



PORT COLBORNE

Mayor's report to city council

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Day in Washington DC

I was in Washington DC three days last week for Great Lakes Day on Capitol Hill. I serve on the board of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, which is a coalition of 250 mayors from Canada and the United States working to protect the Great Lakes. We meet with federal, provincial, and state representatives on both sides of the border whenever there's an issue relating to governance, economics, and science.

It was a jam-packed three days of addressing Great Lakes issues. Plus, it was pretty cool to visit the White House.

I met with seven Members of Congress, three Senators, the Minister and Principal Officer of the US Embassy. I had excellent discussions with Mark Quader, the Major General for the Army Corps of Engineers, and Mary Frances Repko, Deputy Assistant to the President, and Deputy National Climate Adviser.

I had a great meeting with Administrator Adam Tindall-Schlicht, who is the head of the American version of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

I am one of more than a dozen Great Lakes mayors in this group. It's critical to all of us to safeguard and protect safe clean drinking water, share responsibility for environmental stewardship, and prepare for coastal threats to all our municipalities, because we all face them.

Our mayor's group endorsed the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, an investment of \$500-million per year. One single US dollar of restoration investment generates \$3 in economic activity.

We had sessions on replacing lead pipes, preventing invasive species, introducing clean and renewable energy, and we discussed how each of us needs to contribute to sustain the health and prosperity of the Great Lakes.

The Brandon Road Interbasin Project, for example is a massive undertaking in Illinois. Brandon Road project is a complex ecosystem protection effort designed to prevent the upstream movement of invasive carp and other aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes from the Illinois waterway and Mississippi River basin. Remember zebra mussels? Invasive carp have a similar huge impact on the Great Lakes, especially on commercial and sport fishing, and recreational boating.

NOTE: \$6-billion of economic activity

Great Lakes are the third largest economy in the world. To balance the ecological and economic health of the Great Lakes, we're launching the Economic Transformation of the Great Lakes to become a leading blue-green corridor. It will be presented at our Annual General Meeting in Montreal in May.

We covered a lot of ground in three days. We know the more we work together, the more we collaborate, the more we will accomplish.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative has already established the Green Shipping Corridor Network on the Seaway.

We must do this work, for our cities, and our Great Lakes.

On behalf of members of council, I applaud the work undertaken by political leaders on each side of the border, and by staff of governments, agencies, and business.

March Break

Members of council and I thank our many staff and volunteers for coordinating all kinds of excellent programs and activities at our library, museum, and at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre. I realize we're already two days into March Break, but I hope parents and children have checked out all the events on the city website.

Top Hat ceremony

Members of council and I hope you will join us for the 2024 season opening of the Welland Canal Friday, March 22 in Lock 8 Park.

We're starting early this year, at 7:30am, with pancake and sausage breakfast prepared by our city's Fair Trade committee. We have an impressive roster of special guests to celebrate 195 years since the first version of William Hamilton Merritt's "ditch" opened in 1829, and 65 years since the St. Lawrence Seaway was completed and open for business in 1959. Gregg Ruhl, the president of Algoma, will be among our guest speakers, to mark Algoma's 125 years in railways and shipping.

Please join me at the annual Mariner's Service in St. James and St. Brendan's Anglican Church Sunday evening at 7.

The Rev. Jody and her crew salute the sailors and crew who'll pass through our city and sail the Great Lakes. She will attend our Top Hat ceremony next week to bless the canal and all those whose work is linked to it.

Tugboat Bunny

Easter arrives a little early this year, on the weekend of March 30-31. Port Colborne's own Tugboat Bunny arrives on the bow of the JW Cooper Saturday, March 30 about 9am. We hope all the children will bring their parents and friends to the canal along West Street to welcome the jaunty fellow.

Yellow ribbons for Corporal Tyler Crooks

Fifteen years ago on March 20, Corporal Tyler Crooks was killed in action near Kandahar where he was deployed with November Company, 3rd Battalion, with the Royal Canadian Regiment serving with NATO forces in Afghanistan.

March 20, the day of his death, was also his birthday. He turned 24.

He and his brother-in-arms Master Corporal Scott Vernelli were killed that day, and five others wounded, when an improvised device detonated near their patrol 40 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

We tie yellow ribbons -- which signify fallen military -- to poles on each side of Sugarloaf Street at the Cenotaph, and on the lamp posts at city hall's front door. We've done it every year for the past 15 years.

Many of us remember the day his body arrived in Port Colborne, back in 2009. You could not fit another person along Clarence Street -- there were thousands who came out to show their respect.

Council and I hope you'll take a moment, when you see those yellow ribbons, to reflect on the loss of one of our own, and the loss of sons and daughters from towns and cities across our country and around the world.