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Your morning briefing

01.12.2017

Headlines

Coinciding with their print re-design, the *Globe* publishes an in-depth investigation into organized crime targeting large-scale marijuana grow-ops. The story looks at farms and incidents in Southern Ontario where farmers over-growing their allowed amount of marijuana have become the target of repeated robbery attempts. In some cases, the OPP has investigated and found weapons onsite, and later alleged ties to organized crime. The marijuana, police say in the article, is often sold to illegal black market dispensaries.

The *Toronto Star* released a feature investigation on Canadian companies that are top polluters — some have received multiple fines for violating standards — but still receive large government subsidies. The companies examined includes Hamilton-based steel mill ArcelorMittal, which plead guilty to six pollution charges and paid \$666,000, but also received \$43 million in subsidies. The company states in the article that it continually invests to decrease emissions. Two former Ontario environment ministers told the *Star* that change is needed on the issue, including adding environmental conditions to qualify for the subsidies, and the government said it will look into the issue to see what it can do.

In case you missed our stories Thursday:

- [Human rights watchdog clashes with Toronto Police over new discrimination probe](#)
- [PCs tout mental health plan, criticize Health Minister's response](#)
- [Who got government funding this week](#)
- [In Brief: A new OHIP+ digital tool, a whiff of weed revenue, and the Auditor-General's big day](#)

In other news:

The *Canadian Press* reviews Kathleen Wynne's visit to China, her third as premier. \$2 billion worth of agreements that support 2,000 Ontario jobs were signed during the trip, Wynne told *CP*. Her trip to Asia continues with stops in Hong Kong and Vietnam.

The province's largest municipal budget was publicly unveiled Thursday, with Toronto balancing its \$11 billion operating budget on the back of a red-hot real estate market and the accompanying land transfer tax revenue. The *Star* notes that major initiatives like time-based transit transfer, the poverty reduction strategy, and the climate change TransformTO action plan are currently unfunded, but the mayor has expressed his support to find money later in the budget process.

Transit is expected to be a priority subject when Toronto mayor **John Tory** and PC Leader **Patrick Brown** meet Friday, reports the *Toronto Sun*. The PC platform said if elected

they would upload and fund Toronto's subway system, including maintenance, and invest \$5 billion in new subway lines.

Cheri DiNovo's effort to get Queen's Park to permanently recognize November 20 as Trans Day of Remembrance passed second reading yesterday with unanimous support. The legislation is one of the last efforts for the NDP LGBTQ critic before she leaves Queen's Park in the New Year.

The PCs and NDP criticize the inclusion of Fair Hydro Plan savings on the new-look Hydro One bill, with **Andrea Horwath** calling it "not appropriate" and **Lisa MacLeod** saying it's "cynical", reports the *Star*.

In a visit to Western University on Thursday, Brown expressed the party's support for high-speed rail, saying it would be great for the region. The *London Free Press* notes he characterized the plan as a Liberal election ploy just a few months ago.

In a letter to the *Guelph Mercury*, a group of Guelph Hydro employees express their concerns over the company's proposed merger with Alectra. City council will vote on the merger on December 13.

And in the opinion pages:

Andrew Dreschel of the *Hamilton Spectator* argues local concerns about transit privatization are a red herring, and it's more about trying to consolidate labour under ATU Local 107.

The *Globe* editorial board says federal finance minister **Bill Morneau** deserves to stay despite swirling controversies around tax reform, and his own financial disclosure. Instead, the paper decries Opposition Leader **Andrew Scheer's** reasoning for the Toronto MP to resign as minister as "half-baked."

Steve Paikin evaluates the People's Guarantee, writing that while the platform has received decent early reviews, the decision to unveil it now is a risk.

And TVO has launched a Campaign 2018 podcast, featuring **John McGrath**, with new instalments released every other Thursday. The *QP Briefing* podcast team welcomes its friendly rival, and invites everyone to give it a listen.

Events

10 a.m.

Ontario NDP Leader **Andrea Horwath** holds a joint media availability with TDSB Trustees **Marit Stiles**, **Chris Moise**, **Chris Glover** and Toronto City Councillor **Mike Layton** to discuss how to tackle the over \$15 billion school repair backlog. Dovercourt Public School, 228 Bartlett Ave, Toronto.

10:30 a.m.

Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development and Growth, will speak about November job numbers. Media Studio, Queen's Park.

2 p.m.

Dr. **Eric Hoskins**, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, will make an announcement. Windsor Regional Hospital, Ouellette Campus, Main Atrium / Goyeau St. Lobby, 1030 Ouellette Ave, Windsor, ON N9A 1E1.

9 p.m. EST, 10 a.m. CST

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** to meet with BYD. No. 3009, BYD Road Pingshan District, Shenzhen, China.

1 a.m. EST, 2 p.m. CST

Premier Wynne to meet with Huawei and witness an MOU signing ceremony between Ontario business delegates and their Chinese counterparts. Huawei Campus, South Gate F, Jiaxian Road, Bantian District, Shenzhen, China.

5 a.m. EST, 6 p.m. CST

Premier Wynne to deliver remarks at a farewell reception for business delegates. Futian Shangri-La Hotel, 4088 Yi Tian Road, Futian District, Shenzhen, China.

In Brief: The auditor general's big day

30.11.2017

It's the time of year where everyone gathers around a roasting fire. That's right, the auditor general has announced when her annual report will be released. At 12 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 6, **Bonnie Lysyk's** report will be publicly released with a news conference in Queen's Park's Media Studio. The media lock-up will take place in Room 151 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. The report will be posted on the auditor general's website as soon as it is tabled in the legislature.

Last year's report weighed in at 1,060 pages, spread across two volumes.