

# IN THE TRENCHES

September 2013

*"Drainage Doesn't Cost - IT PAYS!"*

[www.drainage.org](http://www.drainage.org)

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## From the President's Desk

Fellow Members:

I hope everyone had a good summer now that fall is upon us, and it is a very busy time of year.

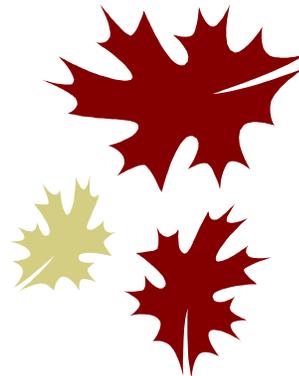
This summer, LICO set up a bus trip to tour the Holland Marsh where they are working on a very large municipal drain. The tour showed the scope of work which had to be done, moving a lot of the canals more than the width of themselves back away from the roads. We also saw the locations of the pumping stations that are monitored constantly to maintain the water levels for drainage and irrigation in the marsh. We finished with a nice lunch at a local winery. It was a very good time and great learning experience for all who attended.

This summer was also had very large rain events with flooding in Toronto, stranding a commuter train for hours. There was also one smaller dyke next to the Holland Marsh that was breached, causing flooding to a large portion of farm land.

Crops in general started off poorly in a lot of areas, showing stress from too much water, really demonstrating the existing tile runs or lack thereof - both good for business.

The LICO Executive are working on and making some changes to the convention format. Again it will have many great speakers and topics for discussion so stay tuned and plan to attend.

In closing, I wish you all a busy and productive fall season.  
Joe Frankis



## Lines from Lambton - Dean Hodgson

What a difference a year makes! After enjoying near perfect farming conditions for most of 2012 Lambton County farmers are experiencing the exact opposite in 2013. First the spring was slow to arrive but the summer seemed even slower. After struggling through a very wet and cold April, most of the field crops were seeded in the month of May. Although growing conditions were less than ideal and most of the crops were a week or two behind, it was beginning to look brighter before the June floods hit Lambton County. The rains came in torrents, dumping buckets of water on the slowly emerging crops. Some parts of the county were hit much harder than others. Many farmers in south Lambton were forced to re-seed in June and some even seeded a third time in July. The torrential rains dearly tested the drainage systems of Lambton County. Many of the huge ditches and flat fields in much of Lambton were flooded but as quickly as they drained away yet another deluge would arrive. All of these problems were a complete reversal of the growing conditions farmers enjoyed in 2012.

However, it was not all bad. There were some tremendous hay crops but not too much ideal hay harvested in June. Many areas were not hit as hard as those southern townships and northern Lambton had some good looking crops with all the moisture they needed. Also these heavy rains have helped to raise the water table in Lambton, not only in the farm fields but the creeks, rivers and lakes. The water levels of the St Clair River and Lake Huron rose to near normal levels for the first time in several years. So even though all of these rains played havoc on the farms, the rest of us, along with the lakes, rivers and trees, will all benefit after several years of falling water tables.

Then in mid-July the weather turned hot and humid though often accompanied with still more rain. Often one area would get another huge downpour while a few miles away farmers were combining wheat. Prior to the harvest, the wheat fields of Lambton were looking good in spite of all the strange weather. Many farmers were hoping for a good harvest if the weather would only cooperate. However, though the 90,000 acre winter wheat crop had looked good, most Lambton farmers were disappointed with the results. Yields were down, moisture was up and much of the wheat graded poorly. So far it has been a disappointing summer for most Lambton County farmers and now August is too dry.

To date the corn crop seems to have withstood the rain and strange weather conditions better than the soybeans, sugar beets and spring grain. Both the spring grain and the sugar beets suffered from water lying in the fields for days. The corn started growing rapidly when the hot, humid weather arrived in July while many of the soybean fields seemed to wilt and yellow under the drastic weather conditions. However, as we near the end of August most soybean fields appear to have recovered from the earlier setbacks and though many are shorter than usual most are a good, dark green colour and farmers are anticipating a good harvest.

Lambton County's tile drain contractors have also had a real set back after the perfect working conditions of 2012. Most of the contractors were booked solid and taking orders for next year. However, with all of the rainy days and wet fields most contractors have had problems finishing their work as planned. As the rains were sporadic around the County contractors were forced to move to areas where soil conditions allowed them to work. I fear their work schedule went out the window long ago. Now the wheat is off and even the wet spots are finally drying, contractors may be able to get back onto schedule and hopefully catch up on the many jobs they had to skip by during the wet weather.

I was talking with Al Jardine who has had problems trying to finish all of the jobs he had promised but Allan is still optimistic about the future. Though yields may be down and the prices as well, Allan finds his farm customers are booking even more tile drainage for the future.

*(Cont'd. Page 3)*

## **Lines from Lambton - (Cont'd. from Page. 2)**

For Ken Jaques it has been a frustrating year out on the 10<sup>th</sup> line. The early weather played havoc with Ken's work schedule with wet fields and rainy days until the wheat harvest. When the weather finally dried enough to start catching up they lost one of their key men when long time employee Greg Johnson was hospitalized. Greg is now on the mend but this has left Jaques Drainage working short with all of the work ahead for this fall. However, Ken says his two sons, Keith and Brian, have stepped up and assumed extra duties and are keeping the business running successfully. Ken is optimistic that even though they have had to work around many problems all year some good fall weather will give everyone a good year.

Steve Vokes of Enniskillen is upbeat in spite of the weather. The Vokes Brothers have been exceptionally busy all year as they have finished several large jobs splitting existing tile. Most of their tiling work this year has been in St. Clair Township but they have also been busy with their 3000 acres of cash crop farming. Steve says they planted about 1000 acres of sugar beets in May that are testing out really well for both sugar and tonnage. Steve is presently busy weeding township road ditches with his excavator operated boom and averages about two miles per day. Earlier this year the Vokes Brothers also constructed a 160'x80'x20' foot deep brine pond for the Edwards Oil Fields near Petrolia. There are not many idle moments around the Vokes Brothers farms. In spite of all this activity Steve still finds time to golf a couple of times a week and is leaving on a trip to Alaska in two weeks.

So it looks as if with a little help from Mother Nature there will be good times ahead for both farmers and tile contractors in Lambton County.

## **Rombouts Farm Drainage of Warwick - Dean Hodgeson**

Rombouts Farm Drainage is located on Lot 23, Con. 2 SER[1] and with the third generation now living on this site, it will likely remain there for many years to come. Recently Frank and Betsy Rombouts moved into the town of Watford where Frank is set to become a "city slicker". Their son Brad and his wife Louise moved from Watford to the home where Brad was raised and learned the drainage business. Brad and Louise have two sons and so the third generation will be growing up around the shop and machinery just as their father before them. The eldest son, Tyler Rombouts, is already interested in the farm drainage business and is intrigued with all of the machinery and lingo. When visitors ask "Are you Tyler?", he answers "Yes and so is my Dad"!

Brad Rombouts was the same as a boy, following his dad around the shop and the job. He walked the tile drains as a youngster, operating tiling equipment since his early teens. Brad worked with his father and attended Sir Sandford Fleming College in Lindsay, Ontario where Brad also earned his diesel mechanic's license. When Brad wanted to go off to college to learn more of the high tech world we now live in, Frank was supportive but cautious. Knowing that young fellows can get carried away far from home, Frank stated "If you graduate, we will pay but if you flunk, you're on your own". Immediately upon graduation Frank received the call "I passed! You owe me ex number of dollars"! Frank was more than happy to pay and Brad has been using his skill and knowledge improving the business ever since.

The Rombouts family came to Canada from Holland in 1952 and Frank grew up on the family farm in Warwick Township. In 1970 Frank started in the drainage business working for Sherman Williams with the first dozer plough in Lambton County. In 1971 Frank went to work for Larry Mansfield in Brook Township and worked with Larry off and on over the next twenty years. During the slack tiling years in the late 1980's Frank bought his own 450 Case Dozer and a 580 Case backhoe and kept busy doing small cleanup jobs. In 1990 Frank got a call from Ken McCutcheon who was installing fiber-optic lines for Bell Canada. Ken hired Frank as a sub-contractor cleaning up the sites after installation. Frank followed Ken across Ontario for the next two years starting from outside of Watford on Hwy. #79 and finishing near Peterborough in 1991. Frank Rombouts has always been ready whenever opportunity knocked!!  
*Cont'd. Page 4)*

## **Rombouts Farm Drainage of Warwick - (Cont'd. from Page. 3)**

Frank has had many other big jobs since then. In the 1990's Frank did very well installing tile drains for Union Gas during pipeline construction. (Frank often says that Bell Canada and Union Gas paid for his farm at Lot 23, Con. 2 SER[1]. Large farm operators have learned they can depend on Rombouts Drainage when they wish to systematically tile drain another new farm. Frank and Brad know that tiling is a seasonal job and both will work from dawn to dark to finish these 100 acre projects so their customer can proceed with his future cropping plans. Frank has built the reputation as a contractor who will start and finish these large footage jobs on time.

In 1991 Frank bought his own Spiecher trencher from Ron Williams and leased Larry Mansfield's dozer-plough. In 1992 Frank bought Larry's tiling equipment in June but did not get any work until late September. Frank said it looked as if he had bought a "dead horse". But times changed quickly when crop prices improved and Frank says he has hardly had time to rest since. Frank Rombouts kept busy as farm tiling picked up steadily through the 1990's. Frank feels they were fortunate that many of Larry Mansfield's customers continued working with Rombouts Drainage. The Rombouts working area has expanded with some very large farm jobs as far away as Moore Township to the west and Adelaide-Caradoc to the east.

In 2001 Frank bought a Tait 400-7 plough from Walker-Wright in order to keep up with all of the large drainage jobs coming his way. In 2009 they bought a Bron 450 which will pull in up to 15" tile. Along the way they bought their first GPS unit and have been continually upgrading since. All of this expensive equipment helps to get those big jobs done.

Brad began working full time with Frank after finishing school and in 2007 began buying into the company as a junior partner. Brad operates the GPS survey system and was away to another seminar this winter explaining even more upgrades are on the way. Frank said if Brad had not joined the business, he may not have gone into this high tech world on his own.

Recently they bought their own electronic tile locating equipment. One man can now go ahead to the next job, locate and flag existing tile and have the job set up and ready to start when the equipment arrives. They are also doing some custom locating for other area tile contractors. So far they are pleased with the results of this new technology. As Frank said it is a lot easier probing when you know you are within a foot of the tile when you start. Frank is planning to act as company consultant sometime in the future so this may become part of his job.

In 2010 Frank and Betsy bought their cottage at Ipperwash Beach in preparation for their retirement years and Frank really enjoys relaxing there after a busy week of tiling. The last few years Frank has been turning more of the work and business over to Brad. Now that they have traded homes with Brad and his family living at the shop, Frank plans to enjoy cottage life at the lake even more.

While relaxing at the cottage Frank and Betsy can look back over the years they spent building the Rombouts Drainage business. They feel they were fortunate to have had some reliable employees in order to get their jobs done quickly and efficiently. Betsy has always been involved as the company book keeper and they feel they will be leaving the business in good hands with Brad, Louise and family following in their footsteps.



## **OMAFRA Report – Sid Vander Veen**

### ***Licensing Updates:***

As of September 1, 2013, there were 92 licensed tile drainage contractors in Ontario. There are a couple other companies that we are working with to get their licensing requirements.

There are also 177 licensed machines and 363 licensed operators in the province.

### ***Agricultural Guide to Permits:***

Kawartha Conservation has produced a document entitled “Agricultural Guide to Permits”. While many conservation authorities have guides for meeting the requirements of conservation authority regulations, this is the only one that I am aware of that is specifically targeted to the agricultural community. To download the guide, go to the website: <http://kawarthaconservation.com> and click on “Programs and Services”. Then click on “Regulation, Permits and Plan Review”. The link to the Guide is located on the right-hand side.

The Guide indicates the removal of a beaver dam from a watercourse requires prior consultation with Kawartha Conservation and may require a permit. The following activities require permits in all occasions:

- Culvert installation or replacement
- Bed-level crossing installation
- Watercourse channel realignment, channelization or straightening
- Enclosing, burying, or piping a watercourse
- Dredging, trenching, ditching
- Erosion protection
- Conversion of wetland area for agricultural activities
- Installation of field tile drainage around a wetland that would convey water in a manner inconsistent with the natural drainage grade

### ***Endangered Species Act***

On July 1, Ontario streamlined its approach to species at risk protection by implementing standardized rules and an online registry for certain low-risk activities. Among other things, the changes include:

- Allowing routine drainage infrastructure maintenance by municipalities to continue while minimizing adverse effects on species. Activities relating to existing drainage infrastructure activities conducted under the *Drainage Act* would not require an ESA permit provided a person registers their activity and complies with the rules in regulation.
- Simplifying requirements for municipalities to carry out activities that protect human health and safety, such as road repairs

The existing approval process remains for all other activities. If your tile drainage activity will have an impact on endangered species, you would be required to get a permit. To find out more about the permitting process, check out the MNR website: [www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/) and click on “Endangered Species”.

## **Contractor Courses on Erosion Control and Agricultural Drainage- Jim Ritter, Kevin McKague and Tim Brook**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) and Ministry of Rural Affairs (MRA) are offering contractor courses in the areas of erosion control and agricultural drainage during the winter of 2014.

### **Agricultural Erosion Control Structures Course**

The purpose of the Agricultural Erosion Control Structures Course is to help contractors recognize and analyze soil erosion problems on agricultural lands. This course is specifically designed for holders of a Class "A" Machine Operator Licence (drainage licence), or those who have completed the Primary Drainage Course or a survey course at a college, university, etc. This course prepares participants, not only to do their own designs, but also helps them recognize which situations require more specialized professional design.

AgErosion is a software application that was produced by OMAF and MRA to assist qualified individuals engaged in the design of agricultural erosion control structures. The software application was developed as an aid to facilitate the use of OMAF and MRA's Agricultural Erosion Control Structures: A Design and Construction Manual (Publication 832). Course participants use the software, after receiving a hands-on demonstration. Participants who take this course and successfully pass the examination will receive the AgErosion software by mail with their Certificate of Achievement.

The Agricultural Erosion Control Structures Course is a five day course and will be held February 24-28, 2014, at the Marden Community Centre just north of Guelph. One day (February 27) will take place at the OMAF and MRA Office at 1 Stone Road for computer software training. The course instructors will be Jim Ritter and Kevin McKague.

To obtain additional information or to register for this course, visit the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus' website at [www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/bdt/bdt\\_training\\_index.cfm](http://www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/bdt/bdt_training_index.cfm) or call 519-674-1500 ext. 63504. Enrolment is limited so please register early to ensure your spot.

### **Primary Drainage Course**

The Primary Drainage Course provides learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand common surveying terms, establish drainage slopes, grade changes and depths, and ensure installations comply with the 'Drainage Guide for Ontario'. As per Regulation 18 of the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act, the primary course includes instruction and practice in surveying and in the principles that apply to the installation of drainage works. This course is one of the mandatory requirements for an operator to upgrade from a Class "C" to a Class "B" Machine Operator Licence. Course topics include: Roles, Responsibilities, and Requirements; Measuring; Design and Installation.

The Primary Drainage Course is a five day course and will be held from January 13-17, 2014 at the Marden Community Centre just north of Guelph. Please note that this course is being held before the LICO convention. The course instructor will be Tim Brook.

To obtain additional information or to register for this course, visit the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus' website at [www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/bdt/bdt\\_training\\_index.cfm](http://www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/bdt/bdt_training_index.cfm) or call 519-674-1500 ext. 63504.

Enrolment is limited so please register early to ensure your spot. Individuals who require the course to upgrade their operator licence will be given priority. Registrations from other individuals will be considered if space is available.

*(Cont'd. Page 8)*

## **Contractor Courses on Erosion Control and Agricultural Drainage-** *(Cont'd. from Page. 7)*

### **Advanced Drainage Course**

The Advanced Drainage Course provides learners with the knowledge and skills required to assess, plan and design agricultural sub-surface drainage works. Learners will gain an understanding of tile drainage design, so that design and installation will comply with the 'Drainage Guide for Ontario'. As per Regulation 18 of the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act, the advanced course includes instruction and practice in the design of drainage works. This course is one of the mandatory requirements for an operator to upgrade from a Class "B" to a Class "A" Machine Operator Licence.

Course topics include:

- Roles, responsibilities, and requirements
- Site assessment
- Preliminary design
- Legislation and the environment
- Drainage system design
- Construction and materials
- Existing systems
- Cost estimates and post construction records

Successful completion of the Primary Drainage Course is a pre-requisite for the Advanced Drainage Course. It is a nine day course and will be held February 3-13, 2014, at the Marden Community Centre. The course instructor will be Tim Brook.

To obtain additional information or to register for this course, visit the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus' website at [www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/bdt/bdt\\_training\\_index.cfm](http://www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/bdt/bdt_training_index.cfm) or call 519-674-1500 ext. 63504.

Enrolment is limited so please register early to ensure your spot. Individuals who require the course to upgrade their operator licence will be given priority. Registrations from other individuals will be considered if space is available.



## Holland Marsh Drainage Tour, July 2013 - Franklin Kains

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 36 participants joined the LICO sponsored summer tour to see the Holland Marsh Drainage System Canal Improvement Project.

The tour by bus was hosted by Frank Jonkman, drainage superintendent for Bradford-Gwillimbury. Frank started with a history of the Holland Marsh explaining how the 28 km of canals and dykes were first built around the perimeter of the marsh in the 1920's to allow for the reclaiming of 3,000 hectares of marshlands for farming and to protect the area from flooding from the surrounding watershed. In 1954, the heavy rains of Hurricane Hazel breached the dykes and flooded the entire area to a depth of up to 10 metres. Following the flooding, a major cleanout was completed and the dykes were rebuilt and raised.

Over the next 50 years, the system steadily deteriorated. The canal filled in and was only providing protection for a 25-year return storm. The dykes, which were built of the high organic spoil taken from the canals, subsided as much as 1 m leaving the road on top very rough. Finally, with little separation between the canal and the road many accidents and several drownings occurred as cars drove into the canal.

A cleanout was proposed to address these problems as well as to enhance the habitat for the fish, animals and plants living in and next to the canal. Starting with the engineers report in 2003, it has become the largest project under the Drainage Act at an estimated cost of \$26 million dollars with assessments made to 9,000 landowners on 25,000 hectares of land in the watershed.

We were able to see how the canal was deepened but also relocated to leave a wide buffer area between it and the road. The cross section had a shallow bench on one side (littoral shelf) to allow for the establishment of aquatic plants and animal life. Gravel beds, root masses and tree trunks were included for fish habitat and spawning. The new roadbed was made of excavated materials from Toronto construction sites to reduce the subsidence problems. The canal or road or both were moved and separated to provide better protection for vehicular traffic.

We learned of a creative approach to the tendering process. Because of the unknowns for both the engineers and the contractors as to what the cleanout costs would be, the estimates in the report were set very high. Rather than go to tender with these unknowns, it was decided to complete a pilot project involving 650 metres of canal. Four 4 contractors were hired to each clean out a short section on a time and materials basis. It turned out that the construction difficulties were less than anticipated. With this experience these contractors were able to submit bids 75% less than the engineer's estimates, saving several millions of dollars. Furthermore, the project will be completed 3 years ahead of schedule.

After the bus tour we visited the Holland Marsh Winery, a new and as yet the only winery on the marsh. We were treated to fine lunch followed by a very entertaining guided tour of the winery and a tasting of 6 of their fine wines. LICO very much appreciates the time and efforts of Frank Jonkman and Sarah Murray for their time and effort in setting up and hosting this tour. It was a most interesting day enjoyed by all.

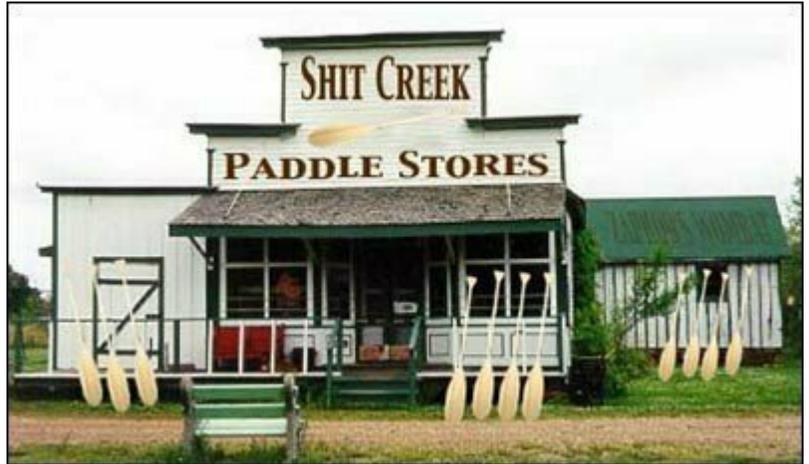


## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 22 & 23, 2014  
LICO Conference  
Best Western Lamplighter Inn  
591 Wellington Rd.,  
London, Ontario N6C 4R3



## FOUND IT!!!!



**You'll all be so pleased to receive this!! How many times have we been "up there without one"??**

## **So Your AODA Customer Service Standard Report is Past Due?** - Jeremy Schwartz, Stringer Management Update

By December 31, 2012, employers with at least 20 employees in Ontario were required to **file a report** with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to confirm they are compliant with the Customer Service Standard under the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005** ("AODA"). Many organizations received a notice in early December reminding them to file. Fail to report and you may face fines and compliance orders. Report failure and you may face fines and compliance orders. The "Customer Service Standard" is the first of five new accessibility standards under the AODA. The Customer Service Standard has applied to most public sector organizations since 2010. As of January 1, 2012, virtually all Ontario employers had to be compliant.

**Read our FAQ below for more information on employers' compliance obligations.** Our firm has developed a turn-key suite of services to help organizations quickly and effectively meet their compliance obligations.

1. We can help you to develop policies that address your particular organization;
2. We can provide in-house or remote webinar training to your management team, to help you understand the new legislation, what is required of your organization and management's role in development and implementation of new policies, practices and procedures now required by law.
3. We can provide in-house or remote, webinar training to your employees and others involved in the provision of goods and services on your behalf, which is a requirement under the Customer Service Standard. Through that training we can help you comply with that obligation and roll out your new policy, practices and procedures.

For more information please contact our AODA practice group:

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