

Francis raps Manning work

Four-lane link to 401 would flood E.C. Row with trucks, mayor says

By DAVE BATTAGELLO
STAR MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS REPORTER

Mayor Eddie Francis says he fears a plan to turn Manning Road into a four-lane connection between Highway 401 and E.C. Row will mean a dramatic increase in the number of international trucks using the expressway.

But Tecumseh Mayor Gary McNamara dismissed Friday "all the negative outcry" over the planned county road expansion and said not wanting trucks on E.C. Row is "a little bit over the top."

An environmental assessment and preliminary design is underway for the project, which is expected to cost between \$125 million and \$150 million. The costs are to be paid out of the federal-provincial border infrastructure

funds for the Windsor area.

Early designs also include expanding a Tecumseh stretch of the expressway — called County Road 22 — between Manning and Banwell roads into six lanes, narrowing to four close to the Windsor border.

Should improvements to Manning Road be completed before fixing the Talbot Road-Huron Church Road corridor, Francis fears it will lead to trucks getting off Highway 401 and heading to the expressway for easier access to the border.

"The City of Windsor has consistently been on the record as being vehemently opposed to any expansion of E.C. Row that would lead to international trucks being introduced to the expressway," he said.

"We believe E.C. Row is at capacity

for local and regional traffic."

McNamara said the project will create a "regional link to the county, city and border" and called it vital to lure desperately needed investment and jobs to the county and city.

"We have to start thinking more outside of the box," he said. "This is a chance to improve roadbeds that are antiquated and overcapacity."

A secondary issue regarding the project is a tug of war over industrial investment in the region and lucrative tax income. Tecumseh and Lakeshore want to develop land near Manning Road while the city wants to attract industry to land near Windsor Airport.

"As a municipal leader, you want to make sure you can make a good case to bring investment to the region," McNamara said. "If you don't have proper in-

frastructure in place it makes that more difficult.

"How do we sell ourselves? We want to be part of the economy and we need to have infrastructure."

City administrators are preparing a response to the Manning Road environmental assessment and will be seeking more direction from council, Francis suggested.

"I can't emphasize it enough. We strongly believe E.C. Row is at capacity today and should remain a local and regional roadway," said the mayor. "There is no concern in improving ECR for that purpose."

"The concern we have is any discussion on steps to expand ECR ahead of GreenLink could by default lead to international trucks on the expressway and we want to avoid that."

The Manning Road-E.C. Row project is included in a lengthy list of border-related issues the city is tackling, prompting Francis to plan a special council meeting within the next week or two, he said.

Windsor is also in the midst of trying to convince the provincial government to build its GreenLink border solution, the Ambassador Bridge is pushing to build its twin span project and the city remains mired in negotiations with Detroit to take over as operator of the U.S. side of the Windsor-Detroit tunnel.

The environmental assessment for the Manning Road project is scheduled to be completed next spring, barring opposition which could slow it down.

Design and tendering is then expected to take a year with construction slated to begin sometime in 2009.

Serious fun and games



Physical education teachers from the Greater Essex County District School Board spent their professional development day playing in the gym Friday. What appeared to be fun and games was actually a serious learning experience as the teachers explored a variety of new teaching techniques. Here Kristy Kassian and Rick Dugal, teachers at Belle River district high school, participate in a strength and agility exercise.

Star photo: Dan Janisse

Economic strategy to build on strengths

By DON LAJOIE
STAR STAFF REPORTER

The Windsor-Essex County Development Commission released its report Friday on last summer's Challenges of Change economic summit and announced a team of community leaders who will devise strategies aimed at helping the area weather the economic downturn and spur future growth.

"We can't prejudge when it will begin to pay off," said Remo Mancini, chairman of the WECD board of directors. "Hopefully, right around the corner. You never know."

In an interview following the report's release and the introduction of leaders for four of five economic sector teams, including manufacturing, health, education and agri-business, Mancini said the establishment of the teams will give the commission the expertise and clout to compete with any competitors, anywhere in the global economy.

Roy Verstraete, president of Anchor Danly, was named manufacturing sector leader. David Malian, who has held senior management positions at Windsor Western Hospital, Green Shield Canada Ltd. and Pfizer Canada as a pharmacist, will head up the health team.

Peter Frise, professor of mechanical and automotive engineering at the University of Windsor, was appointed education sector leader and Kristen Callow, general manager of Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, will assume leadership of the agri-business group.

The naming of a team leader to look into the tourism sector has been delayed to accommodate a review of the local convention and tourism commission.

"These appointees are not just recognized experts in their fields but each one has contacts and partnerships external to this area, plus international experience," said Mancini. "I don't know of any other development commission that has this kind of outreach. It puts us on the road, hopefully, to be one of the tops in North America."

As the leaders were introduced, each gave a brief address, all of them focusing on the need for innovation, diversification and the need for "transition," while building on the regional economy's strengths.

"The future relies on education," said Frise, referring to the need for research and development. "We have to change the way we fit into the new world... If you do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. We can't do that anymore."

Verstraete said the Windsor area's strengths include geographic location and cross-border trade, an established manufacturing base, educational resources and an "affordable, healthy and attractive living environment."



Remo Mancini

Superbugs in agency's sights

Infection-control experts to assist hospitals, health units

By SHARON HILL
STAR STAFF REPORTER

The region should be better prepared to prevent and control infections such as drug-resistant superbugs with the help of a new infection control team.

"Although there will always be another new infection in the news, with education and the standardized approach to infection control and prevention, we should be well armed to deal with any new threat in the future," Dr. Corinna Quan, Windsor's only infectious diseases specialist, said Friday.

Quan is the medical director for the new Erie-St. Clair Infection Control Network. The network opened its office on Rhodes Drive Friday and used the ribbon-cutting ceremony to introduce Quan and the network's coordinator Nora Boyd.

The network is one of 12 in the province that have been started and funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The net-



Dr. Corinna Quan, Windsor's only infectious disease specialist, has been named medical director of the Erie-St. Clair Infection Control Network, which is based in Windsor.

work based in Windsor will cover the city, Essex County, Chatham-Kent and Sarnia/Lambton County.

The goal is to reduce health care-acquired infections in patients, Boyd said.

Medical advancements are helping people live longer but that can make them more susceptible to infections, Boyd said. A patient may go into the hospital to have surgery and end up with pneumonia or a drug-resistant bug.

Boyd said the network is like a coach that

will work with health units and health care providers from hospital staff to dentists. The team will offer education, monitor what infections are hitting this area and try to standardize infection control practices, she said. It could help oversee the response to a pandemic.

The new network means there's now more expertise in the community to reduce health care-acquired infections, she said.

Quan said hospital infections result in longer hospital stays for patients, higher mortality rates and increased health care costs.

"The incidents of health care acquired infections has increased dramatically over the past 20 years particularly with multi-resistant bacteria as you've heard in the news," Quan said.

Earlier this week Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital reported an increase in diarrhea-causing C. difficile infections and predicted more cases are on the way.

City to welcome Santa

Santa Claus is coming to town tonight.

The 39th annual Windsor Santa Claus Parade hits the street at 6 p.m., featuring floats, inflatables, international marching bands and the big man himself.

Show up early, because more than 50,000 Christmas spirit-filled spectators are expected to line the sidewalks.

Entertainment this year includes The Millennium Steel Band from Detroit, the stunt riding Great Canadian Cowgirls and the band Marshall White, which has played for six U.S. presidents.

Ouellette Avenue road construction has made the parade's traditional route impossible this year. So the parade will travel along Riverside Drive West, under the Ambassador Bridge and into Olde Sandwich Towne.

It starts at Ernest Atkinson Park, across the street from the Windsor Sculpture Garden, and finishes at Brock Street next to Mackenzie Hall.

Olde Sandwich Towne is also getting in on the holiday spirit. During the day, before Santa arrives, visitors will be treated to street carollers, hot chocolate and special promotions in stores



Star graphic: Susan Thomson-Stamcoff

and restaurants. Visit www.santaparade.org or call 519-254-2880 for more information.

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