

Drone enthusiast heads up Lambton County federation

Gary Martin brings some diverse talents to the role

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The current president of the Lambton Federation of Agriculture (LFA) brings a diverse set of talents to his position.

As a former auditor with the Canadian Revenue Agency, one may well assume Gary Martin is on top of the numbers when it comes to farming and dealing with government programs. He has also served on the board of the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, and having been born and raised in the former Township of Sombra, Martin is familiar with the area's agricultural community and how it's evolved.

Martin is also a drone enthusiast with a penchant for recording South Lambton's landscape.

The drone provides a bit of fun but there are also practical applications. It delivers an alternative perspective of cropland and natural features and this past spring his drone was used to assess his wheat crop.

"Our wheat was a bit iffy in April. I kept flying over and over to see if it was worth keeping."

Martin also made an unusual discovery with his drone, flying it from a friend's property near Black Creek. Sighted was a jeep in the middle of the little watercourse, evidently having been moved by flow from a shallow crossing just upstream.

Members of the area's constabulary were informed of the discovery.

Martin talked at the LFA's regional meeting that was conducted through a virtual format on Aug. 20.

It was a relatively low-key affair although some concerns were raised.

One important development in Lambton concerns improvements to rural internet services. In an Aug. 26 release, the LFA thanked the provincial government and County of Lambton for partnering with Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology and the Canada's Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks to bring quality broadband internet service. It's expected 3,900 households and businesses will benefit.

The LFA held elections with 10 people acclaimed. Named to the Policy Advisory Committee were Martin, Lauren Van Ewyk and Darcy Fuller. Delegates include Fuller, Julie Maw, George Dickenson, Don McCabe, Cathy Young, Christina Hyatt and Kevin Forbes.

Crispen Colvin is a regional director and Teresa Van Raay also serves farmers in the area as a director-at-large.

The LFA announced the recipients of scholarships on Aug. 20. Recipients were Gracie Goodhill, Hannah Symington, Eric Marsh, Emily Van Ewyk, Emma Darrach, Maggie Annett, Katlyn Griffith and Kevin McGrail. For details, visit the LFA website.



Since switching a minimum-tillage system about five years ago, Gary Martin feels compaction has become less of an issue at his Lambton County farm

The Martin family has deep roots the area, having settled along the Langstaff Line in Kent in 1865. Martin's parents, Vera and the late Keith, moved two roads north to Charlemont Line in Lambton in 1961.

Vera continues to serve as the treasurer of the Charlemont Free Methodist Church.

Martin works about 250 acres, growing wheat and soybeans. He's moved to a minimum tillage system, breaking from his father's tradition.

"It always bothered me you can see the yellow lines where you have driven the tractor. I haven't seen that for about two years... I like to work it shallow a couple times in the spring and plant it deep."

To view Martin's aerial drone videos, visit his YouTube site at www.youtube.com/c/GaryMartin.