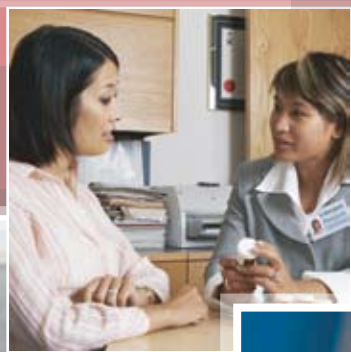




2007 PROGRESS REPORT

moving forward working together

>> getting results, together

This is the fourth in a series of Progress Reports on our government's plan to strengthen our province by strengthening the health, education, skills and prosperity of Ontarians.

Each report has strived to update Ontarians on the results we've achieved in a transparent and, whenever possible, measurable way.

The goal is to be accountable to the people we are privileged to serve — the people of Ontario.

So here you will find the latest results on class sizes and test scores in our schools, wait times and access to doctors in health care, and investment and job creation.

It's virtually impossible to list everything the province has done over the past four years.

The focus, then, is on the leading results when it comes to success for students, better health, and jobs and prosperity.

In all of these areas, and many more, Ontarians have made significant progress by working hard and working together.

What may be most important, however, is that these improvements provide a stronger foundation for what Ontarians can achieve together in the years ahead.



>> success for students

Improving the education and skills of Ontarians is the centrepiece of our plan for Ontario.

When we equip our children to take on the world and win, we equip Ontario to come out on top in the truly global, hypercompetitive economy of the 21st century.

When we reinforce in our children the basic values we share — such as respect for each other and the value of hard work — we help build the kind of society we want for them and their families.

Four years ago, Ontario's public education system was struggling — teacher morale was low, 26 million learning days had been lost to labour disputes, schools required urgent repairs and students weren't getting the individual attention they needed to succeed.

Today, class sizes are smaller, test scores are higher, more students are graduating and schools are getting much-needed repairs.

Per-pupil funding in Ontario's publicly funded schools has increased by 29 per cent from \$7,370 in 2002-03 to \$9,526 in 2007-08 — that's \$2,156 more per student.

We've increased per-pupil funding for rural schools by 32 per cent.

We are fixing the funding formula — investing an additional \$309 million over the next two years. This is in addition to the \$781 million funding increase announced in March 2007.

And for the first time, four-year contracts with teachers guarantee no full-time teachers' strikes. A revitalized Ontario College of Teachers that respects teachers as professionals has the confidence of its members and the public.

We're working with educators, students and parents to make public education the very best education.

Giving kids the best start in life

One way we can ensure our kids grow up to be caring, contributing citizens is by giving them the best possible start in life. We must begin with the early years, so our children are ready to learn when they start school. That's why we've increased support for Ontario's children and youth by more than \$1.3 billion — bringing our total commitment to more than \$3.6 billion.



>> success for students

Under our Best Start Plan for early childhood development:

- > We've created more than 22,000 childcare spaces across Ontario since 2003.
- > Ontario eliminated restrictions on childcare fee subsidies for parents with RRSPs and RESPs.
- > Families are now eligible for childcare fee subsidies based on a sliding scale as family income increases.
- > A new College of Early Childhood Educators is establishing high standards for childcare professionals.

Smaller class sizes

Experienced educators emphasize the importance of the early grades, from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3.

These “primary” years are the ones where children are learning the basics of reading, writing and math — the critical foundation for future success. That's why we have focused on reducing class sizes in these grades, so children get more of the individual attention they need at a time when it's vitally important they get it.

- > In 2003-04, one quarter of all primary classes had 25 or more students.
- > In 2006-07:
 - 93 per cent of primary classes had 23 or fewer students.
 - 65 per cent of primary classes had 20 or fewer.

We are on track to ensure that 90 per cent of primary classes have 20 or fewer students this coming fall.

That's because we're funding 5,100 new primary school teachers.



>> success for students



Higher test scores

We have provided our schools with additional resources, from more teachers to better textbooks to improved libraries.

But to be accountable to Ontarians, we need to ensure more resources are delivering better results.

We use standardized tests in reading, writing and math to measure student progress.

The purpose is to use the results productively, by ensuring struggling schools get what they need to improve, and successful schools share their best practices.

The goal is excellence for all children in publicly funded schools.

Over the past four years, test scores in reading, writing and math have gone up:

Overall, 65 per cent of Grade 3 students are at or above the provincial standard — up from 54 per cent in 2002-03.

And 62 per cent of Grade 6 students are at or above the provincial standard — up from 55 per cent in 2002-03.

And improvements are being made to ensure more of our children find success:

- > 16,000 elementary teachers have been trained to help other teachers improve the reading, writing and math skills of their students.
- > Funding for almost 2,000 new elementary specialist teachers is helping to improve reading, writing and math skills — and boost student achievement in areas such as music, the arts and phys-ed.
- > Student achievement officers, experienced principals, expert teachers and literacy specialists are working with almost 800 struggling schools to improve reading and writing skills.

More high school students graduating

Another measure of student achievement is the number of students who graduate. That's why we've been working hard to ensure that more high school students stay in school and succeed.

So far, the early results are encouraging: the graduation rate is up, from 68 to 73 per cent.

>> success for students

To ensure students continue learning to at least age 18, instead of dropping out at 16, we have introduced new legislation, a high-skills major option, expanded co-op programs and more ways to earn high school credits.

Other steps include:

- > Training 1,100 specialized Student Success Teachers who, instead of teaching in a traditional classroom, work to identify kids at risk of dropping out, work with them to help them complete high school and work with others who have dropped out to tailor a program that allows them to return to classes.
- > Funding 159 innovative “lighthouse projects” that encourage kids to stay in school, as well as attract those who’ve recently left school to return and obtain their diploma.
- > Introducing formal links between high schools, and universities and colleges, that stress the importance of reaching higher.

Good, safe places to learn

As of this past summer, more than 8,000 construction projects were completed or underway at our schools, part of an ongoing \$4-billion investment in repairs, renovations and new schools.

In addition:

- > More than 3,400 schools have undergone safety audits to identify and fix potential problems.
- > Funding has been provided for bullying-prevention programs — \$1,500 per elementary school and \$2,000 per high school.
- > As many as 25,000 teachers will undergo specialized bullying-prevention training starting this year.



>> better health

Few things are as important as our health. And working hard to ensure the health of Ontarians has never been more important.

We live busy, hectic lives. The demands on individual Ontarians and their families are tremendous.

Our population is growing. And it's aging. The demands on our system of universal, publicly funded and operated medicare will only continue to grow.

We need to compete with the rest of the world for investment and jobs. And medicare is one of our greatest competitive advantages over places where employers and individuals pay large amounts for medical insurance.

And, finally, our system of publicly funded, universally available health care — based on your need and not your income — helps define us as Canadians: we look out for one another.

But, four years ago, confidence in medicare was eroding: hospitals were being closed, nurses were being fired and far too many Ontarians were without a family doctor.

So we set out to improve Ontarians' health by building and expanding hospitals, hiring nurses and training more doctors. At the same time, we've worked to promote wellness and prevent illness, and deliver shorter wait times for key medical procedures.

Building and expanding hospitals

There are 100 hospital expansion and building projects either completed, underway or planned across Ontario.

These include:

- > More than doubling the size of Hôpital Montfort in Ottawa — increasing the hospital's size to over 700,000 square feet.
- > Building a new regional cancer centre and expanding the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie — including adding two new operating rooms, more hospital beds and expanded emergency and ambulatory care services.
- > Constructing a new hospital in Sault Ste. Marie, which will house 289 beds, an emergency department twice its current size and, for the first time, offer radiation therapy in the community.

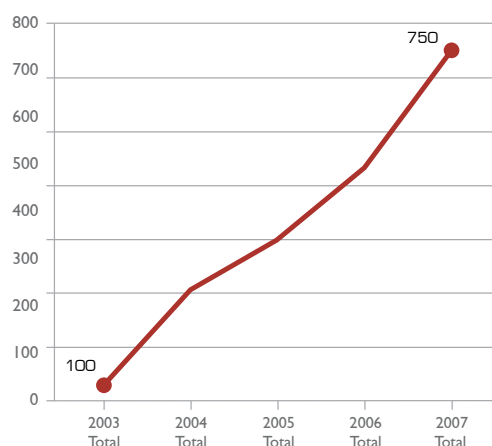




More nurses and doctors

- > We're hiring 8,000 more nurses. About 5,400 are on the job now and we have provided funding to hire another 1,200 in long-term care homes and 1,600 in areas of need to strengthen health care this year.
- > We're increasing first-year medical school enrolment by 23 per cent between 2004-05 and 2008-09.
- > We created 70 per cent more family medicine training positions — which means an additional 337 family doctors by 2008.
- > To improve access to doctors in the north, we've opened the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. With campuses in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, it is the first new medical school in Ontario in decades.
- > Work on the Windsor Medical School satellite campus is underway. Funding has been committed for three additional campuses in Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara and Mississauga.
- > We've created 150 new Family Health Teams in 112 communities — doctors, nurses and other health care professionals (i.e., dietitians, pharmacists, social workers) working together to provide better access to care for more patients.
- > About 750 new internationally educated doctors have been accredited in Ontario since 2003. Since 2004, we've more than doubled the number of training and assessment positions available from 90 to 200.
- > We've almost doubled the number of Community Health Centres (CHCs) and satellites to improve access to health care in communities — 49 new CHCs and satellite centres are established or under development.
- > We've uploaded from municipalities the responsibility for funding mandatory public health programs — from 50 per cent of the total cost to 75 per cent.
- > Our new Health Force Ontario strategy is attracting more doctors and nurses. It includes a new marketing and recruitment centre, a job guarantee for new nursing grads and keeping experienced nurses on the job longer as mentors and advisors.
- > We've doubled the number of nurse practitioner training positions from 75 to 150 a year.

Internationally Trained Doctors in Training and Assessment Programs



>> better health

Shorter wait times

Compared to four years ago, Ontarians are getting:

- > Cataract surgery 158 days faster
- > Hip and knee replacements 116 days and 110 days earlier
- > Cancer surgery 17 days sooner
- > Cardiac procedures up to 34 days quicker, and
- > MRI and CT scans 10 days and 19 days faster.

We know that because we are the first government in Ontario's history to actually measure waiting times.

And Ontarians know about this progress because we're the first to put that wait time information online.

Ontario's first wait times website — which tracks and compares wait times across the province — has been visited by Ontarians four million times to date.

The improvement in wait times is the result of almost 1.3 million additional procedures.



Better access to care

- > Ontario's colorectal cancer screening program — the first of its kind in Canada — means 34,421 more Ontarians will have access to colonoscopies this year.
- > To improve access for northerners, we've raised the travel grant mileage rate under the Northern Health Travel Grant Program to 41 cents a kilometre — and created the first accommodation allowance of up to \$100 per eligible trip.
- > To ensure that Ontarians receive the long-term care they need, more than 5,000 new beds have been added since April 2004.
- > We've also created 1,100 new nursing and 4,900 direct care staff positions in long-term care — and funding for another 1,200 nurses was part of our most recent budget.
- > Home care has been expanded to an additional 88,000 Ontarians needing short-term acute care.
- > Since 2003-04, the government has increased funding for children's mental health services by nearly \$80 million.
- > We've more than tripled the support for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families since 2003-04, including training for teachers, child care staff and therapists.
- > More than 1,100 children with autism are getting the support they need — and we've reduced the number of children waiting for assessments by 69 per cent.
- > New legislation is regulating traditional Chinese medicine, homeopathy, naturopathy, kinesiology and psychotherapy — the first new health professions to be regulated since 1993.

Promoting wellness, preventing illness

To protect people's health from tobacco-related illnesses, we've worked hard to toughen tobacco laws, ban smoking in public places and encourage more Ontarians to quit altogether. As a result:

- > Health Canada's latest figures indicate that tobacco consumption is down in Ontario by 18.7 per cent since 2003.
- > Our landmark Smoke-Free Ontario Act came into effect in 2006, making enclosed public spaces and workplaces 100 per cent smoke free.
- > On May 31, 2008, the final phase of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act will take effect with a complete ban on the retail display of tobacco products.
- > New programs aimed at youth are getting results: 67 per cent of high school students have never smoked a cigarette — a 10 per cent increase since 2003.
- > We're making nicotine replacement therapy more affordable by exempting nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers, sprays and tablets from retail sales tax.

To prevent or detect other health problems, we have:

- > Launched Canada's most comprehensive newborn screening program, increasing the number of disorders newborns are screened for — from two to 28 by the end of this year.
- > Taken action to protect Ontarians against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) — a major cause of cervical cancer — by offering free vaccines to 84,000 girls in Grade 8 and saving families up to \$405 per child.
- > Mandated 20 minutes of physical activity every day for students in all Ontario elementary schools.
- > Served more than 360,000 elementary and secondary students healthier, more nutritious meals through student nutrition programs across Ontario.
- > Added three new vaccines free-of-charge for chicken pox, meningococcal disease and pneumococcal disease — resulting in more than 1.8 million kids getting immunized and saving families up to \$600 per child.



>> better health

- > Provided more flu shots to Ontario families.
- > Provided funding to the Heart and Stroke Foundation to support 1,000 Automated External Defibrillators in communities across Ontario — the single largest government investment for public access defibrillators in Canadian history.



For the first time in the history of Ontario, we have a Ministry of Health Promotion dedicated to encouraging healthier and more active lives among Ontarians. It has also:

- > Launched ACTIVE2010, a major campaign to encourage all Ontarians to make physical activity a part of their daily lives.
- > Expanded community use of schools after hours at reduced rates.
- > Increased support for our amateur athletes by 175 per cent since 2003.

Strengthening medicare

To ensure medicare is there for future generations, we have:

- > Banned two-tier, pay-your-way-to-the-front-of-the-line health care in Ontario with the passage of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act.
- > Established the Ontario Health Quality Council to report on our health care system, so we can determine where improvements are needed and where progress is being made.
- > More than doubled funding for cancer drug treatments — from \$62.4 million in 2003-04 to \$152.12 million in 2006-07.
- > Kept basic accommodation rates for seniors in long-term care homes unchanged for two consecutive years.
- > Improved care and accountability in long-term care homes through the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007.
- > Strengthened pandemic preparedness by providing 15,000 emergency infection control kits to frontline health providers.
- > Created the Operation Health Protection action plan to prevent and better deal with health emergencies like SARS.

>> jobs and prosperity

Ontario's formula for jobs and prosperity in the 21st century is straightforward: invest in our people, strengthen our infrastructure, promote innovation and be prudent with the province's finances.

Four years ago, however, our universities and colleges were severely weakened, our infrastructure was aging, our capacity to develop ideas into new products was lagging and we had inherited a \$5.6-billion deficit.

Today, we're investing in higher education, building roads and bridges, and promoting research and development.

The budget is balanced. In fact, Ontario had a \$2.3-billion surplus last year, and is projecting surpluses for the next three years.

We have more than 340,000 net new jobs — and billions of dollars in new investment — to show for this momentum.

More than 96 per cent of these new jobs are in occupations that pay, on average, more than \$19.50 an hour.

But beyond the statistics lay the most important measure of all — a higher quality of life for more and more Ontarians.



>> jobs and prosperity



Reaching higher

Reaching Higher — a \$6.2-billion plan to improve accessibility, affordability and quality when it comes to universities and colleges in Ontario — was launched in 2005.

Under the plan:

- > We have added 86,000 new spaces to our colleges and universities — a 22 per cent increase from four years ago.
 - > We are doubling student aid, with 145,000 students benefiting from improved assistance last year alone.
 - > We have brought back grants for the most needy students, with 56,000 low- and middle-income students qualifying last year.
 - > We are limiting tuition hikes for most college and university students to five per cent — after freezing tuitions for the first two years of our mandate.
-
- > We've increased book and supply allowances in 2006-07 for the first time since the mid-1980s, benefiting 138,000 students.
 - > We have expanded post-graduate opportunities, with 14,000 more students expected to seek post-graduate degrees by 2009-10.
 - > We've invested \$70 million to upgrade and repair Ontario's colleges and universities.
 - > We've established three-year agreements with colleges and universities to identify and measure quality improvements.
 - > We introduced the First Generation Bursary program to provide special aid to students who are the first in their family to attend post-secondary education. So far, over 1,100 such students have benefited from more assistance.

>> jobs and prosperity

Improving skills and apprenticeship training

To encourage students to pursue trades, create incentives for employers and help workers upgrade their skills, we created the \$2.1-billion Jobs and Skills Renewal Strategy. It's getting results:

- > We are registering 6,000 more apprentices a year now than we were four years ago — a 30 per cent increase.
- > The new Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit is encouraging employers to take on more apprentices in the skilled trades.
- > We're providing \$4.5 million in scholarships and employer bonuses to help at-risk high school students enter apprenticeships.
- > This year, almost one million Ontarians and businesses will benefit from close to \$1 billion in employment and training services through Employment Ontario.



Attracting high-paying jobs

We believe it takes more than a competitive tax structure alone to ensure Ontario can compete for investment and high-paying jobs.

That's why we introduced the Ontario Automotive Investment Strategy — a \$500-million fund designed to leverage high-wage, high-tech jobs that would last.

So far, that fund has saved or created thousands of jobs and attracted more than \$7 billion in new investment.

That includes \$2.5 billion from General Motors, \$1.1 billion from Linamar, \$1.1 billion from Toyota, \$1 billion from Ford, \$768 million from DaimlerChrysler, \$270 million from Navistar, \$154 million from Honda, \$100 million from NemaK and \$93 million from Valiant.

Major projects include the modernization of the Ford Plant in Oakville and construction of a brand new Toyota assembly plant in Woodstock — the first greenfield assembly plant in Canada in a decade.

And for the first time since the invention of the car, Ontario is the leading auto manufacturer in North America.

>> jobs and prosperity

To build on the success of this investment model, the province recently launched the Next Generation Jobs Fund.

It's a \$650-million fund designed to encourage new and green technologies — such as the next generation of clean vehicles — that can be marketed to the world.

In addition, the government has established a six-year, \$500-million Advanced Manufacturing Investment Strategy.

This fund is designed to help manufacturers invest in new, innovative technologies at a time when they face tremendous challenges, including fierce competition, a higher dollar and increased borrowing costs.

So far, that strategy is supporting projects that will generate \$670 million in new investment and create or retain 4,000 jobs.

We've also launched a new foreign investment strategy — and in 2006-07, we attracted 38 international investment deals worth \$670 million, which led to creating or retaining 8,411 jobs.

That strategy has been supported by Ontario business missions to China, India and Pakistan, resulting in more than 70 agreements that will develop new trade, investment and educational opportunities for Ontario.



A greener economy

Ontarians want an economy that's stronger and greener at the same time.

We've worked towards that goal by protecting our air, water and green space. At the same time, we've invested in the next generation of green technologies and jobs.

We have:

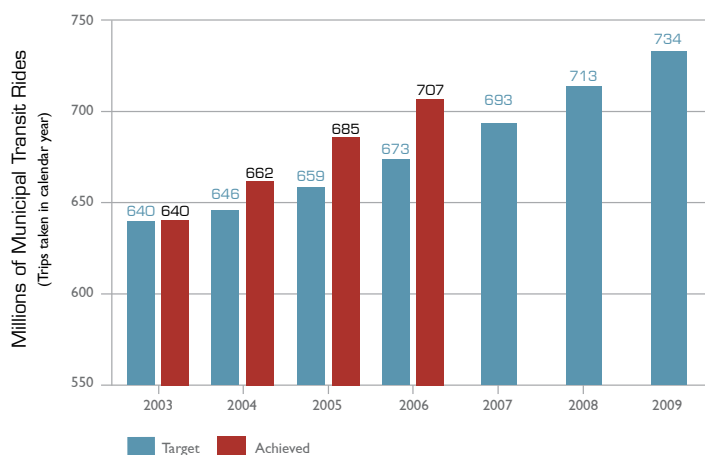
- > Launched MoveOntario 2020 — the largest transit build in Canadian history. It's a \$17.5-billion, 12-year plan to remove 300 million car trips per year off our roads.
- > Already invested a record \$4.9 billion in public transit — including more than \$1.8 billion for GO Transit — to reduce gridlock and greenhouse gas emissions.
- > Created a 1.8-million acre Greenbelt across the Golden Horseshoe that permanently protects green space from development.
- > Supported the planting of 1.8 million new trees on the Greenbelt by 2010.

» jobs and prosperity



- > Closed the single largest producer of air pollution in the Greater Toronto Area — the Lakeview Generating Station — the equivalent of removing 500,000 cars from our roads.
- > Set ambitious but realistic targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels — six per cent by 2014, 15 per cent by 2020 and an 80 per cent reduction by 2050.
- > Required all gasoline sold in Ontario to contain an annual average of five per cent ethanol.
- > Agreed to coordinate policies on fuel standards with California. Ontario will require producers to reduce carbon emissions from transportation fuels by 10 per cent by 2020.
- > Doubled the maximum retail sales tax rebate for qualified hybrid vehicles to \$2,000, helping car owners reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
- > Implemented all 121 recommendations in Justice O'Connor's report on the Walkerton tainted water tragedy, including passage of a new Clean Water Act that ensures communities identify potential risks to local drinking water sources and take action.
- > Made polluters pay for spills with new environmental penalties legislation.
- > Hired 33 new inspectors and other compliance staff to increase water inspections and protect Ontario's water supply.
- > Established some of the toughest hazardous waste disposal rules in North America.
- > Partnered with industry to cut the use of plastic bags by 50 per cent over five years.

Municipal Transit Ridership



>> jobs and prosperity

- > Championed the development of a national packaging strategy to reduce waste.
- > Strengthened protection for species at risk.
- > Protected acres of ecologically significant land in Rouge Park, including the new Bob Hunter Memorial Park.
- > Launched “Bag it Back” — a new deposit return program for recycling wine, beer and spirit containers, which will help divert about 25,000 to 30,000 additional tonnes of glass from landfills annually.

Sustainable growth, modern infrastructure

Ontarians support sustainable growth. They want to ensure our infrastructure can keep pace with growing communities. And they want to know that growth won't undermine the quality of life that brings so many people to Ontario in the first place.

Striving to fulfill these objectives, we have:

- > Launched a \$30-billion, five-year Renew Ontario Plan that is repairing and expanding roads, bridges and other infrastructure across the province.
- > Introduced a new Places to Grow Act to ensure sustainable and prosperous growth.
- > Created a Greater Toronto Transportation Authority to develop a seamless and integrated transit system in the GTA and Hamilton.
- > Worked to increase municipal transit ridership by 65 million passenger trips across Ontario — the equivalent of removing 54 million car trips from our roads.
- > Supported 86 transit systems in 104 communities in Ontario by providing two cents per litre in gas tax funding.



>> jobs and prosperity

Supporting other key sectors

- > We've boosted the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit from 20 per cent to 30 per cent — and the Ontario Production Services Tax Credit from 11 per cent to 18 per cent — to keep Ontario competitive in the global entertainment market.
- > To promote innovation in Ontario, we are investing nearly \$1.7 billion in research and development, to turn new ideas into products and processes the world wants to buy.
- > Ontario's Mineral Development Strategy — the first in the province's history — is strengthening our position as a leading international mining jurisdiction. Last year, Ontario's mineral production from 41 mines was valued at \$9.4 billion, up from \$7.4 billion in 2005.
- > More than 9,200 jobs have been created or sustained through the \$320 million we have invested through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation since 2003.

Ensuring a reliable supply of clean and affordable energy

For the first time in years, Ontario has a plan in place to ensure a reliable supply of clean and affordable energy.

It's a plan to make Ontario a leader in renewable energy, create a culture of conservation and replace some of our existing nuclear capacity while phasing out coal-fired generation.

So far, we have:

- > Brought more than 3,000 megawatts of new power online.
- > Advanced new projects that will provide more than 10,000 megawatts of new electricity by 2010 — more than any other place in North America and enough to power more than five million homes.
- > Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired generation by 29 per cent — all remaining coal-fired power plants will close by 2014.
- > Provided up to \$150 for homeowners to help pay for home energy audits and matched the federal government's grants of up to \$5,000 for home energy retrofits.
- > Provided a retail sales tax exemption on certain Energy Star® qualified appliances and lighting products.
- > Launched an ambitious plan to double our electricity capacity from renewable sources by 2025.
- > Introduced North America's first renewable-energy Standard Offer Program — providing a fixed price for electricity produced by small-scale wind, biomass or small hydroelectric projects, with more than 100 contracts in place so far.

>> jobs and prosperity

- > Gone from 10 wind turbines to almost 700 in place or planned, including Canada's largest wind farm on Wolfe Island near Kingston.
- > Dramatically increased energy from solar power, including a planned solar energy farm near Sarnia, one of the largest in the world.

Helping newcomers succeed

When newcomers to Ontario succeed, we all succeed. So we've been working hard to help them settle and prosper here in our province.

- > To help internationally trained professionals find work in their chosen fields here in Ontario, we passed The Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, which ensures a fair and transparent process for obtaining registration and licensing in regulated professions.
- > We've established the first-ever Office of the Fairness Commissioner, which is responsible for assessing registration and licensing practices.
- > Our new Foreign Trained Professionals Loans Program is providing up to \$5,000 per person to cover assessment, training and exam costs.
- > To help newcomers settle, improve their language skills and find employment, we are investing about \$160 million in 2007-08 — bringing our total investment in newcomer settlement services to \$605 million since 2003.
- > We fought for and won fairness for newcomers to Ontario: a new agreement with the federal government provides an additional \$920 million in federal spending on language training and settlement services over five years.
- > Over \$53 million has been invested in more than 90 bridging programs to help internationally trained individuals get the skills and knowledge they need to work in Ontario.



>> jobs and prosperity

A competitive business climate

- > We're working to create a single corporate income tax collection system to improve service delivery for business.
- > We're phasing out the capital tax and accelerating a five per cent rate cut in 2007, while working towards eliminating the tax altogether in 2010.
- > We're cutting Business Education Taxes. Under our plan, Ontario businesses are expected to save about \$540 million over seven years.
- > The new Ministry for Small Business and Entrepreneurship is working to ensure unnecessary regulations are eliminated at the same time proper safeguards are in place. So far, 24 per cent of business forms spanning seven ministries have been eliminated.

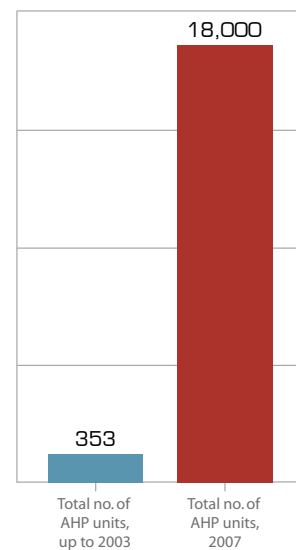
Ensuring every Ontarian has a shot at success

Every Ontarian is entitled to a fair shot at success. That's why we have introduced several measures designed to help Ontario's most vulnerable families, and particularly their children, reach their true potential.

We have:

- > Introduced the new Ontario Child Benefit, which will provide up to \$1,100 per child each year for low-income families, including for the first time, the working poor.
- > Increased social assistance rates seven per cent over the past three years.
- > Increased the minimum wage four times from \$6.85 in 2003 to \$8 this year — and it will continue to go up until it reaches \$10.25/hour in 2010.
- > Provided 35,000 families with affordable housing allowances.
- > Allocated more than 18,000 new affordable housing units for low-income families, seniors, single people and persons living with a mental illness over the past four years.

Total Affordable Housing Units Allocated



>> jobs and prosperity

- > Through the Ontario Home Electricity Relief Program, we've supported about 1.5 million families with more than \$100 million in assistance.
- > New legislation has set the lowest rent increase guidelines in Ontario's history — protecting tenants and benefiting about 1.35 million households in Ontario.
- > We've invested \$18.8 million in the Provincial Rent Bank Program, which has prevented more than 9,600 low-income households from being evicted due to a missed rent payment.
- > Acted to provide \$740 million in property tax relief for low- and moderate-income families this year through Ontario Property and Sales Tax Credits.
- > Provided up to eight weeks of job-protected, unpaid time off for those taking care of a gravely ill family member.
- > Improved the Ontario Disability Support Program to help recipients move into the workforce, and introduced the new Ontarians with Disabilities Act to ensure workplaces and other public places are truly accessible.
- > Enhanced support for adults with development disabilities, investing more than \$500 million in developmental services and supports since 2003.
- > We've strengthened child protection services with increased investments, totalling \$260 million since 2003.



>> jobs and prosperity

Building opportunity in rural Ontario

Rural Ontario is an important part of who we are as Ontarians. And agriculture is central to the rural way of life.

We've been working hard to support our farmers and our small communities. We have:

- > Provided more than \$95 million in support, plus \$36 million through Ontario's share of Canadian Income Stabilization Program advances, to help farmers recover from the fallout of BSE.
- > Provided more than \$1 billion for farm income stabilization and support programs.
- > Exempted farms transferred within a family from land transfer taxes.
- > Increased the number of meat inspectors by 150 to ensure the highest quality standards.
- > Increased annual funding for rural school boards by \$590 million since 2003 — \$2,439 more per student, an increase of 32 per cent.
- > Provided an additional \$60 million on top of the regular funding to help small and rural hospitals meet the unique needs of small communities.
- > Invested in 49 Family Health Teams in rural Ontario.
- > Launched a five-year, \$3.3-billion plan to invest in rural infrastructure, providing funding for roads, bridges, airports, schools and hospitals.
- > Secured more than 7,000 jobs in the food-processing sector with \$1.1 billion worth of investments since 2003.



>> jobs and prosperity

Creating safe communities

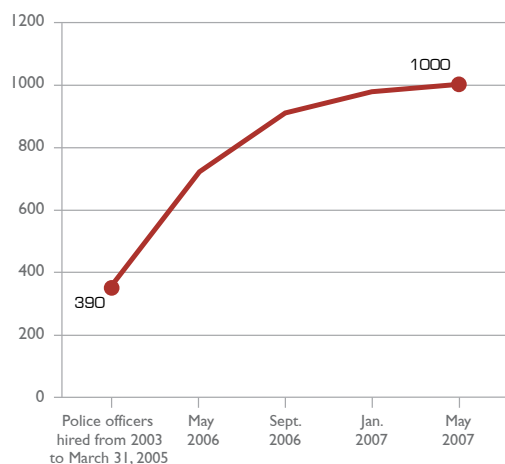
Keeping Ontarians safe is part of building a strong, more prosperous province for everyone.

That's why we've worked with the police and community groups to be tough on crime — and tough on the causes of crime — especially when it comes to battling guns, gangs and street racers.

We have:

- > Put 1,000 more municipal officers on our streets and recently announced an additional 200 provincial police officers.
- > Hired 100 Crown attorneys to prosecute criminal offences.
- > Created and expanded the Guns and Gangs Task Force.
- > Set up major crimes courts to increase the criminal justice system's capacity to respond to large-scale gun and gang-related crimes.
- > Invested in a \$28.5-million Youth Opportunities Strategy, which provides young people in underserved communities with positive alternatives, including job and training opportunities.
- > Set up a Youth Challenge Fund chaired by Mike "Pinball" Clemons, which is providing funding for 58 community-led programs targeted to young people in the GTA.
- > Stiffened penalties for street racers, including higher fines, automatic roadside driver's licence suspensions and vehicle impoundment.
- > Toughened laws for drunk drivers, including stiffer penalties for first-time and repeat offenders and vehicle seizures for those who drive while under suspension.

Putting 1,000 New Officers on the Street



>> conclusion

This has been the fourth in a series of Progress Reports on our government's plan to strengthen our province by strengthening the health, education, skills and prosperity of Ontarians.

In this document, we've strived to update Ontarians on the results we've achieved in a transparent and, whenever possible, measurable way.

The progress has been significant. And it's due to Ontarians working hard and working together.

But our province is, of course, a work in progress. And there's much more to do, if Ontario is to reach its full potential.

We've come a long way in four years. But most importantly, we now have a stronger foundation on which to build a stronger Ontario, for years and generations to come.



2007

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