

Today's News - Thursday, March 9, 2017

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Premier Kathleen Wynne was in Guelph today to highlight how Ontario is lowering electricity bills by 25 per cent on average for households and small businesses, as part of a significant system restructuring that will address long-standing policy challenges and ensure greater fairness. Premier Wynne visited two small businesses in Guelph that will benefit from Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan. Starting this summer, small businesses that receive a time-of-use bill similar to residential customers will be eligible for the 25 per cent cut. As a result, this plan is expected to help up to half a million small businesses and farms. People with low incomes and those living in eligible rural communities will receive even greater reductions to their electricity bills. As part of this plan, rate increases over the next four years will be held to the rate of inflation for everyone. These measures include the eight per cent rebate introduced in January, and build on previously announced initiatives to deliver broad-based rate relief on all electricity bills. Taken together, these changes will deliver the single-largest reduction to electricity rates in Ontario's history. Reducing electricity costs for households and small businesses is part of Ontario's plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

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Also today:

- Ontario is increasing its investment in housing assistance and supports across the province to help up to 6,000 families in need remain permanently housed – a major step forward in its goal to end chronic homelessness by 2025. Chris Ballard, Minister of Housing and Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, was at the Native Women's Centre Mountain View in Hamilton today to announce the new investment. Twenty per cent of the new funding will be dedicated to supporting Indigenous people. This investment builds on the three-year funding for supportive housing that was previously announced in March 2016 as part of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy update. In the coming days, the province will launch a selection process to choose a number of municipalities to participate in the program, and will work with Indigenous partners to select organizations that will deliver these services for Indigenous people. Working with Indigenous partners to end chronic homelessness by 2025 is one of many steps on Ontario's journey of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

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*Our government's four-part economic plan to build Ontario up invests in people's talents and skills, including helping people get and create the jobs of the future by **expanding access to high-quality college and university education**. It includes making **the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history** —\$160 billion over 12 years — part of which is our Moving Ontario Forward plan to build roads, transit and infrastructure. Our plan includes **fostering a dynamic, supportive environment for business to thrive**, including investing in a **low-carbon economy driven by innovative, high-growth, export-oriented businesses**. And it includes creating a **secure retirement pension plan for workers to have the retirement they deserve**.*