

The Queen's Park Guide

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Did you know?

In November 2005, the Ontario unemployment rate edged down 0.3 percentage points to 6.1%. Unemployment increased by 1,400 jobs.

All of the gains were in full-time positions, which grew by 1,900, while part-time jobs declined by 700.

At the national level, employment increased by 30,600 in November and the unemployment rate declined to 6.4%.

Youth employment increased by 11,000 and the youth unemployment rate fell 11.4% in November, down 0.7 percentage points from October.

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Ontario Government Announces New Deputy Minister and LCBO Acting Chair

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty recently announced that Alastair Glass will become Deputy Minister of Research and Innovation effective February 13, 2006.

Dr. Glass is currently the Chairman of the Tyndall National Institute in Cork, Ireland, and until this month was the acting CEO.

Over the last four years, he has played a pivotal role in growing research and development programs in Ireland as the first Director of Information and Communication Sciences at Science Foundation Ireland, and in helping build effective partnerships between industry, government and academia.

Dr. Glass has a B.Sc. (Special) from University College in London and a PhD in physics from the University of British Columbia.

In addition, Liquor Control Board of Ontario Chair and CEO Andrew S. Brandt has announced his retirement.

Named one of Canada's top 200 CEOs by the Financial Post magazine and Business Support Person of the Year by the Ontario Grape and Wine Festival, Brandt will retire when his current appointment expires on February 5, 2006. In accordance with the Liquor Control Act, LCBO Vice Chair Philip Olsson, will become acting chair and CEO.

New Opportunities for Skills Training



**Chris Bentley,
Minister of Training
Colleges and
Universities**

On January 17, 2005, Chris Bentley, Ontario's Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities announced that his government is creating more than 700 pre-apprenticeship spaces across Ontario to help people qualify for skilled trades training.

This year, Ontario is investing \$7 million in 38 new projects that will prepare people who want to become apprentices for training in specific

skilled trades. It includes projects for youth, Aboriginal peoples, women and under-represented groups.

Pre-Apprenticeship Training Programs enable individuals to strengthen their skills through academic upgrading, work placements and employment preparation courses.

Ontario has the largest apprenticeship training system in Canada. Apprenticeship training will be a key feature of Ontario's new One-Stop Training and Employment System, a seamless and co-ordinated training network.

Additional Interim Long-Term Care Beds Announced



Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman

On January 16, 2006, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman announced an additional 204 interim long-term care beds across Ontario to expand services to people who no longer need acute hospital care and relieve pressure on hospitals.

This announcement is part of a \$29.2-million Alternative

Levels of Care strategy announced in February 2005. Interim long-term care beds are for people who no longer need acute care, but live in communities with shortages of permanent long-term care beds. Patients being discharged from hospital are cared for in interim long-term care beds until a permanent long-term care bed becomes available.

In February 2005 the government announced the creation of 500 interim long-term care beds in Ontario. With today's announcement, that commitment has been met.

"Our government is making this investment so that people in Midland and throughout Ontario can receive the health care they need in the setting that suits them best," said Smitherman. "These investments will make the best use of our health care resources and free up our hospitals to provide the kind of acute care they are designed to deliver."

The following is a list of where the new beds will be located by operator and LHIN:

- 36 - Huronia District Hospital (North Simcoe Muskoka)
- 18 - PRHSC (Central East)
- 11 - Northumberland Hills Hospital (Central East)
- 4 - Trillium Centre (South East)
- 12 - Kemptville District Hospital (Champlain, South East)
- 8 - Marianhill (Champlain)
- 11 - Groves Park Lodge (Champlain)
- 1 - E.J. McQuigge (South East)
- 45 - Sault Area Hospitals (North East)
- 3 - Mauno Kaihla Koti (North East)
- 40 - Pioneer Manor (North East)
- 1 - West Nipissing General Hospital (North East)
- 10 - Versa-Care Centre (North West)
- 4 - Caressant Care (South West)

Ontario Government Announced Improvements to Government Access for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses



Ontario Minister of Government Services, Gerry Phillips

On January 13, 2006, Ontario's Minister of Government Services, Gerry Phillips announced new initiatives that will support small businesses.

Last year, task force chair Wayne Arthurs, MPP for Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, and fellow MPPs Tony Wong, Phil McNeely and Judy Marsales traveled around the province and asked small and medium-sized business owners and operators how the government could improve the way it does business with smaller firms.

Based on the consultations, the task force developed 11 recommendations to address the concerns expressed by the small and medium-sized business community.

Of the 11 recommendations, six will be implemented immediately. They include such actions as holding regular procurement training and information sessions and requiring ministries to offer vendor debriefings.

Longer-term recommendations include creating a database for vendors to submit information about their companies. That information can be accessed by government and larger companies, which may provide subcontract work.

An Evening with Dr. Angeline Stoll Lillard



Dr. Angeline Stoll Lillard

On February 1, 2006, Dr. Angeline Stoll Lillard will be speaking in Toronto at 7:30 p.m. on her book *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. Dr. Lillard will also be speaking in London on February 2, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Lillard has made a major contribution with this scientific exploration of how the Montessori model best prepares children to succeed in school and in later life.

This is truly a wonderful opportunity for people with a keen interest in early childhood education.

Tickets are only \$25 and additional information is attached with today's edition of The Guide.

Ontario Government Promotes Crime Prevention for Seniors



Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community Safety

On January 25, the Hon. Monte Kwinter announced A new interactive and bilingual DVD will help Ontario seniors protect themselves from crime.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services provided \$16,200 to the Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers under its

Safer Communities Grant program to fund the production of the DVD.

Initially, the DVD will be sent to all 39 local Crime Stoppers programs across the province to use in presentations to seniors on topics such as fraud, elder abuse and neglect. It also explains how people with information concerning crime or abuse against seniors can pass on the information to police in an anonymous fashion.

Benefits for Seniors at Tax Time



Ontario Minister Responsible for Seniors, Jim Bradley

Recently, Jim Bradley, Ontario's Minister Responsible for Seniors issued a release stating that regrettably, many seniors in Ontario are not receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled.

For many seniors of modest means, tax time is an opportunity to make sure they obtain or retain those benefits.

wait until your 65th birthday. To get a CPP application, call toll-free 1-800-277-9914.

Almost all seniors are eligible for some or all of the "old age pension", which is actually made up of two parts - Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). The OAS is provided regardless of a senior's income, but you must apply. You can apply six months before your 65th birthday - or if you are already 65 apply right now to get your benefits flowing as soon as possible.

First off, it is important that seniors make sure they are getting the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits they earned when they were working. You must apply for your CPP benefits. You can do so as early as age 60, but full benefits are only available if you

If your income is less than \$13,500 a year, you are likely also eligible for GIS benefits. You must also apply to receive these benefits. To apply for OAS or GIS, call the same toll-free line as CPP.

Upcoming Events

Friday, January 27, 2006 - The Kingston and the Islands Ontario Liberal Association is hosting their AGM at 7:00 p.m. The AGM will take place at St. Mary's Cathedral Parish Centre in Kingston.

Friday, January 27, 2006 - The York Centre Riding Association is holding their AGM at 7:00 p.m. The AGM will take place at Mastro Ristorante Italiano at 890 Wilson Avenue in Toronto.

Friday, January 27, 2006 - The London Fanshawe Riding Association is hosting their AGM at 6:00 p.m. The event will take place at the Marconi Club. There will be an address from special guest, Marie Bountrogianni.

Saturday, January 28, 2006 - The Lambton-Kent-Middlesex PC Association is hosting a Country Curling Bonspiel at the Glencoe Curling Club. Tickets are \$200-\$250 for curling and dinner.

Wednesday, February 1, 2006 - Breakfast with the Hon. Leona Dombrowski

Thursday, February 2, 2006 - David Ramsay, MPP is hosting a Timiskiming-Cochrane PLA 2006 Breakfast Fundraiser. The event will take place from 7:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m. at Joe Bidali's in Toronto. Tickets are \$265 and the special guest will be the Hon. Dwight Duncan.

Saturday, February 4, 2006 - The Scarborough PLA 2006 Renaissance Conference will take place at the Scarborough Civic Centre from 8:30 a.m.– 2:00 p.m. The theme will be "Investing in People" and the keynote speaker will be the Hon. Chris Bentley. The cost is \$25 or \$12 for students (lunch is included).

Tuesday, February 7, 2006 - Chinese New Year Banquet at the Ruby Chinese Restaurant in Toronto. The reception will start at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will start at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$98 per person.

For more information or to acquire tickets please contact the Pathway Group.