



John YAKABUSKI

Your MPP for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

QUEEN'S PARK REPORT

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Dear Constituents:

It is indeed a pleasure to once again communicate with you through this annual newsletter to all of the constituents of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Serving as your representative in the 39th Ontario Parliament is an honour and a responsibility that I take very seriously with humility and gratefulness, thanks to the wonderful endorsement I received from RNP voters last October.

One of the aspects that I appreciate most about being your MPP is that I have the opportunity to attend countless community events throughout the region and see first hand the unwavering commitment and devotion of so many good people who feel passionately about the cause to which they volunteer their time and effort. Whether that cause is to help those in need of assistance, to preserve their heritage or culture, to further sports and recreation or to ensure a cleaner environment, the dedication of those involved is exceptional. What a sad world we would be living in without all our volunteers. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

Another function of being an MPP is representing you in the Ontario Legislature. This provides me an opportunity to bring your issues and concerns forward to the provincial government through Members' Statements, House Questions, Petitions, Legislative Debate, Order Paper Questions and, of course, direct daily contact with the Ministers of the Crown. Some concerns are quickly resolved after using one or more of these legislative tools, while other issues require arduous and continuous effort over a long period of time.

To keep you informed, I write a monthly column which is published in most of the newspapers in our riding and I have a website that provides copies of those columns and other news releases that I send out. This newsletter, however, allows me to not only inform you about provincial government issues, it allows me to receive your views in return. In this issue, I am asking what you personally believe the provincial government's priorities should be at this time. I hope you will take the time to consider this and respond accordingly.

Sincerely,

John Yakabuski, MPP
 Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke



John is sworn into office as the MPP for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke by the Clerk of the Ontario Legislature Deborah Deller.



John participated in the 2008 Ontario Volunteer Awards, honouring 146 citizens who have dedicated themselves to volunteerism for 5 to 60 years of continuous service in a given organization. Pictured with John are six members of the Auxiliary to the Arnprior and District Memorial Hospital (l to r): Patricia Smith - 30 years, Bernice O'Connor - 5 years, June Cloutier - 15 years, Marilyn Gillespie - 15 years, Gertude Belmar - 15 years, and Willa Wright - 15 years.



Persistence paid off for Rev. Ingrid Bennett who received her new licence plate. The Eganville Douglas minister won her battle with the Ministry of Transportation and her right to get the personalized licence plate she requested and it was presented by John who successfully lobbied on her behalf.

Photo courtesy of The Eganville Leader

John in the Riding



John and MP Cheryl Gallant participated in the Official Opening of Canada's first neutron reflectometer for the Canadian Neutron Beam Centre, located at AECL's Chalk River Laboratories. This is a new world-class research instrument that will help to ensure Canada's future in nuclear science remains as strong, vibrant and innovative as its past. AECL is a full-service nuclear-technology company that provides services to nuclear utilities around the world.



As the Opposition Critic for Energy, John met with the Federal Minister of Natural Resources, Honourable Gary Lund, to discuss energy issues when he was in the riding to participate in the opening ceremony of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited's Nuclear Legacy Liabilities Program's Waste Analysis Facility at their Chalk River Laboratories. John and Minister Lund are pictured here speaking with George Abdallah of Pembroke, Ontario.

Photo Courtesy of John Carter, Renfrew Mercury



The Deep River water treatment plant was upgraded to improve the drinking water quality for 1,758 households. This project involved the construction of a new low-lift pumping station, new chemical feed and chlorination system facilities, new treatment facilities and the modification of the existing water treatment units. In addition, a second reservoir was built and the existing clearwell and plant water systems were upgraded. John was on hand for the official opening with (l to r) Ontario Clean Water Association Manager Brad Sweet, Her Worship the Mayor of Deep River Anne Aikens, and MP Cheryl Gallant.



John was there for the opening of the Pembroke Summer Jobs Service Office—pictured here with (l to r) Manager of Community and Student Affairs for Algonquin College Jamie Bramburger, Business Co-op Student Leann Rollins, Co-ordinator Cathy Yantha and Summer Student Vicky Robinson.

Sharing the Dream of a new Algonquin College Campus in Pembroke

The project would benefit all of Renfrew County enabling the College to:

- Expand access to full-time and apprenticeship programs and provide employers with a larger skilled labour pool.
- Provide an enhanced learning experience for students with leading-edge classrooms, labs, recreational facilities and green space.
- Contribute to the revitalization of Pembroke's downtown by creating new business opportunities and strengthening the local economy.
- Develop a destination campus to bring more out-of-town students and their families to the region, producing an economic boost and further tourism potential.
- Attract and retain more local students, providing families with an economical option of studying in their home community.
- Increase academic and support staff to provide additional resources for students.
- Offer a modern facility and resources to the public for community usage, expanded corporate training, and new night class opportunities.

John is very supportive of this project and the efforts of so many people thus far and he has taken the message to the Ministers at Queen's Park.



John met with Karen Davies, Dean, Algonquin's Pembroke Campus regarding the proposal to build a new campus in downtown Pembroke.

Forestry: One of our area's most important industries

There are numerous challenges facing the forest industry today and a rather bleak outlook for the near future. There are some, however, who believe that the demand for paper and wood will grow significantly in future years and that Canada because of its vast forest base, its abundance of energy and water and its exceptional, responsible forest management practices is uniquely placed to be the benefactor of that predicted surge. In the meantime though, there doesn't seem to be any end to the contentious issues the industry has to deal with and there are some who doubt that the industry will be able to survive until that time.

The following are just a few of the enormous difficulties that have been brought to my attention by constituents in the forestry business:

- There have been 45,000 direct and indirect jobs lost as a result of what some believe are failed government policies, causing a great deal of hardship in the forestry sector.
- Several pulp and paper mills have announced closures and layoffs in response to increased international competition, the rising Canadian dollar and increasing electricity and fuel costs.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources distributed a report entitled, "Lightening Ecological Footprint" on logging in Algonquin Park, that recommends expanding logging protection zones to 54 per cent of the park from 22 per cent, negatively impacting the wood supply for the local forest industry. This is despite the fact that the harvesting of resources in Algonquin Park predates the establishment of the park, has sustained generations of families in RNP, and that the forests of Renfrew County and Algonquin Provincial Park are the best managed forests in the world.
- The provincial government is appealing an Ontario superior court ruling that residual value charges against Boniferro Mill Works in Sault Ste. Marie were not a fee but an illegal tax imposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources without the clear authorization of the provincial legislature. Millions of dollars are at stake in the outcome of this legal appeal.
- The State of Michigan, a major competitor for Ontario's forest industry offers a 10-year tax abatement program as well it reimburses 50% of the wage costs associated with employee training.
- Sawdust and wood chips have become a matter of interest to the Ministry of Environment, who claim they leak chemicals and are demanding sawmill operators hire expensive consultants to do environmental assessments.

- The new Endangered Species Act creates needless duplication of regulations and red tape that sucks up more resources and revenues from a struggling industry that for the most were already protectors of endangered and threatened species.
- 2008 is the toughest year the Ontario forests industry has experienced to date. The jobs of half the workers in the forestry industry are in jeopardy.



John discusses important forestry industry issues with Dean Felhaber, President of Ben Hokum and Son Limited of Killaloe, Ontario.

These are all issues that we must keep on the table and attempt to resolve in order to stop the demise of the forestry industry and position it to be ready for future redevelopment. The lives of some 230,000 Ontario families are depending on that.



Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

39th Parliament

House Question

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The forest industry is in a real crisis in this province, yet the McGuinty Liberals are content to whistle past the grave yard. At a time when fuel and electricity costs, as well as market conditions, are dealing it a

Forestry Industry

crippling blow, the Liberals decide that it's a good time, after months of discussions, to go back on their word, on the promise they made to the industry, committing that the Endangered Species Act would not supersede what is already the platinum standard, Ontario's Crown Forest

June 10, 2008

Sustainability Act. Minister, why would you turn your back on this industry when the sector can least absorb the body blow that you're dealing? Why would you break your word to them?

Please cut along dotted lines. Fold, tape edges and mail (postage is paid).

YOUR CONCERNS ARE MY PRIORITY

Setting Provincial Government Priorities for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

What do you feel are the most important issues facing RNP and Ontario?
What are your top three priorities?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs and the Economy | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taxation/Tax Cuts | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior's Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law and Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture & Heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> Children & Youth | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism |

Other - If you choose "other" as one of your top three priorities, what is that issue(s)?

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

E-Mail _____



Private Member Bills in the Legislature

Private Member's Bill 38, The Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Amendment Act (Assistance to Municipalities), 2008.

For the third time since I was elected in 2003, I introduced a Private Member's Bill to provide a share of the provincial Gas Tax Rebate to all municipalities in Ontario and not just those that have a public transportation system. My first attempt died on the Order Paper when the Premier prorogued the Legislature to give himself a clean slate in early 2005. My second attempt was debated in the Legislature and approved with the support of MPPs from all three parties in December of 2005. The bill was then referred to a Standing Committee of the Legislature but it was never called for consideration before the Premier collapsed the Legislature for the 2007 election.

Hearing from municipalities throughout Ontario that they need sustainable, predictable funding to maintain and improve their roads, bridges and subterranean infrastructure, and being galled by the fact that although gas tax is collected from everyone, the rebate is only given to those who have a public transportation system, I reintroduced the bill again this year. It was debated in the Legislature on May 1st and much to my extreme disappointment and surprise it was defeated. My disappointment is because this is an issue of fairness for rural Ontario—the current system favours vote-rich urban centres over equally-worthy rural areas. My surprise was that even government MPPs who voted for this bill in 2005 and government MPPs whose ridings would have benefited from receiving a share of the gas tax rebate voted against the bill.

Private Members Bills cannot be re-introduced in the same legislative session, so for now rural municipalities will have to depend upon an undependable end-of-year slushfund of which they may or may not get a fair share and the Federal Government's gas tax rebate which is distributed to all municipalities.

I am circulating a petition calling on the government to distribute gas tax revenues fairly to all municipalities across Ontario—not just to those with public transit systems. Call 1-800-267-2515

Private Member's Bill 58, An Act to Create the Ontario Medal for Civilian Bravery

In April, I introduced a Private Member's Bill to create an Ontario Medal for Civilian Bravery. Currently there is no provincial award available to civilians who perform an act of outstanding bravery.

I believe that citizens who perform selfless acts of bravery in an effort to protect the lives of others should receive special recognition from the province. Ontario awards medals to police or firefighters for exceptional acts of bravery, but not to private citizens which in my mind is a serious oversight.

In that Private Member's Bills have such a small chance of ever becoming law, I have asked the Premier to consider bringing my proposal forward as a Government Bill so that there will be a form of recognition that could be awarded on an annual basis to civilians who, in the opinion of an independent advisory council to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, have performed an act of outstanding bravery. There are a number of people in RNP who would be excellent candidates for such a medal.



The Legislative Page Program at Queen's Park

Legislative Pages are the grade 7 and 8 students who work in the Legislative Chamber of the Provincial Parliament in Toronto. They serve a Term of Duty of up to six weeks and are granted a leave of absence from school during that time.



Daniel Muzzi of Golden Lake recently served as a Page at the Legislative Assembly, joining a roster of talented young boys and girls from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke who have been successful in being chosen to serve in this capacity.

Pages participate in the legislative process, act as messengers in the Chamber, meet with politicians and officials, learn how laws are made and how the Province of Ontario is governed.

Pages from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke who have served with me at Queen's Park

Conor Kyte of Pembroke April 2004
Emma Dobson of Cobden January 2005
Lorena Dobson of Cobden September 2005
Morgan Brodofske of Palmer Rapids April 2006
Joe Kyte of Pembroke May 2007
Daniel Muzzi of Golden Lake March 2008

Lord's Prayer Continues in the Ontario Legislature

I would like to thank the hundreds of constituents who took the time to participate in the process that resulted in a large number of petitions to the Legislative Assembly and countless letters and e-mail messages expressing strong displeasure about the Premier's announced intention to revoke the reading of the Lord's Prayer at the start of each day in the Ontario Legislature.

As a result, after an unnecessary divisive exercise, an all-party committee has come to an agreement to continue reciting the Lord's Prayer each day, followed by a second prayer to be rotated among other faiths represented in the province.

This is a huge victory for every Ontarian who believes that while it is important to recognize the diversity of our province, it is equally important to remember the traditions that shape the Ontario we live in today. It was clear from the start of this debate that many were open to the recitation of other prayers in the Legislature, but not at the expense of the Lord's Prayer and the faith of the majority.

I am very proud that with the support of thousands of Ontarians our party helped to retain this important part of Ontario's history. This is a perfect example of what can happen when people speak up for their beliefs in that it truly made a difference.

JOHN YAKABUSKI, M.P.P.
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke



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