

A political point of view

What the provincial budget should strive for



MPP Julia Munro

Julia Munro
York-Simcoe MPP

With the mortgage crisis in the United States, the continuing loss of good manufacturing jobs in Ontario and increasing prices for many products caused by expensive gas, the economy has moved to the

top of everyone's list of concerns. I am hearing this more and more from local constituents in York-Simcoe, and they want to know what the Ontario government can do about it from me.

Tuesday's provincial budget should give us some idea of what Premier Dalton McGuinty and his Liberals are planning to do. Deadlines, unfortunately, mean I had to send in this article the day before the budget, so I can only guess what Ontario's finance minister will announce. But what needs to be done is quite straightforward.

The first step the government has to take is to cut taxes and red tape for Ontario businesses. Our companies and

entrepreneurs are the job creators in Ontario – not the government. The province needs to make it easier for our businesses to operate, and relieve their tax burden as much as it can. Lower taxes on business create jobs. This is not a partisan issue.

They have been implemented by the Tories in Alberta, the Liberals in British Columbia and the NDP in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Each of these provinces is seeking to attract new business – and keep the businesses already there. Ontario must not allow itself to become uncompetitive with other provinces and US.

Business investors also need to know that Ontario has a safe, secure and

affordable energy supply. Conservation is a great idea – which should be promoted – but we must also ensure we have enough power to keep our province running. Quebec did this with its James Bay power developments and there is no reason we should fall behind.

Infrastructure needs such as roads and sewers have to be provided – and the government's proposal to allocate budget windfalls for infrastructure is not the way to do it. Local governments need secure, dependable funding for local infrastructure.

Business is also attracted to Ontario if our province can provide an excellent quality of life to attract good employees. The province

must ensure that our education system remains strong, that our health care improves. Wait times, doctor shortages and underserved high-growth areas such as York-Simcoe must be addressed. Our area lags behind in its fair share of spending and the government must step up to the plate and provide more money for our needs.

The budget is of course not just about business and its needs. Yet it cannot be denied that creating a good climate for business investment usually means a good climate for individual Ontarians. Investors know that taxes are not the only issue – their businesses need

to be able to attract employees with a good quality of life, and for this the government must do its part.

Attracting investment to any part of the Greater Toronto Area has positive spin-off effects for York-Simcoe. We must ensure that our area has the infrastructure – whether it be transportation, education or health-related, so that local residents have equal opportunity to access good jobs and a good quality of life.

As always, I invite you to contact me at Julia.munro@pc.ola.org with any comments or suggestions.

Information line being unveiled

Telephone information services will soon be available by dialing three simple numbers: 211.

The South Simcoe Community Information Centre, Community Connection Collingwood

and United Way of Greater Simcoe County will announce the expansion of 211 service in the area, during a presentation at The Gibson Centre in Alliston April 2. By dialing 211, callers are directly

connected to a qualified information and referral specialist. The service offers live answer 24/7, multilingual access to community, social, health and government services.

Those in attendance to

the presentation will also learn about the benefits and cost savings of this service, not only to citizens in need of relevant information, but also the overall savings to governments, businesses and community groups.

Health unit giving cash to United Way

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit staff will give nearly \$21,000 to the United Way of Greater Simcoe County today.

In total, health unit staff raised about 16 per cent more money for United Way

than they did last year. The donation will make the health unit one of the United Way branch's top 20 corporate supporters. Donations were collected through every health unit office, including

Cookstown, Barrie, Orillia and Midland.

The United Way is one of the largest non-government sources of social service funding in Simcoe County. During the 2007 campaign, the branch earned nearly \$1.4 million in funding.

Over 80 per cent of funds donated to the branch are raised in the workplace,

mostly through payroll deduction programs. More than 150 county employers support the United Way.

Church Directory

Baha'i Faith – Innisfil	431-7139
Bell Ewart Baptist	456-3334
Christ Church – St. Jude Anglican, Ivy..	458-9631
Church of God Worship Centre, Thornton	
.....	705-730-1738
Churchill United	456-4692
Cookstown United	458-9701
Gilford United	456-4692
Holland Marsh Christian Reformed	775-7291
Exaltation of the Holy Cross	705-730-7999
Ukrainian Church	www.holycrossbarrie.ca
Holy Martyrs Roman Catholic	775-2065
Holy Trinity Lutheran	775-3412
Innisfil Community	436-1611
Lefroy United	456-2098
	www.lefroyunited.ca
Living Faith Presbyterian Church.....	705-424-0779
New Life Fellowship Baptist	436-5413
St. George's Anglican, Utopia.....	458-9631
St. James United, Stroud	436-5225
St. John Vianney	726-8007
St. John's Anglican, Cookstown.....	458-1801
	www.stjohnscookstown.org
St. Paul's Anglican, Coulsen's Hill	775-3648
St. Paul's Anglican, Stroud	722-7755
St. Peter's Anglican, Churchill.....	456-4396
	www.stpeterschurchill.org
Stroud Presbyterian	721-0134
Trinity United, Thornton	458-9701



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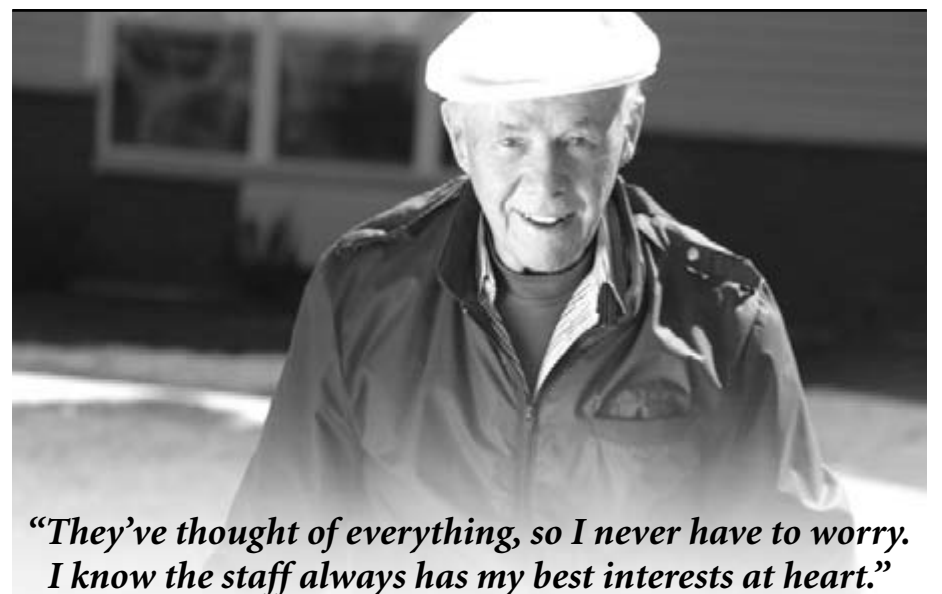
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