

Morning Media Scan: Budget - May 25, 2017

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Morning Media Scan: May 25, 2017

MEDIA SCAN: PROVINCIAL BUDGET 2017

May 25, 2017

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Print Coverage

North Bay Nugget: Grits playing politics: Union; CUPE warns of widening gap between hospital needs and funding; A1 / Front; 2017.05.25

PUBLICATION: North Bay Nugget
PAGE: A1 / Front
DATE: 2017.05.25
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Grits playing politics: Union; CUPE warns of widening gap between hospital needs and funding

CUPE executives are asking whether the Liberal government's decision to give Sault Area Hospital a greater funding increase than other Northern Ontario hospitals could be related to the fact Sault Ste. Marie is in the middle of a byelection.

Michael Hurley, of CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, travelled Wednesday to Sudbury, where he noted that the majority of Northern Ontario hospitals got about a two per cent funding increase, while the Sault Area Hospital saw a 3.8 per cent allocation that amounts to \$5.5 million in 2017.

Although the Sault Area Hospital fared better than other Northern hospitals, Hurley said, it did so in the throes of a byelection "the Liberals are desperate to win, and is still not enough to restore staff, beds and services that have been cut following eight years shrinking provincial funding for hospitals."

Following years of zero base funding increases, Hurley said, the consensus among health-care stakeholders from the association representing hospitals to front-line staff unions is that hospitals need a minimum of about a five per cent increase in funding, simply to maintain existing services.

In the April budget, the province provided a province-wide funding increase of 3.1 per cent for hospitals. Northern hospitals are getting two per cent, with the exception of the Sault.

In 2016-17, the Liberals planned to increase funding two per cent, Hurley said, but were forced by community and labour campaigns focused on patient needs to increase funding 3.5 per cent by the end of the year.

"Like last year, communities have to drive hospital funding higher this year, as well," Hurley said in a statement. "Two per cent just won't do."

To bring hospitals just to last year's 3.5 per cent, he said, funding for Health Sciences North in Sudbury would need to increase by \$10.15 million, not the \$5.8 million announced by the local Liberal MPP last week.

Similarly, North Bay Regional Health Centre's allocation of \$3.67 million would need to go up to \$6.4 million; Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre's \$4 million would need to increase to \$7 million; Lake of the Woods in Kenora would need funding increased from \$555,011 to \$971,000 and Timmins and District Hospital up to \$2.38 million from \$1.36 million.

Hurley predicted the Northern hospital funding gap may grow next year. The province has promised an overall 4.7 per cent increase for health care in 2018-19 which, he said, is closer to the actual cost pressures that hospitals face.

But if this year's two per cent approach is any indication, Northern hospitals will not see anything like that, Hurley added.

Hospitals in the North are facing significant challenges, including higher rates of disease and poverty and "we believe they all deserve increased funding to at least meet operating costs.

"We will continue to push for that and for stable multi-year funding. We are also optimistic that Northern communities will demand funding for their hospitals return to levels at real cost pressures," said Hurley. CUPE is planning a large-scale rally for hospital funding on June 8.

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Kincardine News: MPP Thompson says she has no confidence in the Ontario Liberal budget; A12; 2017.05.25

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MPP Thompson says she has no confidence in the Ontario Liberal budget

Huron-Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson has voted against the Wynne Liberals' Budget, saying she has no confidence in the Liberal government's fiscal policy.

"Since taking office in 2003, the Liberals have more than doubled our provincial debt, having added \$173.2 billion in 14 years," said Thompson in a release. "With a track record like that, Premier Wynne and her Finance Minister cannot reasonably expect the Opposition, or the people of Ontario, to support their budget. Even more concerning, they're hiding a \$5 billion operating deficit with the one-time sale of assets like Hydro One."

The Budget, which was tabled on April 27, and sped through First Reading, Second Reading, only four hours of public consultation, a mere one hour of Committee review, and Third Reading after less than three weeks of scrutiny by the public and Opposition Parties.

"It's shameful that the Liberals would ram this legislation through without a more open conversation," said Thompson. "On a \$141 billion budget, this accelerated timeline is an insult to the public, and the democratic process. We need a government that is more concerned about representing the people who elected them, than their own interests."

The budget now goes to the Lieutenant-Governor for Royal Assent.

The Liberals said Thompson and the PC Party voted against what they called their government's "progressive and balanced budget that focuses on the health and education of Ontarians."

"A balanced budget means more funding for the programs and services people rely on most, unfortunately the PC MPPs decided to oppose a plan that will help their own constituents," the Liberal release said.

The Liberals also listed

items that the PC's have voted against:

- .Universal drug coverage for 4 million individuals under the age of 24
- .\$11 billion investment into Ontario's healthcare
- .\$1.3 billion to reduce healthcare wait times and \$250 million to expand homecare
- .A strategy to enhance care for those with dementia
- .\$6.4 billion in education support for kindergarten to post-secondary levels
- .\$16 billion over 10 years to build new schools and renew existing ones
- .\$190 million over 3 years to create 40,000 work-related opportunities for students
- .Providing support for 100,000 more children to get quality licensed child care

"PC Leader Patrick Brown promised to do things differently than his predecessor and be less partisan, unfortunately he and his party have voted against one of the most progressive budgets in provincial history," the release continues.

Patrick Brown's PC Party seem determined to oppose any plan that helps Ontarians. Similar to the budget, when the Government of Ontario offered the Fair Hydro Plan to reduce hydro rates, the PC Party offered partisan rhetoric and no alternative.

Toronto Star: Councillor wants MPPs up to speed on social housing repair; GT2;
2017.05.25

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SECTION: Greater Toronto
EDITION: ONT
BYLINE: Betsy Powell Toronto Star
KEYWORDS: councillor,bailao,proposing,council,mayor,personal
WORD COUNT: 300

Councillor wants MPPs up to speed on social housing repair

Councillor Ana Bailao is proposing council ask Mayor John Tory to send personal letters to individual Toronto MPPs about the dire state of social housing in their ridings - and potential impact on their constituents.

Bailao, chair of the city's affordable housing committee, will table a motion at this week's council meeting requesting Tory write to the provincial politicians outlining "the number of units at risk of closing without provincial funding." "It's important that MPPs have this information at their fingertips," Bailao said Wednesday.

Bailao said she wanted council's endorsement to "depoliticize" the issue. "We are three levels of government that need to work together. It's not about politics." The motion is seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy.

For weeks, Tory has been waging a so far unsuccessful campaign to persuade Queen's Park to pay a one-third share of funding needed to fix crumbling social housing units.

According to an internal database, half of Toronto Community Housing developments will be in "critical" condition in the next five years without additional funding for repairs.

Except for one, every provincial riding in Toronto will be home to TCH complexes in a critical state of disrepair by 2021 if more funding isn't secured.

Council approved a 10-year, \$2.6 billion repair plan in 2013 to be cost-shared by all three levels of government.

Since then, the city has exceeded its share by spending more than \$1 billion towards TCH, Bailao's motion says. "However, the City alone cannot fix this problem. Without additional funding, approximately 7,500 units are at risk of closure by 2023."

The federal government has made long-term housing commitments, but Ontario's 2017 budget "did not promise to match federal funding nor provide new funding to fund one-third of capital repairs to TCH buildings," the motion states.

With files from Jennifer Pagliaro

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The Sault Star: Pharmacare? Great, but who will pay?; A6; 2017.05.25

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BYLINE: Jerry Agar
SOURCE: The Sault Star
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Pharmacare? Great, but who will pay?

We cannot afford to provide universal, publicly funded drug coverage for everyone in Ontario. We are broke.

That doesn't mean we can't discuss how it might be possible in the future, even the near future, to make it affordable.

The goal of providing life saving, life improving drugs to all Ontarians, regardless of their income, is a noble one and it is worth discussing, which we are now doing.

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath has declared the next step in our medical system needs to be universal pharmacare.

Ontario's Liberal government recently instituted "OHIP+", a drug plan which offers free prescription drugs for people 24 and under, starting in January, 2018.

How will either party pay for it? They don't say.

Perhaps they don't know - or care. It is a great political move.

Emotionally, people of good faith and good hearts are for the idea.

Who wants people to suffer simply because they can't afford the medication their doctor prescribes? But a part of caring is attention to detail, and a sustainable method of funding.

Paying for such a plan is not a small detail to be left to the future.

Emotion and empathy do not trump reality. That sort of attitude is what got us into unprecedented and unsustainable debt; a debt that grows even as the Ontario government claims to have achieved a balanced budget.

The Wynne government, rather than deal with debt, plays with numbers, as they did with the cost of hydro. Lowering the cost of power short term by paying less now, but extending the payments long term is not, as some suggest, like extending your mortgage payments on the house.

The house is an asset. Ontario's debt is just debt, like your credit card bill.

And to seemingly balance the budget, the government is selling assets, such as Hydro One. What happens next year? Ontario's debt is projected to be \$312 billion this year, growing to \$336 billion in 2019-20.

Interest on debt is the fourth largest spending area, at \$11.6 billion.

What would universal pharmacare add? Health care is already our single biggest provincial expense by far.

Ontario will spend \$53.8 billion on health care this year, up from \$52.2 billion last year.

Spending is expected to rise to \$58.1 billion in 2019-20.

What does that mean to you if you pay taxes? There are roughly seven million working, taxpaying people in Ontario.

That means that each taxpayer spends almost \$7,700 a year, or \$640 a month, for health care.

If estimates are correct it will soon be nearly \$700 a month.

That is without adding in universal drug coverage.

How much more can you afford to pay? The only way people who "care" enough to cheerlead for universal pharmacare can be taken seriously is if they also show us where the money to pay for it will come from.

If they only want to raise taxes, they are fiscally irresponsible and lazy.

If they believe the Ontario government is fiscally responsible, then they are at best naive.

Anyone can come up with a spending plan.

Anyone can say they care more than others do. But grownups budget and prioritize. Grownups put some sweat and intelligence into their caring.

Care enough to pay for everyone's drugs? Then care enough to show us the cuts in other spending you have identified and that you will push for

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The Sault Star: 'We need wiser spending,' says Ross Romano; A7; 2017.05.25

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SOURCE: The Sault Star

KEYWORDS: romano,young,teenager,first,became,worried

ILLUSTRATION: / Ross Romano - Progressive Conservative;

COLUMN: The Sault Star

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'We need wiser spending,'says Ross Romano

Ross Romano was a young teenager when he first became worried about the situation in Sault Ste. Marie and vowed to himself that one day he would make a difference.

That day became closer to reality when he met Patrick Brown in law school. The two became friends and played hockey together for several years.

Fast forward a decade and Romano and Brown were reunited at their 10-year law school reunion. It was at that time when Brown, already a municipal councillor, was becoming involved in the Progressive Conservative leadership race and Romano had decided to take the plunge into municipal politics.

"I was always interested in politics," Romano, a first-term city councillor said in a recent interview.

It was then that Romano became involved in Brown's leadership race, taking on an active role with the membership in Sault Ste. Marie, he said.

"Watching the leadership race on TV spurred me on. I saw it as an opportunity for Sault Ste. Marie, for (my wife and I) and our kids and I had the support and encouragement from my wife," Romano said.

"We know it's going to be tough on our family, but we'll figure a way to make it work."

Romano said it was then that he decided to follow that promise he made to himself as a 14-year-old teen and make a difference for Sault Ste. Marie.

Romano said he thought he was going to run in a 2018 provincial general election, but was positioned and ready to go when David Orazietti stepped down from the post Dec. 31.

"I've been at the doors ever since.

I've hit every home in Sault Ste. Marie twice, some a third time," Romano said.

Romano was hoping the byelection would be called sooner so that the city did have a voice at Queen's Park.

He said he's disappointed that Sault Ste. Marie didn't have someone at the table during the provincial budget because he believes the city lost significantly with the Ring of Fire \$1 billion off the table.

"This is the largest opportunity this city has and I don't believe it will happen this year because it's not in the budget," Romano said.

The Liberals have countered that the money is still dedicated to the Ring of Fire but Romano is not so sure.

"This city is struggling. NorOnt wants to move. They need roads. I don't want to see NorOnt or any other potential investors walk away," he said.

The Sault Ste. Marie lawyer knows that if he wins the June 1 byelection, his role will be to advocate and fight for the city he was born and raised in and he says he has the energy to do so.

Romano said the ferrochrome facility is more than just jobs for Northern Ontario. It's about developing relationships with First Nations, creating a strong economy for the North and for Ontario and creating a new network that benefits Ontario as a whole.

"It is an incredible opportunity for Sault Ste. Marie and it upsets me we are squandering," Romano said.

Romano said he's also confident that by developing the Ring of Fire, the Port of Algoma will be a natural connection once the lands issues are resolved during the steelmaker's CCAA proceedings.

The port, he said, is an integral part to the relationships with Indigenous people and the momentum created in the partnerships needed to grow and expand to the Ring of Fire development.

"That port provides access to a deep sea harbour which creates opportunity for our future. This becomes a critical aspect for our port to ship to foreign markets and this gives us such an opportunity to become a distribution hub," Romano said.

The 37-year-old believes that developing 'whole'communities is tough because the province is in such a desperate situation with its debt and municipalities are handcuffed with the limited funding they receive.

"We need a more fiscally responsible government, and we need wiser spending," he said.

He said that the Liberal's cap and trade program will collect \$2 billion, but is not revenue neutral and won't see the money go back into local economies and that Ontario is producing Hydro it doesn't need because of the contracts that have been signed.

In addition, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming modernization study effort resulted in another waste of taxpayer money and put people's lives in a state of uncertainty, he said.

Romano says that even Ontario's health care system - province wide and in Sault Ste. Marie - is foundering and people are not getting the services and care that they deserve.

He doesn't buy into the argument that Sault Ste. Marie's next member of Provincial Parliament needs to be part of the governing party in order to bring results for the city. Instead, he said, he would rather be at Queen's Park arguing on behalf of constituents to get Sault Ste. Marie's fair share and fight for the things that are important to Saultites, including jobs, the steel plant, Pensions, health care, seniors and other services. "I don't believe that you need to be part of the party in power if you have the right voice," he said. "Sometimes things need to be done a little differently if you want to see different results."

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Sudbury Star: Hospital needs millions more: union; Enhanced funding for Sault hospital funding political, council suggests; A3; 2017.05.25

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ILLUSTRATION: John Lappa, Sudbury Star / Dave Shelefontiuk, left, president of CUPE Local 1623, and Michael Hurley, president of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, held a press conference in Sudbury on Wednesday.;

WORD COUNT: 557

Hospital needs millions more: union; Enhanced funding for Sault hospital funding political, council suggests

CUPE executives are asking whether the Liberal government's decision to give Sault Area Hospital a higher funding increase than other Northern Ontario hospitals could be related to the fact Sault Ste. Marie is in the middle of a provincial byelection.

Michael Hurley, CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, travelled Wednesday to Sudbury, where he noted that the majority of Northern Ontario hospitals, including Health Sciences North, which has a regional hospital with a cancer centre, got \$5.8 million or about a 2 per cent funding increase, while the Sault Area Hospital saw a 3.8 per cent allocation that amounts to \$5.5 million in 2017.

Although the Sault Area Hospital fared better than other Northern hospitals, Hurley said, the money it received in throes of the byelection "the Liberals are desperate to win, is still not enough to restore staff, beds and services that have been cut following eight years shrinking provincial funding for hospitals."

Following years of zero base funding increases, Hurley said, the consensus among health-care stakeholders from the association representing hospitals to frontline staff unions is that hospitals need a minimum of about a 5 per cent increase in funding, simply to maintain existing services. In the April budget, the provincial government provided an a provincewide funding increase of 3.1 per cent for hospitals.

Northern hospitals are getting 2 per cent, with the exception of the Sault.

In 2016-17, the Liberals planned to increase funding 2 per cent, Hurley said, but were forced by community and labour campaigns focused on patient need to increase funding 3.5 per cent by the end of the year.

"Like last year, communities have to drive hospital funding higher this year, as well," Hurley said in a statement. "Two per cent just won't do."

To bring hospitals just to last year's 3.5 per cent, he said, funding for HSN would need to increase by \$10.15 million, not the \$5.8 million announced by the local Liberal MPP last week.

Similarly, North Bay Regional Health Centre's allocation of \$3.67 million would need to go up to \$6.4 million; Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre given \$4 million would need to see an increase to \$7 million; Lake of the Woods in Kenora would need funding increased from \$555,011 to \$971,000 and

Timmins and District Hospital up to \$2.38 million from \$1.36 million. Hurley predicted Northern hospital funding gap may grow next year. The Ontario government has promised an overall 4.7 per cent increase for health care in 2018-19, which he said is closer to the actual cost pressures that hospitals face. But if this year's 2 per cent approach is any indication, Northern hospitals will not see anything like that, Hurley added. Hospitals in the North are facing significant challenges including higher rates of disease and poverty and "we believe they all deserve increased funding to at least meet operating costs. We will continue to push for that and for stable multi-year funding. We are also optimistic that Northern communities will demand funding for their hospitals return to levels at real cost pressures," said Hurley, in outlining plans for a large community rally aimed at increasing hospital funding to 5 per cent. CUPE is planning a large-scale rally for hospital funding on June 8. sud.editorial@sunmedia.ca

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Pelham News: Hospital fight ongoing; A4; 2017.05.25

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SOURCE: Postmedia News

KEYWORDS: mayors,colborne,wainfleet,welland,opposed,seeing

ILLUSTRATION: Laura Barton, Postmedia News / Southern-tier mayors are continuing to fight for Welland hospital services.; / JEFFS; / CAMPION; / MALONEY;

WORD COUNT: 871

Hospital fight ongoing

Mayors in Port Colborne, Wainfleet and Welland aren't opposed to seeing a new hospital built in Niagara Falls, but they still want to see a fullservice hospital in Welland.

And they say the fight to keep Welland hospital open is not over, even in light of the province recently earmarking \$9 billion for the construction of new hospitals during the next decade.

"It's a discussion we continue to have in south Niagara," said Port Colborne Mayor John Maloney. "The fight is not over until the province acknowledges that we have a good facility in Welland."

Niagara Health System has put forward redevelopment proposals which include centres of excellence for stroke, eye care, seniors wellness, complex care and academic education, all of which would be located in Niagara Falls. Its plan also calls for building a new facility in Welland to replace the existing hospital that would include urgent care, dialysis clinics, outpatient clinics for medical and surgical patients, diagnostic imaging, ultrasound and radiology, as well as a lab and other services.

Maloney said services such as ophthalmology should not be relocated to a new hospital in Niagara Falls, to be constructed at Biggar and Montrose roads.

"We'd like to see those services already there continue on. It's important the hospital be there for speciality care."

Maloney said the emergency room in Welland is not too old, and he wouldn't want to see a new urgent care facility be put in its place. He would also like to see the urgent care centre in Port Colborne remain open.

He said many people both from inside and outside of the community use the Port Colborne urgent care centre.

And, he added, if a person has more of an emergency medical situation, Welland is just down the road. Welland Mayor Frank Campion said the need is becoming more apparent for Welland hospital, as new

residential and industrial development continues to see the city grow.
"A lot of people rely on the hospital," he said, adding it would be a health and safety issue for the community were it to close. "It's imperative to have it continue."
Campion said when people and businesses move into town they have an expectation there will be a hospital, and that having one is key to the city's economic development and growth as well.
"We'll continue to meet with the NHS and try and influence their decisions on what will become of the hospital here. We do need a 24/7 emergency room and will continue to."
He said a business case for keeping Welland hospital, which serves more than 90,000 people, was put before Ontario's health minister last year by the three south Niagara mayors, and the minister seemed receptive.
"We've left the door open for continued discussion."
The provincial funding announcement in this year's Ontario budget, Campion said, was not unexpected, but he said it doesn't automatically equate to Welland closing in favour of a new hospital.
Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs said an urgent care centre in Welland to replace the hospital will not cut it for residents of south Niagara.
"It's about timely access to care."
"There are people in Wainfleet, Port Colborne and Welland that feel it's going to be too much of a drive. They'll have to make a choice of whether to go to the Falls or St. Catharines."
She said if the urgent care centre in Port Colborne is good for residents who may not have substantial issues, and if it were to close, residents of Wainfleet would have farther to go to deal with the less serious medical issues.
Jeffs is also concerned about the slow erosion of services from Welland hospital, and that was mentioned during the meeting with the health minister last year. She agrees that Niagara Falls does need a new hospital to serve its residents, but feels Welland hospital should remain open.
"If Welland was turned into an urgent care (centre), it wouldn't encourage doctors to come the area," she argued.
While the mayors continue their fight to save Welland hospital, so do members of the Save the Welland Hospital group and Niagara Health Coalition.
"It's a good hospital, it has good bones in it," said the coalition's Sue Hotte. "We're still fighting to keep it open, a 24-hour urgent care would not replace the hospital by any means."
Hotte said south Niagara has an aging population that needs a hospital in Welland, and she added so to do the younger people moving into the area.
"There's tremendous growth coming in," she said.
As the area grows, she said, public transportation and getting to the new hospital in Niagara Falls will continue to be an issue.
She believes figures presented by NHS about average driving times to get to the proposed site are outdated.
Hotte, too, supports a new hospital in Niagara Falls, but said Welland hospital is still needed and necessary.
"Everybody deserves good access to health care," she said.
Hotte said the Save the Welland Hospital group and Niagara Health Coalition would be holding a news conference last Friday in front of Welland Arena on King Street to talk about the province's recent funding announcement.
- with files from Allan Benner dajohnson@postmedia.com Twitter: @DaveJTheTrib

The Sault Star: Joe Krmpotich wants opportunity for local youth; A7; 2017.05.25

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SOURCE:	The Sault Star
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ILLUSTRATION:	/ Joe Krmpotich - NDP;

Joe Krmpotich wants opportunity for local youth

Joe Krmpotich was born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie and raised his children here, hoping that their future would include good jobs, a great community and the lifestyle of their choice.

Now the New Democrat candidate fears for the future of the city and the young people who are so desperately seeking those jobs, benefits and strong future.

"Today's youth need the same opportunity I had at my young age," the third-generation steelworker said.

"Sure, it's a cyclical industry but we've had good wages, we have a good pension and we want that for our younger generations."

Krmpotich, a USW union coordinator who is employed by Essar Steel Algoma, argues that Ontarians need to send a strong message to the government that Northern Ontario and Northerners have been ignored for too long.

"The Conservatives just want to make cuts to services and increase the privatization that started in the (former Premier Mike) Harris years and left us in a big mess," he said.

Krmpotich said he knows the outmigration of youth is still a huge issue in Sault Ste. Marie and throughout Northern Ontario. Many young people are forced to relocate, and even then, the job opportunities are precarious work with no pensions or little benefits.

"That's what we're hearing and we're listening to them and advising them of the opportunities that we are going to create for them," Krmpotich said of the NDP's plan. "I want to help grow Sault Ste. Marie so our youth will stay here."

The NDP candidate's platform includes ensuring that Ontario Lottery and Gaming jobs stay in Sault Ste. Marie and are not reverted back to Toronto.

He also wants to ensure there is a fully-functional and operating steel mill in the city, offering others the chance to stay in Sault Ste. Marie.

And for the future, Krmpotich wants Sault Ste. Marie to be the successful city that will become home to a ferrochrome facility to produce the product from the vast Ring of Fire development, creating more jobs that will result in people returning to the Sault.

"Who knows steel making processes better than those at Essar, better than those in our own community?" he said. "Sault Ste. Marie has a whole lot to offer."

Krmpotich, 60, said that during the past few months campaigning he knows area residents are feeling the pinch of an unsure economy and rising costs.

High hydro rates are impacting both local residents and business owners, something that's preventing entrepreneurs from reinvesting the money they're spending on Hydro into their businesses or hiring more staff, he argues.

The married father of two adult children scoffs at the Liberal's plan announced earlier this spring that will see bills reduced by the HST portion and another 17 per cent.

"Our plan is to reduce bills 30 per cent and, more importantly, put Hydro One back into the public hands," he said.

"This is important to Sault Ste.

Marie because instead of profits going to the private sector, they'll go back to Ontario and the municipalities through the different programs."

As well, he said, hospitals have also seen a massive increase in their hydro rates in recent years and paying those bills means limited health care services in other areas.

"We have a beautiful hospital here, but we're still transporting our sick to places like Sudbury and Toronto and that's a big cost for their families," he said.

The NDP want to implement a Pharmacare program that will provide free prescription drugs for all Ontarians.

The Liberal's are moving forward with a plan that will see children and young adults up to the age of 24 receive free prescriptions, but Krmpotich wants to know what happens to people over that age who require medication.

"Those under 24 in our communities are usually the most healthy ones. We believe that medication should be covered for those 24 to 65 years old as well, and available to them when they need it," he said. The expected costs for that is about one-third of one per cent of Ontario's budget.

Krmpotich says the byelection is important for Sault Ste. Marie residents.

"We ensure hope, change," he said. "The NDP has been fighting for working people all our lives and we are going to continue to do that. We're going to ensure that future generations have the same opportunities that we had when we were their age and we want our youth to live in Sault Ste. Marie and build a good life with their families."

While Krmpotich touts the need for jobs for youth, he also realizes that jobs need to be created for middle and more experienced workers too.

With job requirements changing and the need for individuals who lose their jobs to upgrade their skills and

training, Krmpotich says the NDP's plan to invest in retraining will help bridge that gap. In the early 1990s, when the former Algoma Steel was having tough times, he too went through a retraining program that he says provided him with leadership skills that have served him well ever since. He believes the NDP offers hope and change for Saultitites. "We've been fighting for working people all our lives and we are going to continue to do that," he said. "I want to ensure that future generations have the same opportunities that we had when we were their age and I want them to live in Sault Ste. Marie and have a bright future," he said.

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Sarnia This Week: More EV charging stations eyed for Sarnia; Five charging stations 'coming soon,'MTO map says; A32; 2017.05.25

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ILLUSTRATION: Tyler Kula, Postmedia Network / City of Sarnia Economic Development Director Peter Hungerford stands by the city's electric vehicle charging station at the Charlotte Street parking lot in March. Another five charging stations are being eyed for the city.;

IMAGES: Tyler Kula, Postmedia Network / City of Sarnia Economic Development Director Peter Hungerford stands by the city's electric vehicle charging station at the Charlotte Street parking lot in March. Another five charging stations are being eyed for the city.
[SATW_20170525_Final_A32_01_I001.jpg];

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More EV charging stations eyed for Sarnia; Five charging stations 'coming soon,'MTO map says

The number of public-access plug-in spots for electric vehicles in Sarnia could spike exponentially within a few months, says the head of an Oakville-based company working out potential contracts with local corporations.

"I would say probably by the summer," said Vic Burconak, president and CEO of Koben Systems Inc. (KSI), about potential opening dates for five electric vehicle charging stations listed as "coming soon" on the Transportation Ministry's Electrical Vehicle Chargers Ontario (EVCO) map.

The five stations - Lambton College, Sarnia Harbour, Tim Horton's at 1399 Colborne Rd., the London Road Shopping Centre, and at Callister Musico Insurance Group's 1315 Michigan Ave. location - are part of a massive province-backed move to build a grid for electric vehicles.

"It alleviates that range anxiety that's desperately needed to be able to accommodate EV (electric vehicle) drivers," said Burconak, noting his company carefully vetted its sites, including those in Sarnia, for strategic placement - factoring in proximity to major routes and attractions like shopping centres and restaurants.

KSI, one of 24 funding recipients, has 57 per cent of \$20 million announced for stations last summer via

the EVCO program.

Another \$22 million is in this year's provincial budget for stations, and announcements for the program are pending, a ministry spokesperson said.

"We've got 144 level three (stations) and 200-ish level two going in (province-wide)," Burconak said.

Level twos typically offer a full charge in six to eight hours; level threes in under an hour.

"It's proceeding and it's all good," Burconak said.

For Lambton College - in the midst of an expensive expansion and renovation project - having a charging station for electric vehicles is important to better cater to students and visitors, said Rob Kardas, vice-president of student success and college services.

"Just knowing more and more of this type of vehicle may be on our campus," he said.

Negotiations still have to happen with KSI, he said.

Demand is growing in Sarnia, said Chris Gould, vice-president of utility development with Bluewater Power, which has been pushing for stations in Sarnia.

"We know that permits are coming in and people are putting stations in their own homes," he said.

Having the stations also opens Sarnia up to more tourism opportunities, he said.

"It brings in travelers to charge their car, they grab a bite of lunch in the downtown area, or they do some shopping while they wait for their car to get a portion of a charge or a full charge," he said.

Sarnia currently has one charging station, he said, a city pilot project opened at the Charlotte at Christina streets parking lot in early March.

No information was immediately available from city officials about how well it's been used.

"Even if it's only a handful of (vehicles), that's a step in the right direction," Gould said, adding he's hopeful KSI builds get the goahead.

"I think if we're lucky enough to land a couple of these things, it'll be a very good news story for us," he said.

The Tim Horton's site was announced in the first round of funding last year, but was one of nearly two-thirds in the total project delayed past the March 31 target, said ministry spokesperson, Bob Nichols, in an email. It and the other outstanding builds, it's expected, will be complete by the fall.

"EVCO recipients are currently working to have all of the Sarnia stations in service and MTO anticipates that the final stations will be deployed soon," Nichols wrote. "The charger location map on our website will be updated regularly as projects are completed."

Hanover Post: Grey Bruce Health Services receives funding increase; A14; 2017.05.25

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Grey Bruce Health Services receives funding increase

Grey Bruce Health Services is pleased to confirm that it will receive an additional \$2.5 million in provincial funding for its 2017/18 fiscal year. This represents a 2.07% increase in funding over last year's amount, and was announced recently as part of the Ontario Government's budget. "This is very good news for local and regional hospital services in Grey Bruce," said GBHS President and CEO Lance Thurston. "This new money, combined with adjustments to our funding base last year, will help significantly to bring some stability to our operating budget. It will allow us to focus more of our energies and attention as an organization on strengthening our unique model of integrated rural health care." Thurston is quick to caution that GBHS is by no means out of the woods financially. "Even with this positive budget news, we must continue to look for opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our services and programs if we are to achieve and sustain balanced budgets year over year." As part of that ongoing strategy, GBHS is considering a proposal, as reported previously, to consolidate all elective day surgery at the Owen Sound Regional Hospital. GBHS recently concluded an extensive outreach to hospital and

community stakeholders, including the general public, to receive input on the surgery proposal. "As we had hoped," said Board Chair Mark Ostland, "we received some good input from many individuals and groups keenly interested in their hospital. That feedback has broadened our frame of reference and perspective on this issue. There is much to consider as a Board, beyond simply the financial merits of the proposal at hand." The Board will take additional time to consider the best option for patient care and will make a decision regarding the elective day surgery program at its June meeting. GBHS is also optimistic the Province will make adjustments to its funding formula later this year. "The South West Local Health Integration Network has been instrumental in supporting our advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Health to recognize the unique challenges we face as the only corporation in the Province with six integrated rural hospitals," said Thurston. "The Ministry has been receptive to our plea for a funding formula adjustment. We are hopeful that a new funding arrangement will be announced later this year that will bring financial predictability to the organization and enable us to better plan for a sustainable future."