

The Queen's Park Guide

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Did you know?

In January 2006, employment in Ontario increased by 15,600 despite the loss of 32,500 manufacturing jobs. Ontario's unemployment rate increased to 6.5%

Since its peak of 1,115,300 jobs in November 2002, Ontario manufacturing employment has fallen by 9.2% or 105,500 jobs.

Most of the increase in Ontario employment was in part-time jobs (24,600). Overall, full-time employment declined by 9,000.

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Melancthon I Wind Farm Startup



On March 8, 2006, Ontario's Energy Minister, Donna Cansfield announced the government is increasing its use of clean, renewable energy with the startup of the Melancthon I Wind Farm.

The \$126 million, 67.5 megawatt Melancthon I Wind Farm, located in Melancthon Township near Shelburne, is expected to provide enough power for 20,000 homes annually. Phase II of the project will provide an additional 132 megawatts of power, or enough to power 40,000 homes.

The startup of the Melancthon wind farm

is one of several wind energy milestones occurring across the province. EPCOR's Kingsbridge I 39.6 megawatt Wind Power Project near Goderich has 21 of 22 turbines in place, six of which are on-line and producing power. In addition, the Clean Power Fund's 99 megawatt Erie Shores Wind Farm on the north shore of Lake Erie is nearly half completed with 27 of the project's 66 turbines have been erected.

These three wind farms are some of the 18 new, renewable energy projects the province has supported to date. Combined, these will help Ontario reach its goal of generating five per cent of its electricity capacity through renewable generation by 2007 and ten per cent by 2010.

Ontario Government Expands Newcomer Opportunities



Ontario Citizenship and Immigration Minister, Mike Colle

On March 20, 2006, Ontario and Citizenship Minister, Mike Colle spoke at a conference called "Integrating Immigrants: Building Partnerships that Work.". This conference was comprised of a national audience of decision-makers.

In his speech, Minister Colle stated the Ontario government is committed

to helping newcomers reach their full potential, through a number of initiatives. Some of these initiatives include:

- Signing the first ever Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement;
- Launch of the OntarioImmigration.ca website;
- Signing the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Partnership Agreement;
- Investing \$20 million in 35 bridge training programs to help internationally trained professionals pass their licensing exam and work in their field; and,
- Increasing funding to front line settlement agencies by \$1.2 million annually to serve more newcomers. This brings annual provincial spending to \$130 million on services to help newcomers.

Premier McGuinty Announces New Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre



Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty Announces Cancer Patients will benefit from shorter wait times because of the new Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre

On March 9, 2006, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that his government is expanding services at the Ottawa Hospital and the Queensway Carleton Hospital.

The Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer

Centre project is an integrated cancer program that aims to improve cancer treatment by expanding radiation and associated cancer services at the two Ottawa hospitals.

At the Ottawa Hospital, the project includes adding two new radiation machines and enhancing radiation therapy equipment at the General site. This will improve access to cancer treatment by increasing the total number of radiation machines from six to eight.

At the Queensway Carleton Hospital, renovations will create space for three radiation machines.

This will make it possible to provide more Ottawa area patients with radiation therapy and related cancer services. Renovations and new construction are expected to begin in 2007-08.

These improvements are part of ReNew Ontario, the government's \$30-billion, five-year investment in infrastructure. Under this plan, the McGuinty government and its partners are investing \$5 billion over the next five years to improve Ontario's health care facilities.

"We congratulate the government for committing to build a new cancer centre in Ottawa," said Terry Sullivan, President and CEO of Cancer Care Ontario. "This is very good news for the people in this area who will be diagnosed with cancer in the years to come. It means that patients in Ottawa and the surrounding area will have better and more timely cancer care."

The construction work will be financed and carried out by the private sector, which will assume the financial risks for ensuring that the project is finished on time and on budget. The completed facility will be publicly owned and controlled.

Ontario Government Announces New Penalties for Driver's Licence Fraud



Ontario Minister of Transportation, Harinder Takhar

On March 17, 2006, Ontario Transportation Minister, Harinder Takhar announced individuals who use a fake driver's licence or who make false statements when applying for a driver's licence or vehicle permit now face new penalties.

As of March 15, 2006, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act 2005 states that people convicted of:

- Having or using a fake, altered or fraudulently obtained driver's licence could be fined anywhere from \$400 to \$50,000. Previous fines ranged from \$60 to \$500.

- Making a false statement when applying for a driver's licence, or vehicle permit, either over the Internet or at a Service Ontario kiosk could be fined anywhere from \$400 to \$5,000. Previously the fines ranged from \$100 to \$500.

The higher fines for using false information are in addition to the existing penalties of a vehicle permit or driver's licence suspension of up to six months plus up to 30 days in jail. In Ontario there are an average of 360 convictions a year for using a fake or fraudulently obtained driver's licence.

"These changes will help prevent fraud and better protect all Ontarians by ensuring the integrity of Ontario's driver licence issuance and vehicle registration systems," said Takhar.

Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Minister's of Agriculture Meeting



Earlier this week, Ontario's Agriculture Minister, Leona Dombrowsky, was in British Columbia attending the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Agriculture meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss key issues facing the sector as well as the development of the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy.

Ministers decided to move forward on transforming the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program to make the program less complex and more responsive to the needs of Canada's producers.

Ministers are also proceeding with eliminating the deposit and replacing it with a fee. The details on the fee will be announced by March 31, 2006. Ministers also agreed to further consider expanding the coverage for producers with negative margins, and to consider a targeted advance to proactively aim assistance at commodities or regions

where it is especially needed.

Ministers recognize that it is a priority to ensure Canada is well prepared to address an outbreak of avian influenza, should one occur.

The Ministers also proceeded with discussions pertaining to bovine spongiform encephalopathy. They discussed the importance of enhancing Canada's feed ban and working to address the challenges pertaining to the disposal of specified risk materials.

Minister's also supported proceeding with the National Agriculture and Agri-food Traceability System beginning with livestock.

Finally, the Minister's discussed Canada's participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture negotiations, and their importance to the prosperity and growth of the entire sector. They expressed their particular support for improving Canadian exporters' access to international markets, and strongly reaffirmed their support for the right of producers to choose to use orderly marketing systems.

Information for Qualified Electors in the March 30th Provincial By-Elections



Ontario By-elections

Qualified electors in the March 30th provincial by-elections who wish to vote before Election Day, may still vote at the advance polls. The deadline to vote at advance polls is tomorrow night. Advance polls are open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The addresses of the advance polls where an elector may vote are indicated on the back of the Notice of Registration card.

Qualified electors who did not receive their registration card and have not added their names to the Voter's List may apply for a certificate to Vote at an advance poll and cast their ballot while there.

To be eligible to vote, a person must be 18 years or older; a Canadian citizen; and, a resident of the electoral district.

People who have ceased to live in Ontario within the two years before voting day may be entitled to vote under certain conditions and should contact their local returning office for more information.

Qualified electors for the March 30 by-elections who are unable to cast their ballot in person Election Day or at an advance poll, may apply to vote by proxy. Voting by proxy allows voters to appoint another elector in their electoral district to vote on their behalf. Proxy applications must be submitted by March 29.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, March 28, 2006 - Dr. Marie Bountrogianni is hosting a cocktail reception with special guest the Hon. Joe Cordiano. The reception will take place from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Downtown Fine Cars in Toronto. Tickets are \$250 each.

Wednesday, March 29, 2006 - Ontario PC Leader, John Tory is having his Hamilton reception at the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. Tickets are \$250 per person.

Thursday, March 30, 2006 - Election day for by-elections in the electoral districts of Nepean-Carleton, Toronto-Danforth and Whitby-Ajax.

Tuesday, April 2, 2006 - Dinner at the Piazza, with Greg and Kate Sorbara. The reception will start at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will start at 7:00 p.m. The dinner will take place at the Paramount Conference & Event Venue in Vaughan.

Wednesday, April 5, 2006 - The Hon. Chris Bentley is having a fundraising breakfast at the National Club in Toronto. The event will take place between 7:30 a.m.– 9:00 a.m. The special guest will be the Hon. Donna Cansfield.

Thursday, April 6, 2006 - 20th Anniversary Gerry Phillips Red Trillium Dinner. The reception will start at 6:30 p.m. and the dinner will start at 7:30 p.m. The dinner will take place at the Delta Toronto East Hotel.

Wednesday, April 11, 2006 - Ontario PC Leader, John Tory is hosting his Thunder Bay Dinner at the Valhalla Inn. The reception will start at 5:30 p.m. and the dinner will commence at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$200 each.

Thursday, April 20, 2006 - Brampton Centre Provincial Liberal Association fundraiser with Linda Jeffrey, MPP. The event will take place at the Lion Head Golf and Country Club in Brampton. The special guest will be the Hon. George Smitherman. Further details are TBD.

Wednesday, April 26, 2006 - Garfield Dunlop, MPP is hosting a fundraiser with the Brampton West Ontario PC Association. The event will take place from 5:30 p.m.– 8:00 p.m. at the Albany Club. The key note speaker will be former Ontario Premier Bill Davis. Tickets are \$150 each.

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

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