

Gearing up for the first budget under Premier Doug Ford

By: Sandra Dueck, Policy Analyst, Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

In the next couple of months, the Ford Government will be delivering its first budget. From an advocacy perspective budgets paint a picture of the government's roadmap or work plan for the year.

At a recent meeting of the Economic Club of Canada Premier Ford reiterated the focus of the government for this first budget.

"Ontario inherited a \$15 billion deficit. If we allow this deficit to continue to fester and grow, it will end up imperiling our hospitals, schools and other public services. We cannot allow this to happen," said Premier Ford. "I'm proud to say we have made good progress in restoring fiscal discipline to Ontario, but there's still a lot of hard work ahead of us."

As a result, the government has announced three priorities in the year ahead:

- **Create a Pro-Jobs Environment:** The government will build on its actions to connect more workers to good, local jobs while encouraging job creation, investment and trade both inside and outside of Canada.
- **Balance the Budget Responsibly:** The government will continue to find efficiencies



and streamline services by making sure all programs and services are relevant and effective. This is necessary to help achieve fiscal balance and restore public confidence in Ontario's finances.

- **Build the Health Care System of the Future:** The government will look for new ways to use technology more effectively and commit to new models of collaboration and patient care. It will make historic investments in long-term care for seniors and improved mental health and addiction supports for families.

Along with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce is making a pre-budget submission on behalf of the business community.

"Small businesses are the backbone of the economy and the heart of communities," says Stuart Harrison, President & CEO, Peterborough Chamber of Commerce. "Yet, cumulative red tape, U.S. tax reforms, economic uncertainty, and a system that discourages growth have led to a staggering scale-up challenge for businesses of all sizes across Ontario. We are encouraging the government to address these challenges, focusing on fiscal

balance and smarter spending in the upcoming budget to help Ontarians today and into the future."

The pre-budget submission from the OCC includes 13 tangible recommendations for the upcoming provincial budget to build a stronger Ontario and create a business climate which encourages growth.

The recommendations include leveraging the private sector to expand broadband access, leveraging technology to increase public sector cost efficiency, preserving provincial tax exemptions on employer health and dental plans, creating a variable small business deduction, and delaying taxation on corporate income growth to overcome Ontario's scale up challenge.

Also among the recommendations is a suggestion from the Peterborough and Kingston Chambers of Commerce asking for an increase in the heads and beds levy. This levy applies to public institutions (jails, hospitals, post-secondary) and is a payment in lieu of taxes. The levy has not been adjusted since 1987. This is a concern because cost of municipal services which is what the levy is designed to support has gone up

significantly since that time. A recommendation of \$100/head or bed is being made at this time.

The Peterborough Chamber of Commerce is also talking to the provincial government about apprenticeship ratios. The Board of Directors recently approved a position that asks for a pilot project to expand the apprenticeship ratios in small urban and rural communities. The goal is to encourage more apprentices to stay in their home communities for on-the-job training while helping to increase the number of people entering the skilled trades. A second position also being presented to government will encourage keeping parts of the Ontario College of Trades that were beneficial to business, such as the public registry and clear pathways for internationally trained tradespeople.

The government is also seeking feedback from the general public. They are looking for feedback on cutting red tape for business and people who access government services, improving the way they deliver government programs or services, and saving taxpayers' money. You can submit your thoughts on the budget online until February 8th.

peterboroughchamber.ca/blog

Introducing the 2019 Board of Directors

Ben vanVeen of Team vanRahan Century 21 is the 2019 Chair of the Board.

As Chair, his focus is on how a strong member-driven organization benefits our business community and the community at large.

For more on the inauguration go to peterboroughchamber.ca/blog



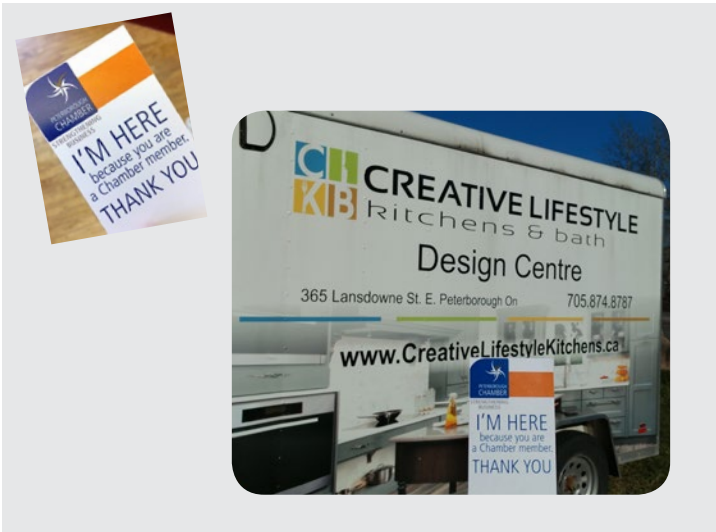
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PTBO CHAMBER MEMBER

Member Milestones

- Congratulations to **Irwin, Sargent & Lowes, Limited Insurance Brokers** on celebrating 70 years in business.
- **Inclusive Advisory** received certification from Great Place to Work, a "global authority on high-trust and high-performing workplace cultures". Congratulations!
- **MotherClock**, a free paperless time tracking service and first

Event Calendar

PBX
PETERBOROUGH BUSINESS EXCHANGE

TUESDAY
February 5th, 2019

Peterborough Business Hub
398 McDonnell Street

4:00pm – 6:00pm

Details: PBX is a great opportunity for the business community, employers, consumers, and community agencies to make valuable connections.

Bring your business cards and get ready to get connected to the Peterborough business community.

Cost: Free, courtesy of Shorelines Casino Peterborough

CHAMBER AM

TUESDAY
February 12th, 2019

Managing Stress in the Workplace

The Carousel
116 Lansdowne Street East

Coffee's on at 7:00am
Speakers from 7:30-8:30am

Cost: Pay for your breakfast

Speaker: Dr. Doug Lukinuk, Peterborough Max Living Chiropractic Centre

Details: The Chamber Breakfast meetings are a great way to fuel up for your busy workday. Network with fellow Chamber members, have a delicious fresh breakfast and enjoy a short presentation from our guest speaker.

Note: Pre-registration encouraged

LUNCHBOX LEARNING

WEDNESDAY
February 20th, 2019
(Chamber & WBN Members only)

The Balancing Act - Managing Stress Overload

Chamber Boardroom
175 George Street North
12:00pm - 1:00pm

Speaker: Dr. Doug Lukinuk, Peterborough Max Living Chiropractic Centre

Details: This free, noon hour series is open to Chamber members and WBN members interested in professional development and connecting with fellow members. Located in the Chamber boardroom, bring your lunch along, listen to a short presentation, and ask some questions.

Cost: Free (Bring your lunch)
Note: Pre-registration required

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