

comment

THE BARRIE EXAMINER

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Laying down a new foundation for growth

Ontario families have been hit hard by the global recession. While economists suggest that we are bouncing back, many of us know someone who has lost their job. Perhaps it is a neighbour, a friend, or maybe even a member of your own family. The worst may be over, but that only means it is time for the rebuilding to begin.



Aileen Carroll
QUEEN'S PARK

The McGuinty government recognized early on that this was an extraordinary recession, which is why we responded in extraordinary ways.

We invested over \$32 billion in roads, bridges, public transit and energy retrofits for our schools. This investment is creating and sustaining over 300,000 jobs, while putting money into the hands of those who need it most: Ontario families.

We also launched the Second Career program, which is helping Ontarians who have lost their job to go back to school so they can get a good job — not just any job. This program is the first of its kind in Canada.

But our government recognizes that we have more to do. The world economy that is emerging is very different from what it was before the global recession hit. To survive in this new world, we need to adapt.

As we prepare to rebuild Ontario's economy, we need to lay down a new foundation for growth. We need to be prepared for new opportunities and new jobs.

What Ontario has accomplished to date is remarkable, but it is what we do next that will define our future.

The next five years will be decisive for our province. That's why we have a new, five-year plan to open Ontario to new growth and new jobs.

Our Open Ontario plan will prepare Ontario to compete in the global economy that's emerging from this recession. It will ensure our workers have the highest skills and best training, and will create new opportunities for economic growth by laying the foundation for job creation in the emerging clean energy and clean water sectors.

Our plan is all about opening up our province to new economic opportunities that will result in new jobs and growth.

Our plan will build a stronger economy by expanding education opportunities in our schools, colleges, universities and trades.

Our plan will continue to improve patient care through new legislation that will ensure our health care professionals work together in the best interests of the patient.

And our plan will eliminate the deficit created by the global recession, in a steady and gradual way.

To learn more about the Open Ontario plan, please visit www.ontario.ca/openontario.

Aileen Carroll is MPP for Barrie



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pointofview

Cash from developers looks a little bit fishy

Who do you owe, and how do you pay? These are the questions voters in five Simcoe County municipalities should be asking their candidates as local elections approach in October.

A report released this week concludes developers gave 43% of all contributions to successful councillors in Barrie, Bradford-West Gwillimbury, Collingwood, Innisfil and New Tecumseth during the 2006 municipal election.

Money & Politics in Simcoe County: Shining a Light on Municipal Election Financing was prepared by Campaign Lake Simcoe.

It says developers' campaign money fills local councils with urban sprawl — or residential subdivision — supporters. Since pro-environment candidates don't get developers' money, it's much tougher for them to be elected.

Campaign Lake Simcoe wants Ontario's government, the parent of municipalities, to ban corporate and union contributions to local elections. And because 58% of these contributions came from outside the municipalities of the candidate, it also wants contributors to be qualified voters in the municipality where their supported candidate is running for office.

Fair enough, although such restrictions don't seem to be on the province's radar, and it's too late to have a ban in place for this year's election anyway.

Municipalities could have done it themselves, of course. Toronto did it. So did Quebec and Manitoba for provincial elections. The feds have done it.

The question is what to do about it for the Oct. 25 election. The best answer is that candidates should police themselves on this matter.

This doesn't mean they cannot accept campaign

contributions from developers. Election campaigns can be expensive, especially for those running for mayor.

But the onus is on candidates to know the interests of developers, or corporations or unions or any other person or organization interested in contributing to a political campaign.

Does the developer own land which needs rezoning or site plan or plan of subdivision approval? Would that approval be required during the term of the next council?

How do residents feel about any such developments? How has the current council and municipal staff dealt with the applications?

These questions should not imply that every developer wants to corrupt the business of local councils or that every councillor can be bought. On the other hand, there's rarely giving done in politics and business without the expectation of receiving something in return.

Developer contributions to Simcoe County candidates have to be particularly scrutinized. This area will see tremendous population growth during the next 20 years, and these people will need homes, and developers to be involved in the planning and building process.

Not to mention political approval to proceed.

The next councils in Barrie, Bradford-West Gwillimbury, Collingwood, Innisfil and New Tecumseth need to look at restricting campaign contributions for the 2014 municipal elections.

This doesn't necessarily mean a ban on developer or corporate or union money, but it does mean looking at the issue and considering solutions.

Because in politics, reality often mirrors perception.

And politicians accepting contributions from developers looks shady.

Canadian athletes worth the investment

The 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics left us with so many incredible moments.

The 14 gold medals won by Canadians not only set a record for a host country, but an all-time record for any nation at a single Winter Olympic Games.

It was terrific to see our athletes rise to the occasion on home soil as never before.

While the medals themselves were tremendous accomplishments, these games were



Patrick Brown
PARLIAMENT HILL

special in other ways.

The Vancouver Olympic Committee (VANOC) organizers did an outstanding job in welcoming the world to Canada.

The spectacle of the opening ceremonies went a long way to tell our unique Canadian narrative, and the closing ceremonies built on that theme of cultural vibrancy and the Canadian journey.

But it is what we saw in the days between that were the most inspirational.

The spirit and energy shown by Canadians was overwhelming and I hope the collective pride we felt is long-lasting.

Whether it was on Dunlop Street in Barrie after Canada won Gold in men's hockey or on Robinson Street in downtown Vancouver, every day during those magical 17 days, the expression of distinctly Canadian emotion was obvious to us and the world.

Own the Podium was created in 2005 to coordinate and focus national funding party resources on targeted high-performance sport programs to achieve Canada's full potential at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Funding levels for winter athletes has been about \$22 million per year, and \$36 million for summer sports in recent years.

With the Winter Olympics now over and the Paralympics coming to a close soon, the VANOC portion of funding (\$11 million) will no longer be available for winter athletes.

I did not want to see this funding end and neither did Prime Minister Stephen Harper. So, in 2010 budget, we announced that the government of Canada is doubling funding to \$22 million per year for winter athletes. There's also an additional \$6 million for summer sport — increasing their total funding package to \$42 million annually. These are two-year commitments.

I was also pleased to see the budget provide \$10 million over the next two years for a program to specifically encourage young people to become more involved in organized sport and promote physical fitness.

This sort of 'playground to the podium' initiative will help plant the seeds early on, in our kids, for good sportsmanship and a drive for excellence, as well as promoting an enduring love of country.

Oh Canada!

Our government sees an inherent national benefit to properly fund athletes who wear the Maple Leaf. Our athletes will proudly represent all of us overseas in the upcoming 2012 Summer Olympics in London, England, and the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

Even though they will be in tough competition against nations which are traditional Olympic powerhouses, with much larger population bases to draw from and formidable sports programs, I believe our athletes will once again punch beyond their weight and makes us all so proud once again.

Patrick Brown is MP for Barrie



quote
of the day

This is a whole new journey."

Barrie Colts captain Stefan Della Rovere, on the beginning of the OHL playoffs

Educational investments will help county's future

The County of Simcoe believes it is important to invest in the future, especially during difficult economic times.

As we watch for continued signs of economic recovery, county council is making significant contributions to Georgian College and Lakehead University, projects that will have a tremendous impact on our region and provide jobs and opportunities for our residents and communities.

Just two weeks after we celebrated the county's \$1-million investment in Lakehead University's Orillia Campus, the county will be participating in a ceremony today at Georgian College in Barrie to present \$800,000 to the Health and Wellness Centre capital campaign.

Education is an important economic and social driver for our communities, and our universities and colleges are key assets that



Cal Patterson
SIMCOE COUNTY

ensure the long-term social, cultural and economic well-being of our residents.

These two exciting expansion projects are good news for Simcoe County.

Council believes that the county has an essential role to promote excellence in the post-secondary education system while ensuring choice and accessibility for students and the best use of available resources.

We are forging ahead with broad, future-oriented partnerships between post-secondary institutions and local government by supporting Georgian College and Lakehead University — important

players in Simcoe County's bright future.

It is in the public's interest and for the greater good of Simcoe County that council is involved and supportive of our colleges and universities as they continue to build a strong and dynamic post-secondary education system that is nationally and internationally competitive. As students arrive here to study each year, our communities will realize economic benefits that post-secondary institutions provide.

Equally important is the opportunity for young students to remain in Simcoe County while they complete their post-secondary education. Many students will maintain jobs and family stability while they upgrade their skills and continue their education.

One of the very best things we can do as a region in terms of economic development is invest in our own people by supporting the

expansion of post-secondary education. Statistics prove that college and university graduates are more employable and bring enhanced skill levels to our local workforce. With most studies showing that eight out of every 10 new jobs being created in the new economy will require either a post-secondary degree or diploma to even apply, we are investing into the workforce of not just today, but tomorrow as well.

Building vibrant communities depends on creating strong partnerships, and the County of Simcoe's leadership has enabled us to do more for our residents, ensuring essential services are provided in the most cost-effective manner and opportunities are maximized.

Simcoe County has been a proud partner with Georgian College for more than 40 years. In 2009, Georgian launched a defibrillation program across the college's seven campuses and the Kempenfelt

Conference Centre through the County of Simcoe Paramedic Services Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) program. PAD is designed to save lives by allowing trained employees to use automated external defibrillators.

Also, the provincial government, County of Simcoe, Barrie, Orillia and the private sector rallied together to support Georgian's \$27 million Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning in 2001.

When the Georgian College Health and Wellness Centre opens in 2012, it will accommodate more than 3,000 additional students. The regional economic impact of these extra students will be significant — estimated to be \$25.6 million annually.

The County of Simcoe is a proud community partner in these projects.

Cal Patterson is warden of Simcoe County