



United Counties of  
Leeds and Grenville  
25 Central Ave. W., Suite 100  
Brockville, ON K6V 4N6  
T 613-342-3840  
800-770-2170  
TTY 800-539-8685  
F 613-342-2101  
[www.leedsgrenville.com](http://www.leedsgrenville.com)

## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2018

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The highlights of regular United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Council Meeting held on Thursday, April 19 and Committee of the Whole and Joint Services Committee meetings held earlier in the month, are listed below.

**Counties-wide Fire Services study:** Counties Council has approved the hiring of an independent consultant with strategic fire service expertise to initiate the investigation into a Counties-wide fire services study.

The consultants will work with the Leeds Grenville Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) at a workshop involving the area's 10 member municipalities. The workshop's outcome will be to prepare a scope of work for a Counties fire services study. This scope will be brought back to Council to consider.

The costs and requirements for municipal fire services have increased significantly over the past decade, including increased standards for fire equipment, firefighting, and dispatching. The goal of the review is to determine whether a Counties-wide fire service will provide efficiencies for greater value to lower-tier municipalities.

The Counties is currently responsible for fire communications. It owns and operates the fire communications infrastructure and has a five-year agreement with the City of Brockville for dispatch services. The United Counties makes an annual donation for Fire Mutual Aid training, fire prevention activities, and Mutual Aid Association membership.

In March, the provincial government announced it will be implementing two regulations requiring all fire services to provide the mandatory training and certification for their firefighters and that municipalities prepare fire risk assessments. For more information, contact Counties CAO, Andy Brown at 613-342-3840, ext. 2301.

**Maple View Lodge OPSEU contract signed:** United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, Maple View Lodge and the Ontario Public Services Employee Union have successfully negotiated a three-year collective agreement, effective from January 01, 2017 to December 31, 2019.

**April 24, 2018**

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The agreement entails wage adjustments for each of the three years: 1.75% in 2017, 1.50% in 2018 and 1.50 % for 2019. OPSEU ratified the tentative agreement with their members on April 18. Counties Council ratified the agreements at their regular meeting on April 19th. For more information, contact Human Resources Manager Colleen Hickey at 613-342-3840, ext. 2332.

**Three-year OPSEU Local 494 contract signed:** United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, Community and Social Services and the Ontario Public Services Employee Union (CUPE) have successfully negotiated a three-year collective agreement, effective from January 01, 2018 to December 31, 2020.

The agreement entails wage adjustments for each of the three years: 1.75% in 2018, 1.50% in 2019, and 1.75 % for 2020. OPSEU ratified the tentative agreement with their members on March 20. Counties Council ratified the agreement at their regular meeting in March. For more information, contact Counties Human Resources Manager Colleen Hickey at 613-342-3840, ext. 2332.

**Counties hosting session on human trafficking:** Robin Jones, Warden for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville is hosting a session to raise awareness of human sex trafficking in Eastern Ontario. It is designed to equip and train social services, police, health care providers, community leaders and educators, as well as anyone in the community, with critical information and practical tools to stop human sex trafficking.

**WHEN:** Monday, April 30, 2-4 p.m.

**WHERE:** Brockville Conference Centre, 7829 Kent Boulevard, Brockville

The keynote speaker is Simone Bell, an Ottawa woman who is a survivor of human trafficking. Joining Simone will be Ontario MPP Laurie Scott (PC - Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock) and OPP Detective Sergeant Coyer Yateman. MPP Scott has put forth a Private Members Bill, *The Girl Next Door Act*, for a strategy on the growing issue of human trafficking.

The session will:

- Provide information on human trafficking in Leeds and Grenville and Ontario, and the scope of the issue among youth.
- Identify risk factors that lead to heightened vulnerability and red flags that may indicate a trafficking situation for parents/grandparents and educators.
- Discuss reasons victims do not self-identify or reach out for help.

**April 24, 2018**

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- Outline resources and services available for survivors.
- Speak about methods to protect children from human trafficking and about resources available to victims.

Human trafficking is one of Canada's fastest growing crimes with the average age of victims being 14 years old. According to the presentation, 93% of victims are Canadian-born and Highway 401 offers a major conduit for the crime.

**Upcoming meetings:** Committee of the Whole Tuesday, May 8; Joint Services Committee Wednesday, May 9, and regular Counties Council on Thursday, May 24. All regular meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the Council Chambers at 25 Central Avenue, Brockville. For more information, contact County Clerk Lesley Todd at 613-342-3840, ext. 2454.

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**Media inquiries:**

Deanna Clark, Economic Development Officer/media releases,  
United Counties of Leeds Grenville  
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON, K6V 4R9  
613-342-3840, ext. 5360 or [deanna.clark@uclg.on.ca](mailto:deanna.clark@uclg.on.ca)  
Cell: 613-803-0249