

Calvin Today

August 2025

The latest news, views, and announcements

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JUNE 21, MAJOR STORM



ABOVE: ONE OF THE MANY CALVIN
ROADS WASHED OUT BY THE STORM
OF JUNE 21.

BELOW: MINISTER OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND
RESPONSE JILL DUNLOP, MAYOR RICHARD GOULD, FIRE CHIEF
JORDAN WHALLEY AND MINISTER VIC FEDELI, REVIEW THE
DAMAGE IN CHAMPLAIN PARK IN JULY.



Message from the Mayor

-- by Richard Gould



It was a dark and stormy night, or at least that's how the story often starts. But that was the reality on June 21, when a massive storm ripped through the township, washing out roads and tossing trees to the ground. By 9:30 PM, the power was out, land lines had failed, and some cell service was out. Hurricane force winds and torrential rains pounded the area. The Calvin Fire Department was deployed to the park, responding to 911 calls about people injured and trapped in their campsites. The public works department began to survey the roads that were littered with fallen trees. The administration of the township began work to coordinate a rescue and determine the extent of the damage in the township. A state of emergency was declared and when it was learned that most, if not all, of the roads in the township were damaged by raging flood water, a shelter in place order was issued. Everyone from fire, public works and administration performed and people were rescued. **Most importantly, there were no fatalities! We are extremely proud of everyone!**

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Calvin Fire Department

It has been an eventful year for the Calvin Fire Department. They had lots of challenges and a new chief has been named. Jordan Whalley accepted the role and had his baptism by fire dealing with the emergency in Champlain Park. The Calvin Fire Department did a fabulous job during the rescue and as a result, lives were saved. By the end of the two-day sleepless ordeal everyone got home safely. Well done!

■ Jordan Whalley named Chief



The Calvin Fire Department was founded in 1976 and next year will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Prior to 1976, residents depended on each other to help them when they had a fire. This often meant a bucket line from an open well and since most homes were log homes, unless the fire was caught very early, it had limited effect. And, there were often injuries and deaths. People who were untrained and ill-equipped tried to rescue livestock from burning barns with disastrous consequences.

In 1975 - 1976, Sandra Smyth and her partner, Derek, were living on old Suzanne's Road. She was an actor and still did some contract work in Toronto.

While she was away, her house had a chimney fire and, tragically, Derek died in the fire.

Sandra soon mustered the strength to work toward the establishment of the Calvin Volunteer Fire Department. Keith Whalley took up the cause and became the first Fire Chief.

Keith Whalley travelled to Chatham, Ontario where he picked up a twenty-year-old 1954 Chev Maple Leaf truck, which became the Fire Department's first pumper truck.

As a point of interest, Jordan Whalley is the grandson of Keith Whalley.

Here is a list of the Fire Chiefs of the Calvin Fire Department.

- Keith Whalley, June 14 1976 - 1980
- Denzil Curran, January 1981 -1983
- Ernie Pellerin, January 1984 – 1985
- Fred Maxwell, January 1986 -1992
- Kenneth Brewitt, September 1992 – 2016
- Dean Maxwell, 2019 – 2022
- Mariel Labreche, 2024 – 2025
- Jordan Whalley, 2025 – .

The fire department is working on public information, one of their mandates and they will be reaching out to residents to work on fire prevention. Check out their Facebook page by searching for Calvin Fire Department. There you will find updates and information on Emergency Preparedness. You can also find them on Instagram at @calvin_fire_department. Here you will find some interesting pictures.

“We at the Calvin Fire Department would like to express our immense gratitude to the OPP, Mattawa Fire Department, CEMS, East Ferris Fire Department, Bonfield Fire Department, North Bay Fire Department, Ornge, West Nipissing Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, Mutual Aid, Provincial Parks, MNRF, Anderson Trucking and Corky North. Calvin needed help and you answered the call.”

A few weeks before the storm, on May 20, 2025, Council adopted Calvin's Emergency Management and Emergency Response Plan. This had been the result of many meetings and much work. After the plan was adopted, the Community Emergency Management Program Committee (CEMC) and the Municipality's Emergency Control Group participated in a tabletop exercise which saw its members practice their roles and responsibilities in a simulated emergency scenario. The emergency that was presented was a tornado in the township. It was fortuitous.

Some of the plan could not be used during the real-life event. The evacuation centre for Calvin residents is the Ecology Centre in Samuel de Champlain Park, and the park was at the epicenter of the storm, but the planning helped everyone understand their roles and course of action.

The emergency plan is available on the municipal website and we encourage all residents to take some time to familiarize themselves with it. Disasters happen and when they do, any preparation is helpful.

Most of the roads have been repaired, but many residents are still struggling with the removal of fallen trees.

Telecommunications was a great problem during the disaster. Cell phone service from Bell was restored in a couple of days and Bell dispatched a large crew to work on Bell land lines. Three weeks later, the land lines had been fixed and service was restored.

Bell is still promising to deliver high speed fibre to every home in Calvin by the end of this year, but December is coming soon. In the meantime, landlines have been restored and cell service is back to its somewhat problematic norm. We will have to wait until the end of the year to see if fibre internet is available in Calvin.

The long-term damage from the storm is extensive. The Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park will not likely open this year. Not only are there thousands of trees tangled into a wild mess, but underground infrastructure was also damaged. There was talk about a partial opening this fall, but now that seems unlikely.

The Ecology Centre is also still closed, but there are hopes that it may partially open in the late fall and there will be some Christmas events planned for this year.

The Eau Claire Gorge is still closed as well. The road into the gorge was badly damaged and hopefully work will begin presently so that this facility can be re-opened. You may notice that signs directing people to the Gorge have been erected on Highway 17, but unfortunately, Graham's Road is still closed.

The current problem everyone is facing, is with funding the repairs. For Calvin, the Ecology Centre and the Gorge, repairs exceeded budgets by a large percentage. Organizations and Municipalities can apply for relief from the provincial government, but repairs have to be made first and paid for, before a claim can be submitted.

In Calvin, our costs included the evacuation of people from the Samuel de Champlain and Algonquin Park, and the many road repairs, including the Hackenbrook Bridge. All of these repairs will wind up costing around a half a million dollars. We can borrow the money, but we will still have to pay for the interest. And it can take time for the relief funding to be obtained. Estimates range from one to two years.

Our administration staff is working hard to come up with a good solution and our MPP, the Honourable Minister Vic Fedeli, has been involved and is working with CAO Donna Maitland to come to a positive solution. It is a work in progress and our thanks go out to all involved.

Economic Development in Calvin Township is a priority

Economic Development in Calvin Township is important. It makes products and services available to local residents. At one time there were numerous stores (Ruby's, Mulligans, John's, O'Hare's, etc), two gas stations (Ruby's and Wonderland), a couple of furniture manufacturers (Calvin Furniture and Waram Furniture) all of which have now closed. Thankfully there are a couple of businesses still alive in the township, but going back in time there were many others. It may surprise you to learn that a hundred years ago there was a cheese factory in Calvin. Thanks to research done by Velma Spinks in Calvin Remembers, we learn that Simon Stein operated a cheese factory directly across the road from the current firehall (lot 16, conc 4) during the First World War (1914 – 1918) and continued operations until 1930. He then closed the business and turned the facility into a post office that he operated until 1950.



Simon Stein in 1918 with cheese factory in Calvin.

The municipality of Calvin has entered into an agreement with Mattawa, Papineau Cameron and Mattawan to work on economic development with the assistance of a government grant.

Municipality of Calvin is at the Mattawa Museum

The Municipality of Calvin has a display at the Mattawa Museum. It includes binoculars used by world renowned ornithologist and Pimisi Bay resident, Louise de Kiriline Lawrence; a bell from the Eau Claire train station and other items donated by residents. There is also a large display of pottery and a great video from Maxwell Pottery, an important business in Calvin.

In the display there are two maps of the original layout of Calvin township and its 100 acre lots. On one map, you can find the names of the first settler of each lot, and on the second

map, you will find the year the lots were first settled. Copies of these maps can be purchased at the museum.



Calvin Display at the Museum

Caution! The current fire rating is EXTREME

Due to the extreme heat warning in the area, we have raised the fire rating to extreme. Be mindful. No one wants to live through a fire! Check out the MNRF interactive map at www.ontario.ca/page/forest-fires.

Sky Med is filming a movie in the township from August 11 to the 14th. They will be filming at Smith Lake Boat Launch on August 13th. The Boat Launch will be closed to public access on that day for the filming to take place.

Thank you to our landfill attendant, student Bradlee Bernard, who is presently leaving us to pursue post secondary studies. We wish him well.

We would also like to welcome Danielle Albright as the part-time administrative assistant, filling a role which was previously full time and which has been vacant since Oct 2024.

To honor the dedication of staff, fire and emergency personnel for how they reacted during the recent storm, an appreciation dinner is being held in late August. This event is 100 percent funded by BDO, TransCanada Safety, and MIS Municipal Insurance Services. Thank you for your generous support.

In order to further advance our exit from the Cassellholme agreement, a delegation will meet with the Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Minister of Long-Term Care. The delegation will include our CAO, the CAO from Papineau Cameron, the mayor and CAO from Mattawa, and two councillors from Mattawan. The meeting will take place at the AMO conference in Ottawa on Aug 19. A report will be brought before council in September.
