



Message from Queen's Park



Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski

September 15, 2005

Much has happened since last month's column. Firstly, let me express on behalf of all my colleagues the profound sadness felt by all Canadians for our friends in the southern United States as they deal with the destruction and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina which struck Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in late August. The outpouring of support and aid on the part of Canadians has certainly helped alleviate some of the terrible suffering these people are experiencing. What we all continue to see in all these disasters is the awesome power of Mother Nature. Our thoughts and prayers are certainly with them.

As you probably know I have also recently been appointed as the official opposition energy critic by our Leader, John Tory. I am very excited about this new responsibility and have already received many requests from stakeholders within the energy sector for meetings to discuss their views with regards to the future of electricity in Ontario. As I write this piece I have just returned from the Ontario Energy Associations Annual Conference where Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association expressed his serious concern that if Ontario doesn't get its energy house in order, business will go elsewhere.

Still on energy but moving away from electricity to the most talked about subject of the past two weeks – Gas Prices. While they have begun to drop back somewhat they are continuing to be at a level that is hurting business and people, especially working families struggling to meet all of their obligations while the federal and provincial governments take more and more of their hard earned money. Back when Dalton McGuinty was in opposition he berated the government, saying it was their responsibility to deal with escalating gas prices, that they must do something to stop the gouging. Yet in the midst of the biggest jump in history his position changed 180 degrees. He said the government could do nothing about it and that people should take public transit or buy a hybrid vehicle. What time does the bus go through Quadeville Dalton? By the way, when he had his knickers in a knot over the governments reaction to gas prices it was selling at sixty cents a liter. You can't have it both ways Premier!

The Renfrew Fair wrapped up last weekend signaling the end of another country fair season here in Renfrew County. I tip my hat to all those who work so hard to make our fairs such fantastic community events throughout the Valley. They really do capture the essence of who

we are as rural Ontarians. The local fair continues to be the highlight of the summer for many.

The summer has also seen significant construction projects undertaken here on our highways. The resurfacing of highway 41 from the highway 60 intersection to Pembroke is now complete. The work on the western section of highway 60 which consists of reconstruction as well as the installation of passing lanes is progressing well, and the Douglas to Kelley's Corners portion of highway 60 project has now begun. The Kelley's Corners to Eganville stretch will be completed next year. With the approval of the four laning of highway 7 from Carleton Place to the 417 it would seem logical that the next four laning project should be the extension of 417 through Arnprior to Renfrew. I will continue to work with local municipal governments to pressure the provincial government on this issue.

I had just received word that the Deep River and District Hospital has been named as one of nine hospitals recognized as "high performing" in an emergency department care report released by the Ministry of Health and the Ontario Hospital Association. Deep River and District Hospital was also one of only two that surpassed standards in three of four categories. Thumbs up to all and keep up the great work. In our hospitals, it's the people that make the difference.

Lastly, our policy development task force will be holding a forum next Monday September 26th at the Eganville Legion at 7:00pm. The issues to be discussed include energy, forestry and the environment. This is your opportunity to help us develop policy as we move toward the next election in 2007. Hope to see you there.

John Yakabuski, MPP
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

Office Contact Information:

Constituency Office
84 Isabella St.
Pembroke, ON
K8A 5S5

Queen's Park Office
Room 202 N.W., Legislative Building
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A8

john_yakabuski@ontla.ola.org