

# Conservatives get things done in productive Spring Sitting of Parliament

by Hon. Peter Van Loan, MP York-Simcoe

Back in January, Canada's New Government laid out the priorities for the spring sitting of parliament.

We promised a budget that would continue to reduce taxes, keep spending focused on results, and restore fiscal balance.

We said we would continue tackling crime to improve public safety;

Continue reforming our political institutions to make them more democratic and accountable;

Continue working to restore Canada's role as a major contributor on the world stage;

And continue developing a comprehensive and realistic plan for controlling and reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

And at the end of the spring sitting, I'm pleased to say we have made progress on all those priorities.

We passed 26 bills into law this spring, including 13 that received royal assent.

The centerpiece of the Government's spring agenda was the 2007 Budget. Its passage marked the first time in 40 years that a minority government has passed a second consecutive budget.

Budget 2007 restores fiscal balance in Canada, cuts taxes for working families, implements the tax fairness plan including \$1 billion in tax relief for seniors, reduces the national debt, and invests in key priorities like improving health care and environmental protection.

We've also made progress on criminal justice reform:

We have eliminated house arrest for people who commit serious, violent crimes;

Created stiff sentences for street racers who hurt innocent bystanders; and

Made it harder for gangsters and terrorists to launder

dirty money and finance their criminal operations.

Unfortunately, the unaccountable, Liberal-dominated Senate refused to pass several important crime bills and effectively killed Bill S-4, legislation that would reduce maximum terms of Senators from 45 years down to eight years.

Canadians want safe streets and accountable legislators, and they won't stand for an institution that stands in their way.

Canadians want this minority parliament to continue getting things done for Canadian taxpayers and for all our families.

Our country is more prosperous, stronger and more united than it's been in 30 years.

My job, and the job of all of us in parliament, is to keep building on this success.

# Minesing Wetlands declared a national treasure

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is marking Canada Day with the protection of the Minesing Wetlands, an internationally significant wetland habitat. It is one of the largest and most diverse wetland complexes in southern Ontario and is ranked in importance alongside Florida's Everglades by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The latest addition to Minesing Wetlands is was announced at a celebration event took place Thursday at the Edenvale Conservation Area.

Minesing Wetlands is home to several significant wildlife species such as Blanding's Turtle and Eastern Prairie Fringed-orchid, as well as the largest and oldest Blue Heron colonies in the province. This biodiversity hotspot also plays an important role with flood control, water quality improvement, fish habitat and recreation.

The wetland is crossed by two major rivers – the Nottawasaga and Mad, with the associated Willow and Coates creeks.

"What better way to celebrate Canada Day than with the protection of this incredible natural heritage site," said NCC Ontario's Regional Vice President, Donna Stewart. "Minesing Wetlands represents one of our most successful collaborations. Working with a diversity of groups and individuals, the ongoing protection of this truly unique natural area is a remarkable achievement for conservation in Canada."

NCC has collaborated with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, Eastern Habitat Joint Venture partners – including Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited Canada, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Friends of the Nature Conservancy of Canada – and other supporters to protect two

properties totalling 114 acres (46 hectares). Since 1974, NCC and its partners have protected over 11,000 acres (4,452 hectares) of this 15,000-acre (6,070-hectare) wetland.

Minesing Wetlands is expertly managed through a partnership agreement with the NVCA, with NCC assisting in stewardship of the area through long-term monitoring arrangements.

This long-standing partnership greatly enhances the ability to expand and protect this internationally significant wetland.

"The NVCA works with many partners in, and outside of our watershed to achieve our goals," said Byron Wesson, Director of Land and Water Stewardship Services with the NVCA.

"Our partnership with the NCC has helped us to protect the world-class Minesing Wetlands and we all benefit from the mutual support and exchange of expertise that the partnership facilitates."

Much of Minesing Wetlands has been conserved under the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV). Established in 1989 as an international partnership under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the recent property acquisitions at Minesing Wetlands are also part of NCC's new partnership with the Government of Canada -- a matching funds initiative to conserve ecologically significant lands across southern Canada.

"Canada's new government is proud to support the efforts of communities across the country to protect ecologically sensitive lands and the species that inhabit them," said the Hon. John Baird, Minister of the Environment.

"The protection of 114 acres of land in the Minesing Wetlands is an excellent example of what we can achieve when we work together to protect Canada's natural treasures."

# Essa decides against high speed internet program

by Richard Blanchard

Essa council has decided not to apply to a federal government program which

would have extended high speed internet to much of the township.

Council decided last

week that the Ontario Municipal Rural Broadband Program had left the municipality with too short time frame to allow the township to submit an application.

"We really would need to have a township employee working full time for the next three weeks in order for us to submit an application," said township

clerk Carole Trainor.

Trainor had attended an information session on the program last Tuesday and was told that all applications had to be submitted by July 13.

The Ontario Municipal Rural Broadband Partnership Program is designed to reduce broadband gaps in rural Ontario and would see rural

municipalities work with other municipalities and telecommunication companies on improving internet service.

Trainor said that the township would have to establish a partnership with an internet service provider and draft a proposal for extended service.

"It is a good program but it certainly doesn't leave us

much time," said mayor Dave Guergis. He noted that township residents do have access to over the air high speed internet services at the present time though they are much more costly than regular broadband.

Council voted to receive the report on the proposal.

## LEFROY/BELLE EWART NEWS

by Linda Gerow

**Annual Garage Sale:** The Ladies Auxiliary garage sale has been postponed until September 8th.

Hall Rentals are available with a Smart Serve Bartender as part of the package. A DJ is also available upon request. Phone 431-9231 or 456-2531 for information or leave a message and someone will return your call.

**Grange Cafe July 28th:** The Grange Café is back!! It's bigger and better than ever. For information or to become involved, call Lefroy United Church at 705-456-2098 or Andrea at 705-436-2098.

**Lefroy Minor Hockey Association** (Home of the Icebreakers) is holding a fund-raiser for the upcoming hockey season on Saturday, June 30th, 2007. Bring your clubs and friends and have a ball! Proceeds are going to help our kids, so make it a worthwhile day at Big Cedar Golf & Country Club with the shotgun start at 8:00 a.m.,

18 holes & lunch for only \$60. Mini putt, putting green & poker fun, hole in one, longest drive and closest to pin prizes. Prizes, raffle table & 50/50 draw and fun scramble style golf. Confirm a tee time by calling Tina Deroy at 705-456-8034

**Newfie Dinner/Dance:** Mark those calendars for October 20th when there will be a Newfie Dinner/Dance at the Lefroy Arena. Emmie is in charge of the festivities and she will be working over the summer to fine tune the entertainment, food and dance preparations. Doors will open at 7, dinner at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are TBA. Stay tuned for upcoming details.

**Quote:** I skate where the puck is going to be, not where it has been...Wayne Gretzky

If you have any items or news for this column, please contact me at lagerow@rogers.com or call at 705-436-9769.



Mark Valcic, Director of Corporate Services for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority received a certificate from the Ontario Municipal Management Institute last Friday from CAO Gayle Wood and Board Chair Virginia Hackson. photo by Michelle Minnoch