

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, February 28, 2018



WELLAND MAYOR MEETS WITH MINISTER OF FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

Welland's Mayor Frank Campion and CAO Gary Long met with the Honourable Marie-France Lalonde, Ontario's Minister of Francophone Affairs at this week's Ontario Good Roads Association Conference (OGRA) in Toronto. Photo attached.

Mayor Campion profiled Welland's Francophone community and discussed potential partnership and funding opportunities with the province to promote the city's French heritage and Francophone tourism. He also made the Minister aware of enhancements to bilingual signage, new French-language content to the city's website that will be launched in March, and partnerships with organizations such as CERF Niagara, Foyer Richelieu, Club Richelieu, and Musée de Welland. The Mayor and staff are working with local organizations and other bilingual cities to promote Francophone tourism and the growing interest in genealogical tourism through the city's participation in the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network.

Minister Lalonde was very familiar with the city's French community having attended a couple cultural events in Welland. The Minister thanked the Mayor for the work that the city and other local agencies are doing to promote the Francophone population by providing programs, services, and cultural activities.

Key facts:

- Welland is one of 26 communities in Ontario designated as bilingual
- 51% of the city's population speaks English and French
- 23% of the population identify themselves as French
- 15% consider themselves bilingual – represents about 7,850 residents

Minister Lalonde is also Minister of Correctional Services and Public Safety. The Mayor discussed the importance of having infrastructure funding programs that support new fire halls, as-well-as having programs and grants to assist municipalities with the increased costs of emergency management. Welland's delegation also met with the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Transportation to discuss industrial developments along Highway 140, and joined elected officials and staff from Niagara Region in a meeting with the Minister of Transportation to discuss provincial support for a consolidated transit system in Niagara. Meetings were also held with Ernie Hardeman MPP as-well-as senior officials with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The 2018 OGRA Annual Conference took place from Sunday, February 25, to Wednesday, February 28, at the Fairmont Royal York in Toronto. Approximately 2,200 municipal leaders from across Canada attended.

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