

Province hands over cheque to City of Ottawa for river cleanup

\$33 million of \$77 million to be used for cleaning of river, remainder for other infrastructure and social housing repair projects

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Officials from the provincial government officially made good on their funding promise to help with Ottawa's sewage problems last Wednesday morning at Petrie Island.

On November 12th, Ottawa-Orléans Liberal MPP Phil McNeely along with Jim

Watson, minister of municipal affairs and housing and MPP for Ottawa West-Nepean handed a cheque of \$77 million to Ottawa Mayor Larry O'Brien and City of Ottawa representatives.

\$33 million of that money will be used towards starting the process of resolving the city's sewage concerns, which totals in a \$100 million investment from all

three levels of government.

"The city shouldn't be along on this and they are not," said McNeely. "With this money, it is making the river cleanup a priority, and we (the province) are pleased that it is going to be done."

With the money, the city can move forward with several of its initiatives to help with Ottawa's sewage sys-

tem that will eliminate 100% of accidental spills and 60% of planned spills into the Ottawa River, said Ward 19 - Cumberland City Councillor Rob Jellett.

"It's very good news," said the east end councillor. "With everything that has happened, now all three levels of government are committed to fixing the problems with

our sewer system."

An unreported sewage spill in August of 2006 resulted in 960,000 cubic metres of raw sewage to be dumped into the Ottawa River.

Petrie Island was closed for 45 days due to massive spikes of E. coli bacteria. The reason for Petrie's di-

sastrous 2006 swimming season was discovered at an early summer tour of the Robert O. Pickford Environmental Centre initiated by Orléans City Councillor Bob Monette.

A gate in Ottawa's sewage system was left open after heavy rainfalls which result-

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ed in the spill. Council was not notified of the incident until shortly after the ROPEC tour, which resulted in the City of Ottawa being fined and charged for the incident. City staffers were also fired.

Monette said this is a good start to the process of fixing Ottawa's sewage troubles with the implementation of real time control monitoring which will resolve the gate malfunctions.

But to fix the overall sewage system, there

is still more work to be done, he added.

"We are looking at a lot more money to fix the entire system," said Monette. "But we are now starting the process. With this money, we are going to rectify the overflow problems. It's a good start."

The remainder of the money will be used for a number of other projects, which include approximately \$10 million for social housing problems and other infrastructure projects across Ottawa.

