

Today's News - Wednesday, March 7, 2018

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Premier Kathleen Wynne is inviting people to join her on the eve of International Women's Day to discuss how to create more fairness and opportunity for everyone in Ontario. The Premier will host a Town Hall today, Wednesday, March 7 at the Design Exchange at the Toronto Dominion Centre at 234 Bay St. in Toronto, and will be moderated by Jane Taber, Vice-President of Public Affairs for NATIONAL Public Relations. Admission to the event is free and open to anyone who wants to engage directly with the Premier about the issues that matter most to them, with a particular focus on gender equality. All questions are welcome. Over the past three months, more than 1,600 people from all over Ontario have had the opportunity to have their say about a range of issues, from health care and education, to free trade and minimum wage. General admission seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Design Exchange. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., and the Premier's Town Hall will start at 6:30 p.m. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to RSVP. Please note, an RSVP does not guarantee admission but helps ensure that adequate seating is available.

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Also Today:

- Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance, announced today that he will deliver the 2018 Ontario Budget on March 28. The Budget will outline the government's plan to create more fairness and opportunity for everyone and help families manage the costs of caring for their loved ones. In order to invest more in hospitals, mental health, long-term care and child care across the province, Ontario is choosing to run a deficit. Minister Sousa made the announcement during a speech to the Economic Club of Canada in Toronto, and provided an update on Ontario's economic outlook and fiscal plan. The province has exceeded its fiscal targets every year since the recession, and is forecasting a surplus in 2017–18. Since 2014, Ontario's economy has outperformed all G7 nations, and the unemployment rate is at its lowest level in nearly two decades. While Ontario's economic growth is strong relative to other jurisdictions, the government recognizes that it must take further action to bolster growth and ensure more people and families have opportunities to get ahead. The 2018 Budget will outline a path to return to balance, building on the province's long track record of strong fiscal management.

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· Ontario is investing in a record number of festivals and events to boost the growing tourism sector, create jobs and offer residents and tourists more reasons to discover and explore the province. Daiene Vernile, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, was joined by Cristina Martins, MPP for Davenport at the Theatre Centre, home of the Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival, to announce the recipients of [Celebrate Ontario 2018](#). The Festival is receiving funding to support six more nights of comedy and to develop a mobile app to connect with audiences through social media, as well as provide event schedule and line-up information. This year, the province is supporting 328 festivals and events, the highest in the history of the program that celebrate Ontario's diversity, heritage and culture. Support from Celebrate Ontario helps festival and event organizers enhance programming, activities and services so that festivals and events can offer new experiences, reach new audiences and support jobs in their communities.

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Our government's plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario includes historic new investments in health care, including free medications for everyone 24 and under through OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare, providing free tuition to over 210,000 students and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 kids access quality, licensed child care and making it more affordable for families, making everyday life more affordable by reducing electricity costs by 25 per cent on average through our Fair Hydro Plan, and taking action to make housing more affordable for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.