



DOWNNEY DIGEST

ISSUE 29 • JUNE 2023



A NOTE FROM DOUG

Summer is finally here!

For many families, this is a time of transition as the school year ends and kids look forward to the prospect of hot days playing in the sun. It is also a good time to remind everyone to be careful as you drive through community neighbourhoods and school zones. The excitement of the end of the school year can provide an easy distraction for children and adults alike.

Though the summer may be here, my team is still available to help you with any provincial concerns you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact my office for assistance.

NEW FUND TO BUILD SKILLED TRADES TRAINING CENTRES

The Ontario government is working for workers by investing \$224 million to build and upgrade training centres and help tackle the province's historic labour shortage. Applications for the new Skills Development Fund (SDF) Capital Stream open on June 30. It will help unions, Indigenous centres, and industry associations with funding to build new training centres or upgrade and convert existing facilities into new training centres with state-of-the-art equipment and technology.



NEW FUND TO BUILD SKILLED TRADES TRAINING CENTRES

Every day, roughly 300,000 jobs are going unfilled in Ontario, costing the province billions in lost productivity. The new capital stream will be open to a wide range of applicants and in-demand industries and support facility expansions, renovations, repairs and retrofits, and new building construction. Over their lifetime, these improved training centres are projected to help more than one million workers get the training they need to land better jobs and ensure businesses can find the skilled workforce they need to grow the economy for everyone.

In addition, the Ontario government is investing \$535,000 through the SDF program to launch two innovative projects that will expand apprenticeship opportunities to future boilermakers in Northern Ontario and across the province. Led by the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local 128, these free programs will provide 1,350 participants with the opportunity to explore rewarding careers as boilermakers, which can pay up to \$38 an hour.

EXPANDING STRONG MAYOR POWERS TO BUILD MORE HOMES FASTER

The Ontario government is expanding strong mayor powers to the mayors of 26 large and fast-growing municipalities that have committed to a housing pledge as part of the province's work to build 1.5 million homes by 2031.

Strong mayor powers offer tools to help heads of council cut red tape and speed up the delivery of key shared municipal-provincial priorities such as housing, transit and infrastructure in their municipalities. These enhanced powers will also bring increased accountability for local leaders, while checks and balances maintain the important oversight role of councillors.



Strong mayor powers and duties include:

- Choosing to appoint the municipality's chief administrative officer
- Hiring certain municipal department heads, and establishing and re-organizing departments
- Creating committees of council, assigning their functions and appointing the chairs and vice-chairs of committees of council
- Proposing the municipal budget, which would be subject to council amendments and a separate head of council veto and council override process
- Vetoing certain by-laws if the head of council is of the opinion that all or part of the by-law could potentially interfere with a provincial priority
- Bringing forward matters for council consideration if the head of council is of the opinion that considering the matter could potentially advance a provincial priority.

These measures will support municipalities as they work to meet their commitments and support the construction of the new homes their residents need and deserve.

ANNUAL RABIES BAIT DROP BEGINS

The Ontario government is continuing its vaccine bait drop program to fight the outbreak of raccoon strain rabies that began in 2015.

Baiting will focus on wildlife habitat, such as bushes, green spaces and ravines where animals may forage, or along fence lines, hedges and large culverts. Baits are not distributed near schools, playgrounds or where children are likely to be present.

Baits help to immunize most raccoons, skunks and foxes that eat them. Baiting is an important part of our rabies control plan - one of the most successful in North America.



My office is always here to help with any provincial matters and concerns. While we endeavour to respond to every matter in a timely manner, our team is often busy helping constituents. Take a look at the month so far:



1045

email contacts



127

phone calls



38

walk-in visits



6

new cases

You can always contact us at Doug.Downey@pc.ola.org or 705-726-5538.