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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Thames Centre Scores \$1 Million
Rink Replacement Grant from the Ontario Government**

Province to Cover Up to 50% of Costs of Ice Pad Construction, Up to \$1 Million

THAMES CENTRE – The Municipality of Thames Centre has been awarded a grant of up to \$1,000,000 from the Ontario Government to facilitate the replacement of the CANUSA rink at the FlightExec Centre.

“The new rink will serve this community for decades to come,” said Rob Flack, MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London. “This is a significant investment in Thames Centre that will increase access to sports and recreation, create jobs, and foster healthier and more active lifestyles for local families.”

The entire project is estimated to cost roughly \$2.02 million, and will see the entire rink replaced. This will include a brand new floor under the rink, as well as new boards, player benches, and penalty boxes. The boards and protective glass around the new rink will meet current NHL safety standards. The new rink will also feature modern ice refrigeration system.

“Rink upgrades will yield long-term benefits for our community,” explained Mayor Sharron McMillan. “We will improve safety and ice quality for residents of all ages who use the rink for activities like hockey, ringette, or skating, while maintaining our ability to host tournaments and events that bring people to Thames Centre.”

The current CANUSA rink is in its fiftieth year of use. The rink has been identified as an asset in need of replacement in recent Asset Management Plans.

“We have ramped up efforts to secure grant funding to help offset the cost to local property taxpayers and ensure Thames Centre receives its fair share of provincial support,” says CAO David Barrick. “We are thankful for this funding announcement and with smart planning, we can build a better rink while losing as little ice time as possible.”

The removal of the old rink and construction of the new one is tentatively planned to take place over the summer of 2026, while the ice at the CANUSA rink is typically removed.

Council has yet to approve its share of project funding, but is expected to consider the project, with rink replacement funds to be part of the 2026 Budget. The provincial grant was issued based on the Municipality’s application to the Ontario Government’s Community Sports and Recreation Infrastructure Fund.

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