer www.leaguelineup.com/thamesfordsoccer
West Oxford Girls Hockey Assoc. www.wogha.ca

Other Organizations
Thamesford Jr. PJHL Hockey Club www.thamesfordtrojans.pjhlon.hockeytech.com
Thamesford NBC Hockey www.tnhl.hockeyleaguestats.com
Embro NBC Hockey www.embronbc.ca
Thamesford Men's Slo-Pitch www.thamesfordslopitch.com
Thamesford Beach Volleyball Club www.thamesfordvolleyball.com

Schools (Elementary)
Zorra Highland Public School 519-475-4121
A.J. Baker Public School 519-283-1098
Thamesford Public School 519-285-2043
Roch Carrier French Immersion 519-537-7321
John Knox Christian School 519-539-1492

School Boards
Thames Valley District School Board 519-452-2000
1-888-224-3354
London District Catholic School Board 519-663-2088

Service Clubs & Community Groups
Embro & Zorra Agricultural Society
Nicole Barnett 519-533-2208
Embro Highland Games/
Zorra Caledonian Society 519-475-4451
Thamesford Lion's Club
Box 242, Thamesford, ON N0M 2M0
Francine Overeem, President 519-868-9239
thamesfordlions@gmail.com
Thamesford Scouts
Jackie Van Daele 519-283-6159
Kintore Optimist Club 519-283-6321
Harrington & Area Community Association
Michael Kukhta 905-599-2151
michael.kukhta@gmail.com
Harrington Grist Mill Restoration Project
Tim Van de Kemp 519-801-5810
timbetvdk@gmail.com
Oxford County 4-H oxford4-h@xplornet.com

Other
Alzheimers Society 519-421-2466
1-877-594-2368
Beachville District Museum 519-423-6497
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ingersoll, Tillsonburg & Area
519-485-1801 or 519-842-9000
ingtburg@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca www.sharethefun.org
Calithumpian Committee 519-535-9198
Canadian Blood Services 888-236-6283
Canadian Cancer Society 888-939-3333
Canadian Red Cross 519-539-0265
Children's Aid Society, Oxford County 519-539-6176
Crime Stoppers 800-222-TIPS
Cuckoos Nest Folk Music 519-473-2099
Embro Pond Association
Brian McCowan, President 519-301-4893
Embro West Zorra History Book
Helen Brenneman 519-535-4728
Embro Library 519-475-4172
Fanshawe Pioneer Village 519-457-1296
Girl Guides - Thamesford 519-285-1126
Harrington Public Library 519-475-6909
Hardeman, Ernie, MPP. 519-537-5222
Horticultural Society (Ingersoll) 519-485-1808
Ingersoll Choral Society 519-902-4007
Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre 519-485-4691
Ingersoll Services for Seniors 519-485-3869
Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts 519-485-3070
Lawn Bowling Embro 519-475-4729
Khanna, Arpan MP 519-421-7124
North Embro Cemetery
Darwin Cooper 519-475-4530
Ontario Early Years Programs 800-539-9800
OPP 800-265-7191
Oxford County Jr. Farmers 519-469-3281
Oxford County Federation of Agriculture 519-852-8856
Rural Oxford Economic Development 519-619-6895
ronda@ruraloxford.ca ruraloxford.ca
South West Community Care Access Centre 519-539-1284
info-woodstock@sw.ccac-ont.ca
Thamesford Block Parents 519-285-1126
Thamesford Business Association 519-285-3249
Thamesford Public Library 519-285-3219
Thamesford Snowmobile Club
Harold Hacon (trails) 519-461-0855
David Blight (President) 519-432-2729
Thistle Theatre - Box Office 226-785-3353
infothistletheatre@gmail.com
Tiny Paws Dog Rescue - Linda Collier www.tpdr.ca
VON Oxford 519-539-1231
VON Sakura House 519-537-8515
Welcome Wagon 519-485-2990
Wienerfest - Linda Collier 519 285-5123
Women's Canadian Club 519-471-8924

Places of Worship
St. Andrew's United Church
924044 Road 92, Brooksdale, Ontario
519-475-6011

Chalmers United Church
842993 Road 84, Kintore, Ontario
519-283-6376

Crossroads Alliance Church
194552 19th Line, R.R. 3
Ingersoll, Ontario
519- 485-4440

Knox Presbyterian Church
115 St. Andrews Street
Embro, Ontario
519-475-4816

Knox Presbyterian Church
963727 Road 96 , Harrington, Ontario
519-475-4011

Knox United Church
116 Kincardine Street, Embro, Ontario
519-475-4060

Maple Grove Christian Retreat
194936 19th Line
Thamesford, Ontario
519-285-3334

St. John's Anglican Church
220 Dundas Street
Thamesford, Ontario
519-285-3218

Truth Community Church
154978 15th Line (Banner Rd.)
Thamesford, Ontario
519-285-2112
www.truthcommunitychurch.ca

Westminster United Church
115 George Street
Thamesford, Ontario
519-285-3212
www.makingconnextions.com

East Nissouri Union Church
519-349-2333

Beavers Receive North Star Award

A huge congratulations to Keiran and Max, who have both successfully completed their North Star Award as third-year Beaver Scouts with 7th Woodstock.

The North Star Award is the highest award that can be earned in the Beaver Scout section. Achieving it requires dedication, enthusiasm, perseverance, and a commitment to living the values of Scouting through personal growth, outdoor adventure, leadership, and community service.

Throughout their time in Beavers, Keiran and Max have demonstrated outstanding teamwork, curiosity, and Scout spirit. They enthusiastically embraced new challenges, supported their fellow Beavers, and consistently gave their best in every activity.

As part of their North Star Award, they completed meaningful community service projects that made a positive impact on those around them. They participated in a Christmas Toy Drive, helping to bring joy to local families during the holiday season, and volunteered at the Embro Parade, collecting food donations in support of local food banks. Their willingness to give back to the community reflects the Scouting promise to help others and make a difference. Earning the North Star Award is a significant milestone and marks the successful completion of their Beaver Scout journey. Their achievements over the past three years are a testament to their dedication, hard work, and positive attitudes.

As Keiran and Max move on to the Cub Scout section, they carry with them the skills, confidence, and friendships they have built in Beavers. Everyone at 7th Woodstock is incredibly proud of all they have accomplished and wishes them every success as they continue their Scouting adventure.

Congratulations, Keiran and Max, on this outstanding achievement!

Keiran

Max

Thamesford Lions Club

Thamesford Lions Community Events

"Catch The Ace" Progressive Raffle
Weekly Prize Draws
8pm Tuesday nights streamed LIVE on "THAMESFORD LIONS" Facebook at Brunny's Bar & Grill

Tickets ($5) can be purchased in Thamesford from:
Dewy's Auto • Village Catering & Deli • Brunny's Sport Bar & Grill • JC Graphics • McFarlan Rowlands Insurance • Shell Gas Station

Tickets ($5) can be purchased in Embro from:
Highland Restaurant • Embro Family Pharmacy

Contact: Lion Tony 519-285-3618

Canada Outdoor Farm Show - Food Booth
Tuesday Sept 15 to Thursday Sept 17, 2026
8:30AM to 5PM daily - Woodstock

River Park Watershed Celebration
Saturday, Oct 3, 2026
Time TBA – Lions River Park
Contact: Lion Glenn glennross140@gmail.com

Lions Christmas Carol Sing
Saturday Dec 5, 2026
6:30PM - Thamesford Recreation Centre
Contact: Lion Rebecca beckiehag@gmail.com

Thamesford Arena Canteen
Serving on weekends during Thamesford Trojan & Minor Hockey Home Games

Thamesford Arena Bar
Serving during Thamesford Trojan Home Games

Follow Us on our new "THAMESFORD LIONS" Facebook page for the Latest News on these & other community events coming your way!

Please note the Thamesford Lions offer bar services for your events year-round and in the Spring, Summer or Fall. We can provide BBQ services as well – contact a Club Member to get more information.

Trimming • Chipping
Stump Removal • Firewood

RR#2, Ingersoll, Ontario N5C 3J5

P: 519-485-6481
C: 519-852-4099

Keep up to date on news and events in Zorra Township

www.zorra.ca

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Follow us on LinkedIn! Township of Zorra
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(519) 475-4471
www.happyhills.com
thebakers@happyhills.com

ZORRA Wardens

What's so "great" about being Oxford County warden? It's not a prison warden (we are not prisoners). The warden is head of county council; overseeing council meetings, speaking on behalf of the County at official events; interacting with other levels of government and, to the extent each warden feels comfortable doing so, participating in higher level administrative discussions.

The pertinent point for Zorra Heritage Committee's (ZHC) is that when a member of county council representing Zorra is elected by the other members of County Council to be warden, they are meeting the criteria to be considered a "Great of Zorra" because they are being recognized for their contribution outside of Zorra.

Our current warden is the Mayor of Zorra, but how many wardens before him represented Zorra and deserve to be included as a "Great"? The previous Zorra warden, Claire G. Minler, served in 1972 when the term was only 1 year. Since the County of Oxford was created in 1850, we've had 36 Zorra wardens. They came from all corners of Zorra, including each of the pre-amalgamation municipalities: East Nissouri, Embro, North Oxford and West Zorra.

1851 - John Scatcherd
1852-1856 - Donald Matheson
1859 - W.S. Light
1868 - Samuel Towle
1870 - Alexander McCorquodale
1873 - John Youngs
1877 - Thomas Robinson
1883 - Mathew Day
1885 - James Munro
1892 - E.L. Sutherland
1893 - D.R. Calder
1898 - M.T. Buchanan
1901 (2nd ½) - John Youngs
1910 - William Forbes
1911 - William McGhee
1920 - H.B. Atkinson
1926 - William Weir
1927 - William McIntosh
1930 - Henry Hanlon
1932 - Robert Oliver
1937 - Charles F. Beagley
1940 - Hugh Harris
1942 - Alvin McKay
1945 - A.D. McCorquodale
1946 - Winston Nichols
1947 - Milton Betteridge

1951 - Grant Sutherland
1954 - James Hossack
1956 - Reginald R. Day
1957 - Cecil M. Riddle
1960 - Donald Hossack
1961 - Ernest F. Garner
1964 - William M. Sutherland
1966 - Hugh Munro
1972 - Clair G. Minler
2023-2026 – Marcus Ryan

Many names may seem familiar as descendants continue to live in Zorra. The Oxford County Archives, at https:/archives.oxfordcounty.ca/exhibits/wardens-and-council/county-wardens/, presents photos and brief biographies of the wardens, but several include not much more information than you might find on the person's tombstone. Won't it be great if people come forward and provide more information or join ZHC in doing further research!

Please contact the Beachville District Museum for more information, especially if you are interested in helping out.

beachvilledistrictmuseum.com/ or beachvilledistrictmuseum@gmail.com or
(519) 423-6497 or drop in at 584371 Beachville Road on the west edge of Beachville

Zorra TOWNSHIP DOING OUR PART

TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Modern Square Dancing is for YOU!

Looking for something to do in the evening or something new to try? Modern square dancing is a great way to learn something new, have fun, meet new friends, relieve stress, and get some exercise! At Thames Valley Dance Club, we dance on Monday nights from 7:00-9:00pm. All you need is comfortable shoes and casual clothing. No experience or partner is required and anyone over the age of 12 is welcome (children from 12-15 with an adult, please). We will be starting our 2026-2027 season on Monday, Sept 14/26 at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall, 108 Wonham St. S. Ingersoll. The first night is free, and after that the cost is $8.00 per person each Monday, paid monthly at the start of the month. For more information, contact Julie at 519-535-3314. Hope to see you on Sept 14th at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall!

Trojans Hockey

The Trojans are celebrating 50 years of Hometown Hockey in Thamesford!

The Thamesford Trojans were founded in 1976 as members of the Western Ontario Junior D Hockey League, then moved to the OHA Junior Development League in 1991. In 2006, the OHAJDL was disbanded and replaced with the Southern Ontario Junior Hockey League where the Trojans played until moving to Provincial Junior Hockey League Junior C in 2016.

The Trojans won 9 Ontario Junior D championships – the only team in Jr D history with that many titles. The most notable of these championships were the 1989-1992 seasons and the 2010-2012 seasons, where the Trojans won the Ontario title for three consecutive seasons, being the only team in league history to accomplish this feat not only once, but twice. As part of the PJHL Jr C Yeck Division, the Trojans have won two division titles in back-to-back seasons 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

The Trojans continue to be one of the few remaining community-owned teams in the PJHL. The team is run by a volunteer board made up of several community members. This means that the team relies entirely on community support to keep the team on the ice. We accomplish this through fundraising and sponsorships.

The 50th season of Trojans hockey will kick off with a Home Opener in Thamesford on Saturday, September 19th at 2:30pm against the Lucan Irish. The game will start with a ceremonial puck drop featuring members of the inaugural 76-77 team. Immediately following the game, there will be a social event in the hall with food and drinks available for purchase by the Thamesford Lions Club. There will be a display of trophies, jerseys, and photos from 50 years of Trojans hockey. There will be live music by The Fat Willies, featuring Trojans Alumni players Billy Huitema and Josh Lewis. We are looking forward to catching up with old friends and celebrating this huge milestone for the Trojans. Hope to see you there!

Thistle Theatre

Dramarama
Summer 2026

Thistle Theatre celebrated the 30th season of Dramarama in July 2026. Dramarama is a 2-week summer day camp run by Thistle Theatre that introduces children between the ages of 6 and 13 to theatre. A typical day at Dramarama includes playmaking, music, prop and set construction and design, group theatre activities, production, drama, dance, and outdoor fun and games. We welcomed 60 campers this year who joined us for 2 sessions over 4 weeks in July. Our first group of campers provided us with 2 performances of "The Disappearance" on July 17. Our second group of campers took us to the circus for 2 performances of "The Big Top Flop" on July 31. We had new and returning campers this year to the Thistle Theatre stage, and we all hope you had as much fun as we did. We want to say a special thank you to our Dramarama Leadership team, including our camp leaders, our leaders in training, our technical directors and our Camp Director – Becky Issenman. Missed out on the fun this year! Don't worry – Registration for Dramarama Summer 2027 will open on February 1, 2027. More information can be found by going to www.thistle-theatre/dramarama

Cast of "The Big Top Flop" – July 31, 2026

Western Ontario Drama League's MiniFest

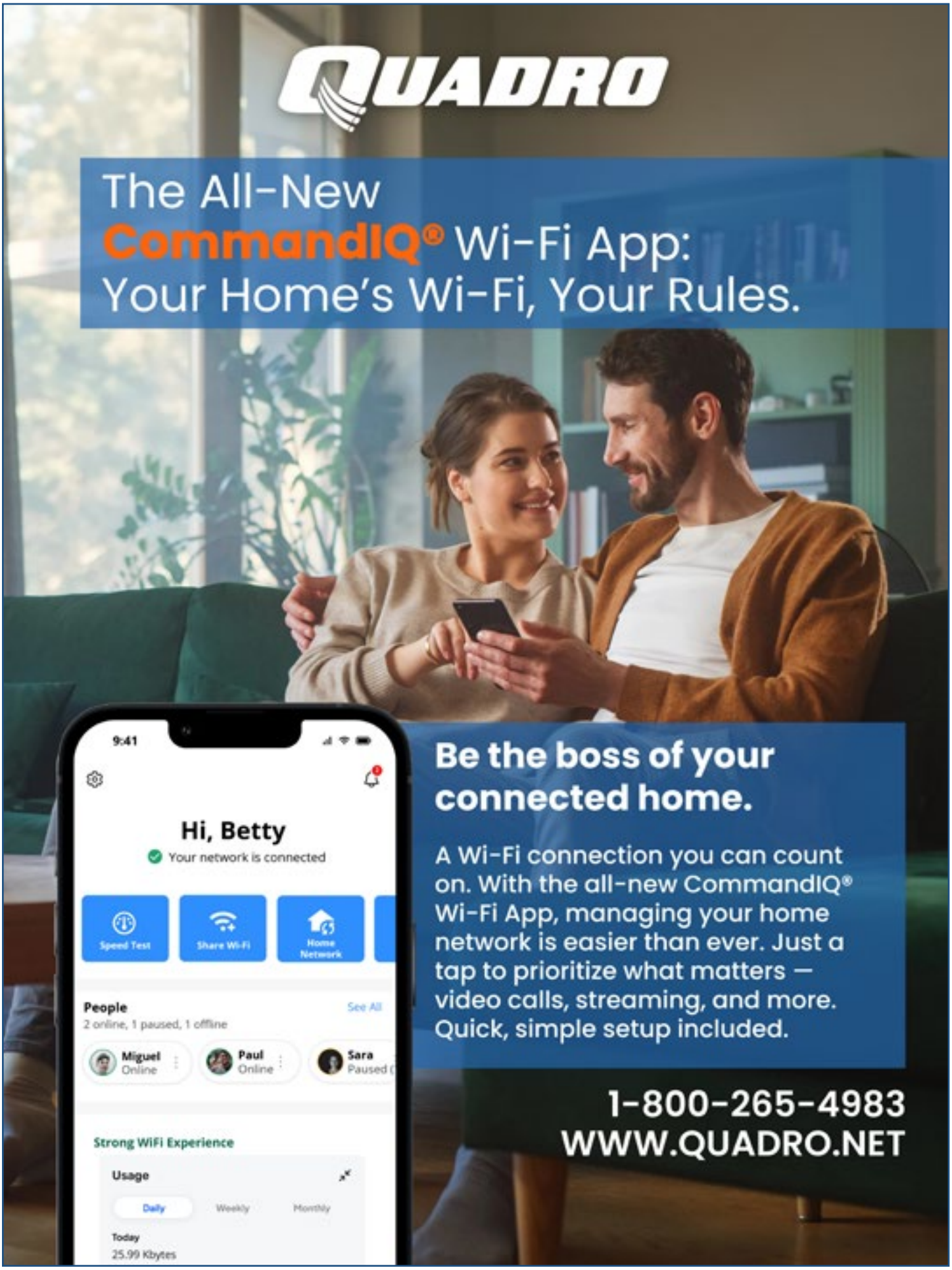
On August 7 and 8, Thistle Theatre hosted Western Ontario Drama League's MiniFest in Embro. What is MiniFest?? It's a One Act Play Theatre Workshop where participating community theatre groups have an opportunity to perform and see how other groups approach the SAME material! It is an exercise in creative individuality, a chance to learn about choices you either didn't make or didn't consider, and a fun workshop for both folks new to community theatre and those that have been around for a long time. This year's festival featured the play "Jersey" by Brad Fortmon, with Heather May leading the workshop.

Embro hosted performances of "Jersey" by Binbrook Community Players, Cambridge Community Players, Guelph Little Theatre, London Community Players, and Theatre Woodstock. We were treated to 6 amazing performances of the play, with a variety of perspectives that ranged from phycological thriller to campy 80's TV sitcom. The weekend was a great success. Thistle Theatre would especially like to thank the community for its support and donations, and members of the Thistle Theatre community who volunteered their time to make MiniFest a success.

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
November 12-22, 2026

Thistle Theatre is bringing the musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" to its stage in Embro this fall. The casting is done, and rehearsals will be starting on September 4th. Show dates are set for November 12th to 15th, and November 19th to 22nd. Tickets will be going on sale soon. Check www.thistle-theatre.com for more information.

We are still looking for volunteers to assist with various aspects of the production. There are lots of opportunities. One unique aspect of this show is the fact that it features several young performers. During the rehearsal period from September to November, we are looking for a couple of individuals to assist with our younger performers. Rehearsals can often involve a lot of waiting around, and we are looking for some volunteers to help us keep our younger performers occupied and focussed. If that, or any other volunteer role is of interest to you, please reach out to us at www.thistle-theatre.com/volunteer.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