

Who Are We?

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New Signals for Safety • By Anita Locke

Peterborough County Recently Installed Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) At The Corners Of Bridge And Queen Streets In Lakefield. Members of the (Joint County of Peterborough and Township Of Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield) Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Were On Hand June 9 to Test the New Signals .

In what she described as a “first for me”, Peterborough County’s Engineering and Construction Co-ordinator Kendra Reid gave an overview of the new APS and solicited input and suggestions from AAC members and CNIB representatives Leanne Carpenter and Penny Russell.

Peterborough County Public Works had received a request from the Accessibility Advisory Committee to install accessible pedestrian signals within the County. This was the first time a request for such an installation had been received.

In order to determine the need for APS at certain intersections, the Technical Services department developed evaluation criteria which were used to rank and prioritize various intersections within the County.

APS are used in conjunction with standard pedestrian signal heads to assist those with visual impairments in crossing the street. The supplements produce an audible sound (often a beep or chirping sound) that notifies pedestrians that it is safe to cross the road.

The two most common types of APS installation are Pedestrian Head (Ped-head) Mounted (chirping sounds) and Pushbutton Integrated.

The Queen and Bridge Street, Lakefield, intersection utilizes the Pushbutton Integrated. It is a newer version and is the type endorsed by most accessibility advocacy groups. They consist of large pushbuttons with speakers integrated into the pushbutton. The audible beacon used in this case is a beeping sound that is only meant to be heard within a pre-set distance of the pushbutton. This type of system also uses a “locator tone” which is a quiet beeping sound that allows persons with visual impairments to locate the pushbuttons. The pushbuttons also use “vibrotactile” feedback, which means they vibrate to let the pedestrian know that the crossing phase has been activated. Pedestrians who are visually impaired need to press the activation button and hold it for three seconds in order for the audible notification to be activated.



Standing, left to right: John Fallis (AAC member, Peterborough County), Anita Locke (AAC member, Lakefield Ward Councillor, Township of Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield), Eric Thornley (AAC member), Thomas Campbell (AAC member), Leanne Carpenter (CNIB), Penny Russell (CNIB). Seated: Alec Denys (Chair, AAC member).

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Financial Notes • By Gwyneth James

The 2011 federal budget was finally passed following the election last month. It did not provide for many benefits to the average taxpayer, but there are a few changes you should know about.

For families, there is a new \$500 tax credit (worth a maximum of 15% of \$500 or \$75) that can be claimed for a wide variety of children’s activities including music lessons, art classes and tutoring. This is in addition to the \$500 fitness tax credit. Another new tax credit – not available until 2012 – will allow an additional \$2,000 claim for caregiver costs incurred for a dependent with a mental or physical infirmity (max \$300 value). And finally, the \$10,000 cap on medical expenses incurred for dependent relatives (other than your spouse or children) has been removed for 2011 and onwards (value depends on the individual taxpayer).

For students, the tuition tax credit will be amended to recognize fees paid to take certain exams. Also, the tax credit for studying abroad can now be claimed for courses lasting as little as 3 weeks (previously 13 weeks). And for RESPs, the assets inside will now be transferrable from one sibling’s plan to another’s without penalties, as long as the receiving sibling has not turned 21.

For investors there were two changes, but neither one results in reduced tax. The rules for RRSPs have been tightened to prevent using RRSP funds for investing in private companies and other aggressive tax planning strategies. And the rules for donating flow-through shares to a charity have also been tightened, although the capital gain is still tax-free. “The rules provide for a special tax on certain tax advantages that unduly exploit the tax attributes of an RRSP/RRIF on prohibited investments and on non-qualified investments,” according to CRA’s website www.cra-arc.gc.ca.

Someone must be advising CRA on “wish list” items. What are yours?

Gwyneth James MBA CGA is the owner of TCP Accounting & Tax Services which has been providing accounting services for over 20 years to individuals and small businesses throughout Peterborough City and County. (705) 876-6011.

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