



DOWNEY DIGEST

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A NOTE FROM DOUG

Christmas gives us the opportunity to spend time with family and friends. It is a time of shared joy; of making new memories with loved ones, and remembering times gone by. It is an opportunity to reflect upon all the good we find in our lives, and to look forward to what the New Year will bring. It is a time of great community spirit, when we embrace our neighbours with kindness, and go the extra mile to help those around us.

I look back upon this year with gratitude in my heart. Our community has risen to the challenges presented to us, and met them with great courage and care for one another. Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte, and all of the communities found within it, have shown true strength and resilience in the face of great difficulty. We have been compassionate and understanding towards each other, and as we move into a new year, I know that this will remain constant.

May this holiday bring you much love and hope, goodwill and good cheer. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

CUTTING WHOLESALE ALCOHOL PRICES

The Ontario government is supporting businesses impacted by the pandemic by cutting LCBO wholesale prices for bars and restaurants, enabling curbside pickup of beer, wine and cider from licensed grocery stores, and freezing the basic beer tax rate.

Restaurants and other businesses with a license to operate a liquor consumption premise will save an effective 20% compared to retail prices on wholesale alcohol. This change will provide approximately \$60 million in annual support to restaurants, bars and other businesses.



This action builds on other recent changes to improve alcohol choice and convenience for consumers, including new legal framework for the sale, service and delivery of beverage alcohol. Highlights include:

- Allowing licensed grocery stores to offer curbside pickup of beer, wine and cider
- Streamlining licensing and renewals for businesses through a single primary licence with endorsements for additional activities, such as on-site retail stores or brew pubs
- Increasing flexibility for grocers to cross-promote beer, cider and wine with non-alcohol products
- Enhancing social responsibility in the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario's Registrar's Standards by requiring individuals who sell, serve or handle alcohol to recertify their Smart Serve Training.
- Making permanent the extension of retail sale hours to 7am to 11pm for alcohol that were put into place in March 2020 in response to COVID-19.

SALVATION ARMY KETTLE DRIVE

The Salvation Army Kettle Drive is BACK in stores and malls around our region this year! Please support this wonderful charity if you're able, whenever you see these kettles as you're out and about in our community.

This year, the Kettle Drive also has an option for you to tap your donation using a credit card, making donating easier than ever.



QR CODES AND RAPID TESTS OVER THE HOLIDAYS

During the holidays my office will be closed to the public, but you can still get your QR code printed off at your local library. All you require to access the provincial COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination website is your Ontario Health Card.

Additionally, the government is providing free rapid antigen tests over the holidays at pop up sites across the province, as well as at select LCBO locations. For more information about where you can get a rapid antigen screening or a rapid antigen test, please visit:

www.Ontario.ca/holidaytesting

BARRIE LEGION RECEIVES OTF FUNDING

Earlier this month, I was pleased to announce that our local Legion, Branch 147, was the recipient of **\$140,100** in funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Resilient Communities Fund.

This funding was awarded to community non-profit organizations to help them recover and rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19, and to help these organizations plan to meet the future needs of their community.



When the Legion received word of the grant earlier this year, it began to concentrate on creating a strong financial plan, coupled with a strategic organizational plan that would involve marketing, communications, fundraising and technology to help position it for the next five years and beyond. The grant is also helping the Legion to upgrade its software, buy PPE for staff, and make much needed renovations to the main floor and entrance lobby.

The Legion is committed to preserving this space for remembrance and recognition. The public is always welcome and the Legion will remain accessible for many community activities and events. If you require more information about using the legion for your next meeting or event, please visit their website, www.barrielegion147.ca.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

