

# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Wilmot Family Resource Centre

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2024

FREE



The construction project to improve safety in the Punkeydoodles Corners area is close to completion. Oxford County expects it to be open to motorists within two weeks. Photo by Dave Snooks

## Tavistock long-term care home welcomes international nurses

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

peopleCare has introduced eight internationally educated nurses in Tavistock to work as personal support workers in the company's new building, which is expecting to welcome its first residents at the end of the month.

The company utilizes a federal-government process to hire temporary foreign workers to help with Canada's health human-resource challenges.

"Whenever someone wants to tap into this program, we always say don't go it alone. Some federal partners know the ins and outs and are ready to help," said peopleCare vice president of communications and engagement Sheena Campbell.

"peopleCare works with an international immigration recruitment specialist who handles important steps like pre-screening candidates based on experience, English proficiency and background checks, as well as completing the labour-market-impact assessment required by the program. While we cover some of the fees, each candidate takes care of most of the associated costs themselves."

Campbell added the nurses are talented and driven individuals who are investing in their future by joining this program.

"They're committed to building a life here in Canada and we're here to help them achieve that. Every nurse we hire goes through the same process as anyone else – interviews around their experience, skills and fit with peopleCare's values-based culture of care and excellence."

The company arranges temporary housing and helps newcomers with essentials

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## Punkeydoodles Corners project nearing completion

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To say there is much anticipation surrounding the opening of the roadways at Punkeydoodles Corners would be an understatement.

Several drone and ground-level photos have been published online by curious bystanders and residents are asking why the intersection hasn't been open to traffic. Ryan Vink, Oxford County's project manager, provided the Gazette with an update.

"Construction has progressed well and we are pushing as fast as we can to open the road but we do have a few things left to complete. With line painting and surface asphalt down, people can see the finish line but we have our deficiency walk-throughs scheduled next week, as well as finishing the installation of the electrical works, which is not yet complete and our final step before we can open the road."

He added with two of the existing intersections now completely closed, the county needs to ensure proper illumination

from the new streetlights active for drivers to see the changes at these intersections.

"We are working right now to complete the electrical connections with the utility providers. I think we are getting close. I don't want to commit to a specific date as I cannot speak for the utility providers, but I am hoping we can have this completed in the next few weeks."

Ed Danen is the leader of the Punkeydoodles Corners community group and said while they haven't met over the

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### NEW HAMBURG OPTIMIST

# PUMPKIN CARVING EVENT

Saturday October 26! Behind New Hamburg Firehall on Huron!

BRING YOUR CARVED PUMPKIN BACK AT 6:00PM AND WATCH THE MAGIC!

FREE PUMPKIN! ZOMBIE WALKS (6:15 & 6:45) FACE PAINTING! LOOT BAGS!

# Punkeydoodles Corners project nearing completion

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summer, everyone is keen for construction to be completed.

"I think anybody who lives up and down the sideroads here is more than ready to see it opened up and is wondering why it's taking so long since it's paved and painted. The sideroads like 102, 104 and 106 to a lesser extent, are beat. They have been taking a lot of extra traffic for two months now."

One aspect of the work area residents won't miss is transport trucks frequenting side-road detours despite the fact they are not designed to carry that type of traffic. Danen believed the county closed Road 102 for a few days to try and curb truck traffic but it wasn't successful.

"I think that was to get Google to try and take drivers somewhere else but as it was opened up, they came right back but to a lesser extent. Ideally, trucks were to take the roads going north through Shakespeare, but I have a feeling it's a lot of traffic from the 16th Line."

Some area residents have been steadfast in their opinion a roundabout is needed in the area, but Danen said he's taking a wait-and-see approach.

"We will see what happens. If we don't get the results we are looking for, we will keep the pressure on. I hope they don't take two weeks to get it open. I was down there (Monday) and had a look around and what I can see is streetlighting is the only holdup. Signage and everything else seem

to be in place."

He added the newly installed turning lanes are nice and wide but there is one challenge he saw.

"From County Road 5 heading west, if you come north on 5 and want to do a left turn towards Tavistock, visibility there could be a challenge. The right turn lane would be right beside the vehicle there and the stop line on the pavement is slightly ahead of the left turn so there will be some obstruction there."

He added people turning left from the Oxford-Perth Townline could also obstruct the view.

"That's the one that concerns me. The lines of sight everywhere else look great and the safety is definitely going to be

improved."

The project is ahead of schedule as the original completion date was the end of November, something Danen explained didn't come as a surprise to him.

"They very well should be because they have had awesome weather and very little need for delay."

The area farmer also had some advice for motorists ready to travel in the area once it has been opened.

"Be safe and take the time to learn what the new corner is going to do and also have patience. There will be some hiccups at the start until people get used to it. Let's have patience to see how things play out and hopefully will see an improved movement of traffic."

## Tavistock long-term care home welcomes international nurses

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like getting a social insurance number. After that, they're responsible for their housing, transportation and registration.

"We're also looking to connect them with local landlords, and we're hearing some of the nurses have already posted on the Tavistock Community Facebook page to find housing. If anyone knows of a rental, we'd love for them to reach out to us at the home," said Campbell.

The Gazette was invited to a meet and greet with six of the new employees and peopleCare's staffing manager Mariana de Macedo Boz who said her role is to welcome the newcomers to Canada and support them in their transition.

"My job is to make sure they settle in and get the necessary training. peopleCare as a company has already done this process with our home in Meaford and it was very successful as that home transitioned into a new building as well. It's been working very well."

She added they are asking for the community's help to find the new employees a place to call home.

"We are looking for accommodations, we are looking for support in making them feel comfortable and learning about the culture of Tavistock and area. We do have employees from the Philippines who are very eager to make them feel welcome and support them within their culture."

de Macedo Boz said the new staff members will be paired with a long-serving employee to assist with providing care and learning Ontario care standards. She added the newcomers are already being made to feel welcome.

"Tavistock is a very small town but is a very strong community. Families and residents are gathering together offering their homes and rooms for rental to make sure everyone has a place to stay. Our staff are very excited and we have also done a lot of work keeping the residents informed."

Six of the seven international nurses are from the Philippines and the other is from Nigeria, but they all arrived in Canada after last working and living in the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia. They have

agreed to a two-year commitment with peopleCare.

Paulina, a Nigerian national, said being able to work in health care around the world has always been her desire and while it was difficult to leave her family behind, she is grateful to be here.

"I have always heard about Canada, how friendly people are and how diverse it is culturally. There is also top-notch education, so it is a privilege and it warms my heart to come here. I want to give residents a happy and full life, to assist them and give them what they cannot give to themselves at this stage of their lives."

She added while not nervous about living in rural Ontario, she was slightly concerned about being accepted because of the colour of her skin.

"Because I am Nigerian, I didn't know how I would be received but because of my previous knowledge of Canada, I knew people are welcoming and normally love visitors. When I came and met Mariana, she was so excited to meet us with a warm hug.

I felt very relaxed and I had a wonderful sleep despite the stress."

Cherrylene is from the Philippines and has spent the last nine years nursing in Saudi Arabia. She has family in Alberta which made coming to Canada an easy decision.

"They have very nice things to say about the country. People here are very welcoming with no discrimination or racism. They are very kind and helpful. I was also looking for a new experience, especially taking care of the elderly. Most of my experience was in hospital."

She added living in a small town like Tavistock also has its benefits.

"There is no pollution. It is very different from the big city I was in. It's not crowded and the air is so fresh. It's very safe."

A consulting company is supporting peopleCare as the new employees begin the process of becoming Registered Nurses or Registered Practical Nurses in Canada, something that can take a long time to complete.

"They will need to go through the process of passing a (College of Nurses) exam. Our home is here to help them with the experience part as PSWs. If they decide to move forward and become nurses, we will continue to support them to reach that goal," explained De Macedo Boz.

The company, which owns and operates seven long-term care homes and one retirement home, is bringing in a dozen more internationally trained nurses shortly. de Macedo Boz, a native of Brazil, has been in Canada for five years and sympathizes with her new coworkers.

"People helped me when I came so it's only fair if I help them. I understand what they are going through and it can be a lot. I am more than happy to help. peopleCare is a big family in the sense that people are helping each other. If we have to search for quality nurses in the Philippines or Nigeria, we will do so as long as our residents have the best care possible."



Pictured are six of the eight international nurses who have been hired to work at the new peopleCare long-term care home in Tavistock. 12 additional nurses are arriving in the near future Photo by Lee Griffi