

Connecting for Care

Working Together - Collaboration and Commitment in Midland!

On the evening of June 23rd the town of Midland was forced to tackle the aftermath of fury that had arrived unexpectedly and without warning during the supper hour that day. At approximately 6:20pm, a tornado tore through an area 25 kilometres in length, from Georgian Bay to Waubaushene, tearing down trees and power lines, but more importantly, destroying the homes of many residents in the Smith's Camp trailer park.

In speaking with Mayor Jim Downer, Chief Administrative Officer Ted Walker and Fire Chief Kevin Foster, details of how Midland rose to the challenge became clear.

The town of Midland has a Community Control Group that meets on a monthly basis to review the town's Emergency Response Plan. The group is comprised of senior municipal staff and depending upon the monthly agenda topics, includes representatives from Public Health, Georgian Bay General Hospital and others. No one anticipates ever having to enact an emergency response plan but on this evening, the group charged with the plan's implementation went in to high gear.

At the Midland Fire Hall an Emergency Operations Centre was established, where each organization with a role to play in the Emergency Response Plan set up a workstation. By 7:30 that evening, just over an hour after the tornado hit, Mayor Downer, in consultation with the Community Control Group, declared a state of emergency, activating provincial and county emergency procedures.

The County of Simcoe established the Evacuation Centre at the North Simcoe Sports Centre calling on community volunteers and others to help shelter, feed and support individuals who were affected by the tornado.

'Having strong partnerships already in place with community organizations and others, enabled the excellent response of all members of the emergency response team' noted Chief Foster.



Fire, police and paramedics did the quality jobs they had been trained to do. The trailer park site was 'ground zero' and numerous sweeps of the park were carried out, looking for individuals that might have been trapped under homes that were now a mass of twisted metal. Thankfully, no loss of life occurred but damage was severe for many homes and businesses.

Take the local manufacturing business housed in a building that has over 100,000 square feet. Its roof was lifted 10" and then dropped back down! Because of that, the integrity of the walls and roof were compromised resulting in over five million dollars of damage.

There was also the story of the woman who had a lovely circular rock garden with flowers amongst the rocks and an age-old maple tree in the middle. When the tornado was over, the rock garden and its flowers were untouched, but the maple tree had been torn completely from the garden, roots and all and was nowhere to be found.

Mayor Downer played a key communication role in ensuring the media was kept informed. Updates were provided on an hourly basis, and anyone with a personal or business interest in what was happening, was able to follow the event on local and national television or radio. At no time did speculation and misinformation about damage or loss of life occur due to the Mayor's diligence in ensuring accurate information was





provided.

The Mayor, CAO and Fire Chief provided many examples of cooperation and offers of assistance the town received, such as:

- Province of Ontario provided a million dollars to assist in the clean-up
- County of Simcoe Warden Patterson offered 'whatever you need – it's there for you'
- Support from the Town of Blue Mountains, City of Barrie, Bradford West Gwillimbury, South Simcoe – the offers of assistance from municipalities were too many to detail
- Hydro One – provided 35 crews to clear damaged trees and re-establish power lines along Highway 93, another area hit hard by the tornado
- Catholic Family Life Centre in Midland provided counseling and support services for those suffering after-effects from the tornado
- Midland Power Utility Corporation received support from the communities of Wasaga Beach, Clearview, Tiny and as far away as Newmarket
- Georgian Bay Volunteer Search and Rescue had members of Huntsville's Search and Rescue Team arrive on site to help out
- County of Simcoe waived tipping fees for tree and brush damage disposal and kept the landfill site open extended hours, including Canada Day
- Provincial Emergency Response Team (PERT) provided invaluable advice to the Midland team
- Home Depot – provided \$5,000 in credits so that any equipment or supplies needed to assist in the clean-up could be acquired easily and quickly



These are just a few.

Chief Foster commented on the commitment of the area's emergency responders – hospital, fire, police and paramedics. "They just went and did the things they do, working through the night". As well, organizations such as the Salvation Army, Catholic Family Life Centre, Canadian Red Cross and local individuals that lived in the trailer park all pitched in and worked tirelessly to deal with the emergency.

The Mayor noted 'I can't stress enough how great the province was'. The Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, The Honourable Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ian Davidson, Ontario's

Commissioner of Community Safety all played a role. Minister Bradley noted Midland's success at handling the disaster could be used as an example for other municipalities.

That doesn't mean there weren't lessons to be learned. Ted Walker, Chief Administrative Officer commented 'I didn't get the call out notice on my cell phone until 10:30pm by which time I had already been in touch with the team. Having the general public refrain from using cell phones during crisis situations is critical. Freeing up cell coverage is essential as a means of providing communication for those that are responding to the emergency, often in areas where landlines are not available".

Chief Foster also noted that a revised call out (notification) system was being reviewed by the Emergency Response Planning Team prior to June 23rd and the tornado. Work on the revised notification system will continue and once completed will play a critical role in the emergency response plan.

In May 2010 during a radio interview, Mayor Downer urged the public to develop a home emergency response kit which would contain such items as a flashlight, batteries, water, food and medications. The purpose of the kit would be to ensure residents had essential items to survive for 72-hours in the event of an emergency, allowing response teams time to deal with critical issues. According to the Mayor, not many people paid attention to that message in May. The woman that interviewed the Mayor was one of those individuals. On the radio shortly after the tornado, she spoke about the May interview noting she was heading home right after her show to begin putting together her home emergency response kit – better late than never.

As Minister Bradley noted, the town of Midland proved it was a shining example of what to do in the event of a natural disaster of that magnitude. Excellent planning, cooperation and commitment from all involved enabled Midland's success. Working together

with community organizations, various levels of government, businesses and individuals saw Midland achieve the successful handling of what could have easily been a terrible tragedy.

Are you making a difference in Ontario's health care system!

Celebrating
Innovations in
Health Care Expo

Presented by HealthAchieve in partnership with the Government of Ontario, Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo 2010 showcases initiatives driving health care system renewal in Ontario.

This year's Expo will reflect [six new themes](#) that focus on the government's [Excellent Care for All Strategy](#), to create a high quality, integrated health care system with better patient outcomes and improved access to care.

The Expo welcomes entries from health care organizations across all sectors. In past years, it has showcased over 200 exhibitors annually and celebrated the inventiveness and hard work of Ontario's health care providers.

Deadline for submissions is September 10, 2010. For further information, please go to www.health.gov.on.ca/innovations.

LHIN Leadership Council Update

The LHIN-wide Leadership Council met on August 11, 2010 to discuss a North Simcoe Muskoka strategy for both Critical Care and Complex Continuing Care and to receive an update on the *Care Connections - Partnering for Healthy Communities* project.

Critical Care

Dr. Giulio DiDiodato, Chair of the Critical Care Steering Committee, received Leadership Council's support for the implementation of a North Simcoe Muskoka Critical Care System. Refinement of processes has yet to be finalized, but this system-wide approach aligns completely with models of care being developed as part of the *Care Connections – Partnering for Healthy Communities* project. The Critical Care System provides an excellent opportunity to review how critical care is provided across the region, allowing organizations to work collaboratively to improve patient care.

Complex Continuing Care

The Complex Continuing Care (CCC) Steering Committee received Leadership Council's support for the siting and sizing of 97 complex continuing care beds, with a future total projection of 102 CCC beds for North Simcoe Muskoka. Standardized definition of a CCC patient, staffing and bed allocations, roles and position descriptions is work that will be completed by March 2011 in preparation for the implementation of a regional CCC program.

Care Connections - Partnering for Healthy Communities

The nine working groups have validated the outcomes that were achieved at the Care Connections Symposium held on May 18th and 19th. Completing work on proposed models of care and how those models will impact the health care system for North Simcoe Muskoka is currently underway.

ICT/eHealth consultation activities included meeting with stakeholders in each of the five regions to gather current state information on technology capabilities and needs. The Leadership Council supported the ICT/eHealth vision for North Simcoe Muskoka. The ICT/eHealth project team will bring Terms of Reference for an eHealth Advisory Steering Committee to the next Leadership Council meeting as information.

NSM LHIN Welcomes Dorian Calvano!

Dorian Calvano, Program Supervisor, Social Services Division, Corporation of the County of Simcoe, will be completing his field placement with the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN as part of his work in achieving a Masters degree in Social Work with the University of Windsor. Prior to working for the County for the past six years, Dorian worked with the Canadian Red Cross in Simcoe and Muskoka. Dorian has extensive experience in social housing and homelessness as well as addictions and mental health.



Doriano has been a long-time LHIN supporter and was part of the initial LHIN-wide community engagement in 2005 when the NSM LHIN was in its early stages. Doriano has continued to participate in the evolution of the LHIN, as a member of the Aging at Home Strategy Planning and Evaluation team and as a community participant in the Mental Health and Addictions Working Group for the *Care Connections – Partnering for Healthy Communities* project.

Doriano began working with the *Care Connections – Partnering for Healthy Communities* project team on Monday August 23rd and will be with the LHIN until December 2010.

While completing his placement with the LHIN, Doriano will be working out of his County of Simcoe office and will maintain his contact information with the County.

