



Message from Queen's Park



Monthly Column by MPP John Yakabuski

January, 2008

Things are getting back to normal (whatever that is these days) after Christmas with the children back to school etc. The weather is again a topic of conversation. The January thaw was surely one of the most dramatic in recent memory. Some colder weather will help now to make the ice on our lakes safer, and to kill off some of the bugs floating around.

One of the issues making the news these days is the controversy and confusion caused by the McGuinty government's move to create another holiday in Ontario. Their decision that February 18th will be "Family Day" has shown once again that this government uses the "back of an envelope plan" as it makes new law. Regardless of ones views on this new holiday – for some – it is clear that the decision to create it was made without consultation and without consideration of the many problems and inequities that would follow as a result. This very political approach is quite simply not the way to govern in the Province of Ontario.

Recently Renfrew County Council has indicated that it plans to take a much more unified approach to pressing the Ministry of Transportation regarding the expansion of Highway 417. Rather than municipal governments lobbying individually, they will speak as a group on this very crucial issue. This is certainly an approach that I support and will continue to work with the County of Renfrew and its municipal officials as we make our case for this project to proceed.

The recent shootings in Toronto have its Mayor, David Miller, as well as the Provincial Attorney General, Chris Bentley, calling on the federal government to ban hand guns. They just don't get it. Hand guns have been effectively banned already. They have been strictly controlled in Canada since 1935. A complete ban will make sure that you or I don't own one but it will have little effect on the gangs of thugs that operate in Toronto. Someone who is capable of committing murder is not going to be deterred by the fact that their gun is illegal. The Liberals have to get off their soapbox and take down these gangs. Stop trying to blame the federal government for your own unwillingness to deal with the problem of gangs.

On Friday January 18th, I had the honour of joining four brave police officers from our riding as they were presented with The Ontario Medal for Police Bravery. Acting Deputy Chief – then Sergeant – John Andrew (DREW) Mellon and Constable Shawn Piercey of the Pembroke Police Services, as well as Provincial Constable Jack Gibson, and Sergeant Bruce Sawbridge of the Upper Ottawa Valley Detachment of the OPP, received their medals and certificates in a special ceremony at Queen's Park. The Honourable David Onley, Lieutenant

Governor of Ontario and the Honourable Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Community Safety & Correctional Services, made the presentations. The four officers were awarded their medals for displaying exemplary courage and bravery. They each risked their own lives to save the life of another. Congratulations and thank you to each one of our gallant heroes. To you we extend our admiration and gratitude.

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