

## County accepts Ontario One Call service

By James Matthews - Dufferin County will enter into the provincially legislated Ontario One Call service agreement and enact appropriate bylaws.

The county's public works committee met on Wednesday at the Primrose Public Works Operations Centre.

Scott Burns, the county's public works director, said they will provide Ontario One Call (ONICALL) with some general mapping of county infrastructure as part of Dufferin's membership.

ONICALL is a non-profit service which facilitates the legal obligation that contractors, residents, municipalities and utility companies have to obtain buried utility service wire locates prior to any excavation. Requests for locates through ONICALL can be made free of charge by the public.

All owners of underground utilities, including municipalities, are responsible for providing service locates when requested. This includes any storm sewer, sanitary sewer, water main, fibre-optic, as well as traffic signal and street light electrical wiring. For infrastructure within county roads, this service is currently provided by county engineering and operations staff, also free of charge.

All municipal infrastructure owners throughout the province must be registered with ONICALL by June 19.

"The call system will streamline our system," said Mr. Burns, as calls to ONICALL that pertain to county infrastructure can be filtered and directed to public works.

The ONICALL contact centre utilizes a database to determine whether a locate request is applicable to an infrastructure owner and provides the owner with the request. Filters can be developed through ONICALL to assist in streamlining the process to ensure that only applicable requests are sent to the owner for review. This will increase efficiency and limit the number of non-essential requests that Dufferin County will receive for review.

The service will also help reduce the likelihood of damage to county-owned infrastructure and assist in monitoring that contractors requesting locates have all the appropriate county permits for their proposed work.

While there's no financial obligation this year, the county will have to pony up \$1.60 per call in future years. But Mr. Burns said even that paltry sum is of benefit to the county as they receive as many as 300 calls a year.