# Health Unit
# Media Release

January 31, 2011

## Health Unit board meeting news

**Health Unit elects chair and vice chair at AGM:** Jack Butt was elected chair of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit's Board of Health at the AGM Jan. 27. He is a community representative on the Board and is entering his fourth term as Chair. Jack is a prominent member of our community who has been a strong advocate for local public health services. Ken Graham was elected Vice-Chair. He is a member of the Smiths Falls Municipal Council and a long standing member of the board of health having previously served as Chair.

**Health Unit Board approves municipal levy at 2%:** The Senior Management Team had prepared a detailed budget outlining possible savings in many areas to compensate for previously negotiated salary increases for union members. All non-union staff will have a zero increase in salary. The Board agreed to a 2% increase in the municipal levy for 2011 recognizing that this would leave the health unit with a planned deficit of $37,577. Staff will work aggressively to decrease this amount over the year and any remaining deficit will come from the reserve. The Board acknowledged that all municipalities are facing economic restraints and it was their responsibility to keep the levy to the minimum increase without jeopardizing public health services.

**Overwhelming response to food safety training blitz:** The Health Unit is offering free food handler training with new funding received from the Ministry of Health and Long-term care from Jan 31 to March 31. The response has been overwhelming for registration in the 12 sessions at 8 community's sites. 500 people have registered for the 550 spots and some locations have a waiting list. Food handler training is an important component of the health unit food safety program so that staff in restaurants and other food premises has the knowledge and skill for food storage, handling and preparation to avoid outbreaks of food borne illness.

**New levy distribution method being considered** - In November, the Board of Health had recommended using the 2006 Statistics Canada census projected to 2009 by the Ontario Ministry of Finance as the basis for distributing the municipal portion of the Health Unit budget among the obligated municipalities. The United Counties, Smiths Falls and Lanark County Councils have approved this approach. The other Councils are still in the process of deciding whether they will approve it. Members of the Board reiterated that the MPAC data, which was the previous used to allocate the municipal levy, was not accurate and it made more sense to use the census data.

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