

New Haldimand town hall takes shape

42,900-square-foot complex ready this fall



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Haldimand council is pleased with progress to date on construction of a new county administration building on Chippewa Street in Cayuga. The county expects to cut the ribbon on the \$18-million project sometime this fall. *HALDIMAND COUNTY / CONTRIBUTED GRAPHIC*

Haldimand County is on track to complete its new administration complex in Cayuga by this fall.

The county reports that 99 per cent of the building's steel frame is in place. The roof deck has been completed while installation of electrical equipment, sanitary services, sprinkler systems, spray-foam insulation and door frames is underway.

Haldimand council received an update on the building's progress in mid-April.

"The progress we've seen over the past few weeks is exciting," Mayor Ken Hewitt said in a news release.

"It's great to see the building take shape. A great deal of time and effort has gone into getting the project to this point. I look forward to the moment we can welcome and serve the community in this space."

By the end of June, several key components will be finished. This includes the roofing, stone work and insulation installation.

Work on interior drywall will begin shortly. Also in the queue is a steel canopy that will shade the front entrance. Road work – including grading – will begin on Chippewa Street once the good weather is here to stay.

Planning for the new administrative building began in 2015.

When the new Haldimand County was formed in 2000, the architects of the new municipality decided it was a good idea to spread municipal offices across the county. The plan was to give all towns in Haldimand a stake in the municipal enterprise.

Fifteen years later, Haldimand council decided this involved a lot of driving around for citizens and that perhaps it was best to provide "one-stop shopping" for permits, information and the like.

Encouraging the county in this direction were reports that the current administration building on Munsee Street North in Cayuga is past its best-before date and needs a lot of expensive repairs and upgrades. Some of this is related to the building's modernist design and lack of access to the elderly and the handicapped.

Satellite offices in Hagersville, Caledonia and Dunnville will be closed once the county's 176 front-line employees are relocated to the new offices. The county recently said locating staff under one roof "is expected to improve internal communications, expedite work-flow processes, and enhance problem-solving between staff teams."

The contractor selected for the project is Matheson Constructors of Aurora. Haldimand expects to spend \$18 million on the project but the final amount will not be known until the ribbon-cutting.

When finished, the building will have 42,900 square feet of floor space over three storeys.

"After thorough analysis and community consultation, a consolidated service model – involving the construction of a new administration building – was selected by council. Construction on the new building began in May, 2018," the county says in the news release.

"All services currently available at the county's satellite offices will be offered at the new building and new on-line tools will be introduced to provide more (round-the-clock) services to residents.

"Library branches will be retrofitted with 'community hubs,' (which are) computer and information stations designed to connect residents with county news and on-line services. Library staff will be available to provide instruction and guidance on how to make use of online services, like how to pay taxes or water bills on-line."