

Mayor Jenkins shares her vision for Bancroft

By Tony Pearson

Bancroft's Mayor Bernice Jenkins recently sat down with Bancroft This Week to discuss her plans for Bancroft in the next four years.

Question: You're starting your fourth term on Council. What made you decide to run again?

Answer: Serving the public is truly addictive. Councillors aim to make a difference to their communities, and it's hard to walk away when there's more to do. I believe we accomplished a lot in the past four years, but there are still priorities I want to help achieve.

Question: What was this campaign like for you?

Answer: I learned a lot. As you go around canvassing, people talk to you about their hopes for the town. When you have some experience, you can see what might be done, and that re-energizes you. In addition, this campaign showed me that people are looking to have more input into township matters.

Question: What are some initiatives you hope to work on?

Answer: One of the most important is getting a sewer line to the north of town; this will provide a spur to economic development there. Another is the Earth Science Centre; a third is the biomass facility.

Question: What about the desire you found for more public input?

Answer: I am going to recommend two open town hall meetings next year ? one in Bancroft, and one in L'Amable. Beforehand, we need to ask the public for their discussion priorities.

I would also like to see a closer liaison with seniors and their organizations. Hopefully, there can be more joint planning of activities among the area's seniors' clubs and the municipality.

Question: What are your hopes for the new council's operations?

Answer: With a new council, there's a sense of excitement and opportunity. The returning councillors impart continuity and perspective, while the new councillors bring new ideas and new energy. All councillors need to be heard, so we can find a unified direction forward.

Question: How can a team spirit be fostered?

Answer: I'm going to suggest that we start off working mostly as committee of the whole, tackling issues together, as councillors develop a feel for the workload and what their areas of interest are. The ideal is that every member gets to make best use of their particular strengths.

Question: You mentioned continuity. What's the key issue there?

Answer: Our financial situation. We always have to keep the balance between the town's spending, debt, and tax levels in mind. So one committee which needs to continue is Finance and Growth, with the emphasis on growth.

Question: You're also continuing on County Council. What are your hopes there?

Answer: We need to keep looking for ways that we can form partnerships with neighbouring municipalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of common services. The County has an important role to play in fostering such partnerships.

Question: What special role do you hope to play as mayor?

Answer: The mayor is, of course, the leader of council. Tom Peters, the ?Pursuit of Excellence? management consultant, says that ?leadership is the liberation of talent.? As mayor, my job is to encourage, support, and ensure open and transparent discussion, so that the full talents of everyone are brought to bear on improving Bancroft.