

■ **ACCESSIBILITY:** StopGap Sarnia-Lambton building free ramps for businesses

# Ramping up accessibility

**TYLER KULA**  
The Observer

A colourful project is underway to make Sarnia-Lambton shops easier to access.

Custom-fitted wooden ramps, brightly painted in red, blue, yellow and green, are headed to front and back doors across Sarnia-Lambton, making single-step entryways assailable for people with disabilities.



**From a business perspective, just get in touch with me, we'll measure your step, we'll take a picture and that's it."**

Natalie Normand

"It's big," said Dan Edwards about the need.

Wheelchair-bound since a spinal cord injury in 2006, the motivational speaker said his friends can often lift him past the seemingly innocuous barriers, but other people aren't necessarily as lucky.

People with walkers, folks with bad knees, even people pushing babies in strollers can benefit from a more accessible business community, he said.

On Friday, 15 of the wooden wedges were being built and painted at Dixin Construction, readying for rollout via the Stop-Gap Sarnia-Lambton Community Ramp Project.

It's an extension of the Toronto-



TYLER KULA/THE OBSERVER

**Kelsey Moore-Nielsen paints the smallest of 15 ramps during the first build day for the StopGap Sarnia-Lambton Community Ramp Project. The project supplies wooden ramps for single-step business entryways, to help make them more accessible.**

based StopGap Foundation's project that's already helped supply hundreds of wooden ramps in Canadian communities, said Natalie Normand, project coordinator for the Sarnia-Lambton ramp rollout — and of the local Breaking Barriers to Business project that aims to bring businesses in line with provincial accessibility legislation.

The StopGap Sarnia-Lambton group's aim is to have 65 portable ramps built by the end of September.

They need to fundraise an estimated \$5,000 for materials. It costs \$75 on average per ramp, but fundraising makes them free to businesses that get on board, Normand said.

"It's in the interest of improving our community and our economy," she said, noting hopes are the temporary, "stop-gap" ramps will also get participants thinking about more long-term ramps in a few years time.

In Lambton County, she said, \$440 million is controlled by people with disabilities, and

if they can't enter a store, that location likely has no shot at their business.

Getting involved is easy, she said.

"From a business perspective, just get in touch with me, we'll measure your step, we'll take a picture and that's it," she said.

Businesses, as well as people wanting to help the cause or spread the word, can check out stopgapsarnialambton.ca, she said.

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■ **OMB:** Unclear when adjudicator's decision will be made

# St. Clair land use hearing wraps up

**TYLER KULA**  
The Observer

It's unclear exactly when an adjudicator's ruling will come down after an Ontario Municipal Board hearing into an industrial recycling business in St. Clair Township wrapped up earlier this week.

"We do not know when to expect a decision from the board as they have not provided us with an estimated time," said Charlie McClemens, with the township's building and planning department.



**It's not our decision, it's not Jim Seward's group's decision, it's the OMB that makes the decision."**

Elsie Metcalfe

At issue was Jim Seward's plan to use part of his Courtright Line property, near Highway 40, to recycle industrial materials like unwanted cement and asphalt into gravel — as well as to recycle mud used in petroleum well drilling and excavations.

Township council had been opposed to Seward's initial plan in 2012, but the sides worked out an agreement, including berms and setback restrictions in "minutes of settlement"

for a zoning bylaw that would give Seward's business the go-ahead, said McClemens.

But neighbours in the area have argued the business will create dust and noise pollution that could be hazardous to their health, and have hired representation to argue on their behalf at the municipal board (OMB) hearing.

The full week had been booked at the township's council chambers in Mooretown, McClemens said.

Asked how the hearing went, Elsie Metcalfe, one of the neighbours opposed to Seward's company, said she couldn't comment before the decision is made public.

Seward, Friday, responding to the same question, said it was his understanding the neighbours' side "conceded."

McClemens and Metcalfe did not confirm or deny that claim. "We're waiting for the board to get back to us with a decision," McClemens said.

"It's not our decision, it's not Jim Seward's group's decision, it's the OMB that makes the decision," Metcalfe said.

St. Clair Township Mayor Steve Arnold said the decision could be next month.

"Usually they will recess for a month before they render a decision," he said.

The process, Seward said, has cost him "hundreds of thousands" of dollars.

"They put us in one heck of a predicament to try and run a company," he said.

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■ **MAILBOX**

# Canada Post snubs city invite to mailbox meeting

**CHRIS O'GORMAN**  
The Observer

Canada Post has declined an invitation from Sarnia City Council to participate in a public meeting where locals would have an opportunity to voice concerns about the federal mail agency's new community mailboxes.

The invitation was the idea of city councillor Brian White, who said he wanted to extend the olive branch to Canada Post at a time when the organization faces increasing backlash from municipalities over who decides the location of the mailboxes.

After more than three months of waiting for a reply, White said the crown corporation's response on Thursday is disappointing but not a surprise.

"It feels like a snub. It's not a snub to me or even to council, it's a snub to the community members who want to have input and whose opinion and voice has great value," White said.

"It was a canned excuse that allows them to tell that they can just keep on moving with their agenda without having to be accountable."

Andrew Paterson, Canada Post's manager of municipal engagement, wrote in his reply that the federal agency won't be attending because the city isn't one of the communities where the new community mailboxes are currently being rolled out.

"Canada Post does have a robust Community Outreach process, and once our schedule for Sarnia is established, that process will commence," he wrote via email.

Community mailboxes are popping up cities across Canada and roughly one million more homes will be served by the boxes by the end of the year, according to Canada Post.

The move is a cost-saving measure the postal agency hopes will offset declining revenues. In 2014, Canada Post delivered 1.4 billion fewer pieces of mail than it did a decade ago.

But the roll-out of the large community mailboxes are angering municipalities whose elected officials and residents say they are not being consulted about where they are constructed.

Canada Post rebuffed a similar call for a public meeting in London where some residents are camping out in proposed mailbox zones to prevent their construction.

In June, the postal service won its legal battle with the City of Hamilton, overturning a bylaw that required the crown corporation to obtain a \$200 permit for each mailbox it wanted to construct.

Municipalities worry the mailboxes will create traffic troubles, increase litter, and require additional city funds for extra street lighting and sidewalk snow removal.

Sarnia mayor Mike Bradley said, while the mailboxes may not be in the city yet, Canada Post's treatment of these other municipalities does not lead him to believe there is much the city can do if residents complain.

"There's a deep-seated anger. People pay federal taxes but they continually turn around and see lower-quality services," he said.

Representatives from Canada Post spoke to city council earlier in the year, but Bradley said the officials made it clear they were not interested in meeting with the public and the encounter was "stormy to say the least."

"If they had any support when they entered the chamber, by the time they finished speaking to us they had lost all that support," he said.

Canada Post insists they are consulting with the public. In his email to council, Paterson said the crown corporation gets feedback via email and mail-in surveys as well as going door-to-door to speak with residents where the community mailboxes are being built.

Bradley said this amounts to "artful" public relations and said the "weasel(ly) double-talk" is an attempt to avoid facing the public directly.

"No one is buying this," he said. "What Canada Post is trying to do is public relations their way through this instead of dealing with the substantive issues that communities have."

White said the response wasn't "in any way sufficient or, quite frankly, even nice."

Council will meet again on Sept. 14 to discuss next steps.

When Canada Post announces Sarnia's community mailboxes, White plans to again invite the federal agency to a public meeting. If they decline, White says he plans to go ahead anyway.

"Whether that's sanctioned by the city or whether that's just Brian White putting on a town hall meeting, I will move forward and gather the input from community members," he said. "That's the very least I can do."



**VILLAGE OF POINT EDWARD**

**NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS**

**SANITARY SEWER CLEANING**

**August 17-21, 2015**

Please Note that the Village of Point Edward will be conducting Sanitary Sewer cleaning from August 17-August 21, 2015. As a precautionary measure, we recommend that you keep the lid of your toilets down as some minor water splashing may occur. In the event that any sewer gas odour occurs, pour a glass of water into all sink traps or shower traps. If the toilet empties, please flush. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Jason Verstraeten  
Manager of Environmental Services

**26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**PARKS AND RECREATION**

**SUMMER WATERFRONT CONCERT SERIES**

**APPEARING THIS WEEK**

**August 17<sup>th</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Canatara Bandshell**

**Monday August 17, 7:15 PM – Free Admission**

• Rob Dickson and Friends

*Let your hair down and raise your voice to some rock & country party mix tunes, Monday!*

**Tuesday August 18, 7:15 PM – Free Admission**

• The R.E.D. Line Band

*Calling all new and old time country fans – this hat-tippin', boot-kickin' band has it all!*

**Wednesday August 19, 7:15 PM – Free Admission**

• Joan Spalding & the Foggy Mountain Band

*This band is not only full of musical talent, but is skilled at dancing as well – don't miss out!*

**Thursday August 20, 7:00 PM – Free Admission**

• Closing Night Celebration

*Come out and celebrate all kinds of talent at our "Share the Stage" grand finale performance!*

**Kenwick on the Lake Music Series**

**Wednesday August 19, 7:00 PM – Free Admission**

• After Hours

**Wednesday August 26, 7:00 PM (LAST CONCERT) – Free Admission**

• Mike Blackmore and Chris Molyneux

*Kenwick on the Lake Pavilion, 2759 Old Lakeshore Rd.*

**DONATIONS ACCEPTED**

For more information: Call 519-332-0330 Ext. 3202/3218

Waterfront Calendar available at City Hall or Online at [www.sarnia.ca](http://www.sarnia.ca)

**ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF UNION GAS LIMITED**

**Union Gas Limited has applied for approval to change its gas commodity, storage and transportation rates effective January 1, 2016.**

**Learn more. Have your say.**

Union Gas Limited has applied to change its rates to better reflect how it supplies natural gas to its customers. The proposed changes include the following:

- A change in the reference price used to set rates on a quarterly basis for a majority of its customers; and
- A change to how it allocates costs to the different types of customers that it serves.

An average residential customer would see the following annual bill impact, but these impacts would only start in 2018:

Residential Customer – Service Area	Approximate Bill Impact
Southern Ontario (Windsor to Hamilton)	Decrease of \$20
Northern Delivery Area (North Bay to Kapuskasing)	Increase of \$26
All Other Delivery Areas	Decrease of \$1.50 – \$51.50

Other customers in Union Gas Limited's service area, including businesses, will also be affected.

**THE ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD IS HOLDING A PUBLIC HEARING**

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) will hold a public hearing to consider the application filed by Union Gas.

We will question Union Gas on the case. We will also hear arguments from individuals and from groups that represent the customers of Union Gas. At the end of this hearing, the OEB will decide whether to approve the changes that Union Gas has requested in this application.

The OEB is an independent and impartial public agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a financially viable and efficient energy sector that provides you with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

**BE INFORMED AND HAVE YOUR SAY**

You have the right to information regarding this application and to be involved in the process.

- You can review the application filed by Union Gas on the OEB's website now.
- You can file a letter with your comments, which will be considered during the hearing.
- You can become an active participant (called an intervenor). Apply by **August 25, 2015** or the hearing will go ahead without you and you will not receive any further notice of the proceeding.
- At the end of the process, you can review the OEB's decision and its reasons on our website.

**LEARN MORE**

Our file number for this case is **EB-2015-0181**. To learn more about this hearing, find instructions on how to file letters or become an intervenor, or to access any document related to this case, please select the file number **EB-2015-0181** from the list on the OEB website: [www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/notice](http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/notice). You can also phone our Consumer Relations Centre at 1-877-632-2727 with any questions.

**ORAL VS. WRITTEN HEARINGS**

There are two types of OEB hearings – oral and written. The OEB will determine at a later date whether to proceed by way of a written or oral hearing. If you think an oral hearing is needed, you can write to the OEB to explain why by **August 25, 2015**.

**PRIVACY**

If you write a letter of comment, your name and the content of your letter will be put on the public record and the OEB website. However, your personal telephone number, home address and e-mail address will be removed. If you are a business, all your information will remain public. If you apply to become an intervenor, all information will be public.

This hearing will be held under section 36 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, S.O. 1998 c.15 (Schedule B).

Ontario Energy Board / Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario