



On behalf of The Corporation of the Town of Kearney Staff and Council may I extend Season's Greetings and our Best Wishes for a joyous and healthy New Year to our ratepayers near and far!

December marks the first anniversary in our four year term of office. Mindful of the old adage

You can please some of the people all of the time

And all of the people some of the time,

But you can't please all of the people all of the time...

I believe your Council has accomplished just that. We have approved our 2012 budget (a first – before the budget year actually commenced!) and for the second consecutive year we have held the line on our tax levy. What does this mean to you? Unless you have made improvements to your property affecting your property assessment, your taxes should remain the same as last year. Once we receive confirmation of our Provincial education taxes we will proceed to pass a by-law setting out our 2012 tax ratios. We have done this through a concerted effort by our staff to reduce our operating expenses and reallocate those savings to offset capital purchases, reduce debt or increase our reserves (money set aside for unforeseen events). This has also been accomplished without increasing our debt (actually reducing our debt) and absorbing a 2% tax increase to fund our share of improvements to Highway 518E. We in fact are “doing more with less” through ever-improving efficiencies.

A very good example of this is the Town's decision to join a purchasing consortium which comprises various levels of federal, provincial and municipal governments. You can imagine the purchasing power this consortium has, and Kearney is now the beneficiary of this, with huge savings expected in many areas ranging from office supplies to equipment. The Town is now also in discussions with neighbouring municipalities to see what equipment might be shared to avoid the necessity of purchasing or leasing needed equipment often underutilised. We are currently in the process of updating some of our accounting software and here again, we expect process enhancements.

Road maintenance and improvements will continue unabated, with road reconstruction scheduled for 518E and replacement of the Higgins Road Culvert, as well as an additional \$225,000 budgeted for road maintenance based on our revised 5 year plan which is to be tabled in the first quarter of 2012. We are not finished there, as money has been also set aside for improvements at the Kearney Community Centre, with our kitchen being completely remodelled thanks to a Trillium grant, and our gym floor being replaced after too many years of wear and tear.

With the continuing support and efforts of our management and staff, working as a Team with your Council, we will continue efforts to maximise use of all the precious resources available to us, in order to make Kearney an affordable place to live, work and enjoy!

PAUL H TOMLINSON
MAYOR