

C-K riding a construction high

By **Pam Wright** - December 1, 2021



Two Aurora Exteriors employees are hard at it putting siding on a new home in south Chatham recently.

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Despite a global pandemic, construction in Chatham-Kent is having a year like no other.

The municipality's planning department has issued a record-setting 1,259 building permits worth \$313-million so far in 2021.

The year's overall dollar value dwarfs 2020's value of \$146-million.

Chatham-Kent's chief building official Paul Lacina said the unprecedented rise can be attributed in part to a spike in residential construction – a phenomena that's occurring right across Ontario.

“There's lots of new residential construction that's really pushing the value,” Lacina explained, adding five apartment buildings were given the green light in 2021.

Lacina said there's been a steady increase in construction rates since 2018, but the big spike has come in the last two years.

According to Lacina, residential construction is happening in all corners of the municipality, but Chatham proper is seeing the biggest jump.

Out of a total of 314 permits issued for single-family dwellings, 181 are located in Chatham alone.

Outside Chatham, South Kent is second in residential construction with 69 permits in 2021, followed by West Kent with 27.

There were 18 building permits issued in North Kent in 2021, 16 in East Kent, and three in Wallaceburg.

Jon Rumble, president of the Chatham-Kent Home Builders Association, said the residential market for homes is strong.

“It's way more than we've ever seen,” Rumble explained, adding that all of the custom homebuilders are presently booking a year in advance.

There are many factors for the rise, he said. Land shortages in Windsor-Essex, the pandemic trend of working from home, an influx of people from the GTA, Chatham-Kent natives coming back home, and the fact millennials are starting families are all contributing factors.

Rumble said the Ontario Homebuilders Association has a campaign called “Baby Needs a New Home” explaining how millennials are the main drivers of the increase.

“The millennials are bigger than the baby boomers and they are taking over the market,” Rumble said.

The fact that Chatham-Kent is a nice, quiet place to settle down is a big plus, he added.

Ongoing developments currently in the works include Prestancia in north Chatham, where various builders are working on homes, as well as The Landing under development by Multi-Construction.

A variety of companies are working on Churchill and two Midwood projects. Maple City Homes is in both north and south Chatham and is also building homes in Blenheim.

Dave Depencier is developing a section of new homes in Dresden.

Recently, a new development broke ground in Ridgetown. Built by Nor-Built Construction and developer Paul Khangura, the new housing project called Victoria Estates will eventually see 10 detached and six semi-detached homes constructed.

According to Rumble, Ontario will need to build one million homes over the next 10 years to meet the rising demand.

So far, 973 residential permits valued at \$248,039,270 have been issued for the year to date in Chatham-Kent.

The agricultural sector has seen 118 permits valued at \$29,437,365; 115 commercial permits valued at \$18,809,472; 29 for industrial valued at \$4,858,850 and 24 institutional permits with a value of \$12,308,251.

