

## **More Than Just a Building BOOM**

At our last council meeting, Darryl Denny, our very capable Director of Building and Compliance, provided his monthly report on building activity in the Township. Consistent with his previous reports, the report disclosed a significant amount of building activity in the Township. In December 2011, there were 22 residential permits issued. These were for homes built in Ayr. That brought the total for the year to 108 residential building permits. More than 90% of these residential permits were issued to the Hilltop Developments. To put those numbers into some perspective, there were 41 residential permits issued in the Township in 2010. For 2011 there were 259 building permits issued. This far exceeded the previous highest annual permit total. In 2009 there were 210 permits issued and 199 in 2010. When you consider the dollar value of those permits, in 2009 the total value of the building permits was \$15,305,127.00. In 2010, the year we began construction of the North Dumfries Community Complex, the value was \$30,553,422.00. In 2011, the total value of construction in the Township was \$26,990,619. That is an impressive number.

One only has to take a short drive around the Township to see the sparks of growth. When you head over to the Hwy 401 and 97 intersections you can see the development of a variety of commercial and industrial buildings. Our goal in 2012 will be to continue to encourage that activity to better develop our employment lands and bring job opportunities to the Township and Waterloo region. In downtown Ayr we saw some beautiful renovations and refurbishments in our heritage buildings and we hope to see that trend continue in 2012. The Waterloo region planners recently identified the Northumberland and Stanley Street intersection as one of the best scenic roads in Waterloo region. We would certainly want to build on the beauty and heritage of that area moving forward. Centennial Park provides our community with tremendous opportunities, most recently enhanced by the work of the Ayr Horticultural Society.

The one area that I am particularly amazed with is the residential growth in Ayr, particularly the south end. I jogged around the area recently and was very pleasantly surprised to see the number of homes that have recently been completed and are in the building stages. The growth in residential permits confirms it. There are a lot of foundations going in the ground. The growth is a credit to the work of local builders, Tice River Homes and Forest Park Homes. There have been some lean times recently and their work and efforts, individually and collaboratively, seems to be paying dividends in the rapid residential growth.

Part of the rapid residential growth includes the development of semi detached homes and townhomes along Vincent Drive and Patterson Drive. This residential growth will have a very significant social impact to the Township and particularly Ayr in ways that will exceed the economic benefits. One of the most striking features of this development for me is the people that are moving into this development. We are seeing many young families, including children of long time Ayr families purchasing homes and setting down their own roots in our community. We are seeing second, third and fourth generations of long time Ayr and Township families purchasing homes in order to establish their own families in our community. We will not be able to assess the value of this sort of social development but I can assure you that the value will be priceless. A community benefits in a positive way when we are able to provide housing opportunities for our children to establish their own roots in the community. We are fortunate to be located within Waterloo region where our children have the opportunity to enjoy good employment opportunities and still remain within the community that they were raised.

As we move forward, our goal will be to expand the housing options for seniors in our community. It is well recognized that there is a trend among baby boomers now entering their retiring years to downsize their homes. I know that some have been able to find suitable accommodations in Ayr. It is our hope that developers will consider this trend and develop more options in our community that can provide for both independent and assisted living. It is unfortunate to see people that have made a lifetime contribution to our community have to leave because of a lack of viable housing options.

The Vincent and Patterson names hold a special place in the social and economic fabric of our community. The streets that honour their contributions to our community seem to be poised to continue that tradition of community involvement through the families that are setting roots there. The current building BOOM will have positive echoes for generations to come.

Rob Deutschmann  
Mayor, North Dumfries Township.