

Media Release

Town of Midland confirms ransomware incident

September 4, 2018

(Midland, Ontario) – In the early hours of Saturday, September 1, the Town of Midland became the victim of a sophisticated cyber-attack in which the Town’s network was illegally accessed and infected with ransomware. The malware was able to encrypt a number of Town systems rendering them unusable. The Town subsequently received a ransom demand to decrypt the systems.

Town of Midland staff worked quickly to isolate the attack and to activate a cyber incident investigation and response. All necessary steps are being taken to restore access to systems and files, and to ensure operations return to normal as quickly as possible.

Vital services, such as fire services and water and waste management, were not impacted as these systems are purposely isolated for security reasons. Ongoing investigations have not found any evidence that information was removed from the system or inappropriately accessed, and cyber security experts are working quickly to rule out the possibility.

“Residents can rest assured that we are taking this matter extremely seriously,” said Mayor Gord McKay, “We are working closely with cyber security experts that specialize in these types of illegal attacks, and we have reported the incident to law enforcement and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. We thank our residents and businesses for their patience and continued support during this situation.”

Based on recommendations outlined in a recent Service Delivery Review and lessons learned from a similar ransomware attack against a neighbouring municipality, the Town had secured an insurance policy for protection in the event of such illegal activities, developed a strategy to address ever-evolving cyber security threats and was in the process of implementing enhanced security measures.

“At the time of the attack the Town was in the process of making several improvements to our IT security,” added Town of Midland Chief Administrative Officer John Skorobohacz, “Once systems are fully restored, we will continue with those plans and look for additional opportunities to enhance our security based on the guidance of cyber security experts.”

Town administration will provide an update within the next 24-48 hours on the status of the response at www.midland.ca.

For more information, please contact:

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