



Loyalist Township News Release –

Date: August 5th, 2009

Subject: **Announcement from Province re Amherst Island Ferry Service**

Announcement:

Loyalist Township welcomed the news from the Province (**Ontario Preserves Amherst Island Ferry Service – McGuinty Government Announces Ownership of Service Docks – August 4, 2009**) in response to Council's more than decade-long quest for the Ministry of Transportation to take over ownership of the Township-owned docks at Stella and Millhaven. For clarification, negotiations for the transfer of the docks to the Province have not taken place but the Minister's announcement yesterday indicates that the many requests from Township Council for the Province to assume ownership and convert the docks to end-loading capability have finally been successful. Reeve Clayton McEwen and Councillor Duncan Ashley (representing Amherst Island) look forward to meeting with Ministry officials as soon as possible to begin negotiations that will lead to the transfer of the dock facilities.

Background:

The Stella and Millhaven docks were transferred to Loyalist Township in 1998 as part of the federal government's Harbours and Ports divestiture program. The Ministry of Transportation was not interested in acquiring the docks at that time but the Council of the former Township of Amherst Island and subsequent Loyalist Township Councils have, over the years, requested that MTO take over ownership of the docks that are used by the provincially owned ferry that provides the municipally-operated service to Amherst Island. The Frontenac II and the replacement Quinte Loyalist ferries are designed for end-loading; conversion of the docks to end-loading use has long been identified as the most efficient system for the year-round service required by the agricultural community and regular commuters.

In 2006, Council hired an engineering firm to provide preliminary options and estimated costs to reconfigure the docks from side-loading to end-loading. The Township previously provided that report to the Ministry for information. Earlier this year, Loyalist Township Council identified the need for end-loading docks as the Township's infrastructure priority, in an effort to obtain Federal and Provincial infrastructure funding for conversion of the docks. The project, however, did not proceed to the application stage because the absence of a completed environmental assessment disqualified the project as meeting the shovel-ready requirement of the federal/provincial programs. Council's request

to the province to allow the use of accumulated berthage fees to fund an environmental assessment remains outstanding and is now redundant.

Reeve McEwen, Councillor Ashley and senior staff met with Kathryn Moore, Regional Director, Eastern Region, Ministry of Transportation and Stuart Jones, Manager, Operational Services, on March 23rd, 2009, to discuss outstanding issues that included the possible transfer of the docks. As recently as last month, Council submitted requests for a meeting with the Minister at the up-coming Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference and, preferably, a meeting with the Minister in Toronto. Council is pleased that a decision has been announced and the next meetings with Ministry staff will further the Township's longstanding goal.

Reeve McEwen commented that the Minister's decision to accept the docks and work toward needed improvements will assist the Township, in partnership with the Province, in the continuing provision of excellent ferry service to Amherst Island. In addition, he wished to acknowledge the role played by Kathryn Moore, Regional Director, for her on-going support of Council's efforts.

For more information, please contact:

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