

Warden's 2018 Inaugural Address – Stewart Halliday

Welcome friends, my family, members of Grey County Council, distinctive guests, our valued staff and members from the media. I am very honoured to have been selected as your Grey County Warden for 2018.

Celebrating this event in our new Council Chambers is also a very special milestone.

I want to begin by once again thanking my mover County Councillor and Deputy Mayor of the Town of Blue Mountains -Gail Ardiel and my seconder County Councillor and Deputy Mayor of Meaford- Harley Greenfield, as well all of County Council for your vote of confidence and support.

It takes the strength and support of many to be a good and effective leader. As Warden I know that having the support of my wife Patricia and my six children, my fellow Councillors, our staff and over 94,000 residents are the keys to my success as head of Council.

Under the leadership of past Wardens Alan Barfoot , Kevin Eccles, who are sitting members of this current Council, we have achieved a great many things in the past three years and have advanced many initiatives, all in an effort to continue making Grey County a great place to work and play. Remember, this County was started in 1852 and we also need to thank the many Wardens and Councillors that have gone before and built the foundation upon which we move forward today.

I look forward to this new responsibility as your Warden and by further working together as a Council on the initiatives that have been set in place during the past three years we now have a chance to bring it all together. Acting as your cleanup Warden for this four-year term, I hope to have a great finish for our final year in 2018.

We will continue to represent this County in the best possible way not only in our own communities, but also at the Provincial and Federal levels to ensure that our voices are heard, and that our issues are addressed through a rural lens.

It is vitally important that we as a council maintain seats on our Grey Bruce Public Health Board, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Stewardship Grey Bruce, Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy, Grey County Federation of Agriculture, Georgian College and The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, again in the spirit of making our voice heard.

Our CAO Kim Wingrove has put out a call for Council members to sign up for membership in a new CAO objectives and Evaluation Committee. This team will need to get into gear very quickly as it is imperative that we create a work plan for 2018. You can't move forward if you don't plan.

We will review each new goal against the three pillars of our updated strategic plan. The first being to grow the economy, the second is to support healthy connected communities and the third is to deliver excellence in governance and service.

Our new Council and Committee of the Whole with two sittings per month has been tested and now endorsed and this format allows each Council member to fully participate and understand all of the issues before this Council. This updated process ensures that each member of Council will be fully informed and this forum will allow us to address the needs of our ratepayers and our communities in a responsible and effective manner.

Recent initiatives have included our successful inclusion in the Top 7 Intelligent Communities in the World. Being on the world stage has allowed Grey County to participate in a new initiative to explore how we can market ourselves to world investors.

Look forward this coming spring to follow Grey County's participation in THINK CANADA.

We will be releasing our new Official Plan for provincial and community final input. A clever use of our tag line "Colour it your way" led to the title Recolour Grey. Staff with extensive community input has explored five major categories. Live Grey, Cultivate Grey, Develop Grey, Move Grey and Natural Grey. This plan will provide a twenty-year window into our land-based planning.

Other categories arose during these discussions and many comments focused on quality of life issues. It will be up to this next Council to determine how we can formulate solutions for these concerns. We must begin to manage these expectations. This will include developing sustainable youth and senior strategies, understanding those that need a helping hand and making sure that our community has a high index for health and well-being.

With clear vision, strategic directions and attainable objectives we will work SMART. SPECIFIC: MEASURABLE: ACHIEVABLE: RESPONSIBLE: TIMELY.

We should have continued population growth as our seasonal residents become full timers; new homes are also being built to accommodate the many new people that will join our communities. They will move here to live in our authentic rural communities. We offer four seasons of natural beauty and fresh air. Our award winning Tourism Department is working to bring more visitors.

This is already happening and the Tourism department has the numbers to prove it. Every citizen, every retailer is a Grey County Goodwill Ambassador.

Let's make sure we put out the WELCOME mat.

We will be working hard to make sure that this happens and with the help and expansion of our own agencies and with support from Provincial agencies like RT07 Bruce Grey Simcoe we will live in a county that will develop and attract the emerging connected, creative and entrepreneurial citizens that will help to expand our economy. From tiny homes to smaller market garden farms, we understand the future and are willing to develop a capacity to experiment. Growth is good when it also develops more jobs.

There will be a great deal of new Provincial legislation that will be approved in the next few weeks. We must examine and adapt. My fellow Councillors, with all the challenges we face as a Council we will need to identify the impacts of the new legislation and seek a unified approach. We will also need to examine issues like improved relationships and partnerships with our lower tier Councils and staffs. We need to get talking about further development in this area early in 2018.

A lot is currently happening, the CAOs meet, the treasurers meet, the clerks meet and the Transportation directors meet and Tourism and Economic Development are reaching out. Having a goal for continuous improvement will make more of this happen. We need to celebrate our successes and continue to move forward. Financial restraints will make us work better not harder.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with humbled honour that I sit here before you as the new Grey County Warden for 2018. I look forward to the challenges and responsibilities of this new position. I again thank you for your confidence. I will want to work directly with each member of this Council so that they are heard and will endeavour to encourage a process to bring their ideas forward.

By working together in 2018, I expect we will achieve many goals and continue to make Grey County the best it can be. We are proud of our communities and we will continue to welcome new citizens to our beautiful and authentic county.

Join us and COLOUR IT YOUR WAY.

To each and every one of you, and your families; have a wonderful holiday season, celebrate it your way, and have a prosperous and exciting New Year in 2018.

Thank you and join us for the celebrations to follow.