Infomart Newsletters

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Morning News Clippings

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Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018
Edited by: Paul Crawford (Paul.Crawford@oeb.ca)

Contact Editor

Clippings Summary

News - 13 Results

Hydro One sale OK: Court

Toronto Sun - Wed Mar 28 2018
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $587
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A8

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tvo.org - Wed Mar 28 2018
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www.airdberlis.com · Tue Mar 27 2018
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Byline: David Reevely

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Is 'phase out farming' next?

The Sachem - Tue Mar 27 2018
Tone: Neutral
Ad Value: $26
Reach: 6967 **Page:** 1

The coal burning plant at Nanticoke could produce 4400 megawatts of **electricity**. By 2020, the Nanticoke **Solar** Project will produce 44 megawatts. Forgive my cynicism. If I was tasked with supplying **power** to a ...

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Full Articles

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No evidence exists that **Ontario** Premier Kathleen Wynne or any of her senior ministers acted in bad faith when they made the surprise decision to privatize part of provincial **utility** **Hydro** One, the province's top court ruled on Tuesday.

Upholding an earlier ruling dismissing a lawsuit against the province, the **Ontario** Court of Appeal agreed the Liberal government's decision is immune to such legal action because the privatization was a matter of "core policy."

The **Canadian** Union of **Public** Employees and other **ratepayers** sued Wynne along with her **energy** and finance ministers, arguing the privatization **plan** was merely a scheme to reward donors to the Liberal party

Back to Top

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It’s still not ironic, but it’s kind of like rain on your wedding day: the Liberals were (and still are) about to present a feel-good budget filled with billions in new spending on popular programs and services, when Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk once again threw a wrench in the works. Her remarks to a committee at Queen’s Park last week struck at the Liberals’ biggest weakness: oversight and accountability with public finances.

Back to Top

Energy minister downplays dispute between auditor, electricity system operator | CTV Windsor News

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Back to Top

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Back to Top

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With their billion-dollara-year promise to make daycare free for **Ontario** kids from the age of two-and-ahalf, the **Ontario** Liberals are reminding us what they stand for: bigger government that sincerely wants to help.

"Not being able to find or afford child care is stressful, it is troubling, and it is holding families back at a time when it's already hard enough to get ahead," Premier Kathleen Wynne said in making the announcement at a **Toronto** elementary school. "This investment will make life more affordable for families and allow more parents to make the choice to go back to work, knowing their child is safe and cared for."

The whole price tag is $2.2 billion over three years, the biggest chunk of which is $930 million in the third year to start paying for daycare for all kids from the time they turn two-and-a-half until they start kindergarten.

There's money for more daycares to open, including on First Nations reserves; more subsidized spaces for younger kids; raises for daycare workers; and experimental programs that offer more flexible hours for parents who work odd shifts.

The economics of daycare are brutal but simple. With the group we're talking about, kids aged two-and-a-half to four or five, an unlicensed home daycare provider can look after a maximum of five children (including his or her own). So all the costs of care, including food and toys and equipment and the provider's time, have to be divided among five families at the most. That's $9,000 a year per family, easily, and often much more.

In a licensed daycare, the ratio can be a bit higher - up to eight kids per adult - but these are almost always in commercial premises with more overhead and credentialed staff, so the fees are similar.

"Free preschool provides both economic and social benefits for our province," chimed in Finance Minister Charles Sousa. "It saves families $17,000 per child and gives parents the opportunity to go back to work ?sooner. Most importantly, these investments ensure all kids get the best possible start in life."

Many families will have two kids of daycare age at once. Sometimes three. The government commissioned a study by economics professor Gordon Cleveland, who specializes in early-childhood education issues, that found the daycare bill for children under six eats up more than 20 per cent of an average family's after-tax income.

The same study recommended that full government funding for pre-school care should be followed by subsidies for infant and toddler care, with an income test that will give bigger subsidies to lower earners. The Liberals haven't announced that they'll do that (yet).

Averages conceal a lot of variation because infant daycare is even more expensive and the number of earners and kids in a household makes a big difference, but clearly it's a heavy burden for anyone who isn't rich.

Managing this on two fulltime middleclass incomes is difficult and it's something else if you're precariously employed or working parttime with unpredictable hours. The idea is that smoothing out these difficulties will not only make voters happier, it'll benefit the economy by making work easier.

I should probably make a macro to plug that last paragraph quickly into any column on what the Wynne Liberals have been up to and will get up to in the next couple of months.

They've made a project of taking social-support systems that have depended on steady employment and replacing them with government guarantees.

Pensions, drug coverage and now child care are the biggies. Better mentalhealth, addiction and autism treatment and improved home-based health care are part of the package, too, taking up costs many people have covered out of pocket (or with workplace insurance) when the **public** systems have let them down.

The opposition accuses the Liberals of buying votes. I mean, they didn't raise this daycare announcement in question period at all Tuesday, but in general.

The **Fair Hydro Plan** is the plainest example. It's tarted up in talk of generational fairness but it's a cynical case of giving us cheaper **electricity** bills now in exchange for noticeably higher ones later.

With these other social programs, the Liberals get to announce big plans, figure out how to pay for them later (the full daycare promise doesn't kick in for two years!), and campaign on dark warnings that the Progressive Conservatives will cancel things the government hasn't even actually done. They did just the same in 2014. The political advantage is obvious.

But Wynne and her party do actually believe in what they're doing, and it's at least debatable whether it's just vote-buying if you're sincere.

First the Liberals were governing from the activist **centre**, then they were building **Ontario** up, then they were helping Ontarians in their daily lives. Now it's all about "the government's **plan** to support care, create opportunity and make life more affordable during this period of rapid economic change." Different words for much the same thing: the government's here to help smooth the bumps.

Whatever else it is, it's a governing philosophy, and it hasn't changed much since Wynne became premier. dreevely@postmedia.com twitter.com/davidreevely

Back to Top

Wynne tries to buy the election

Toronto Sun - Wed Mar 28 2018
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Premier Kathleen Wynne believes our votes can be bought - with our money - in the June 7 **Ontario** election.

Now she's just negotiating the price. Apparently, we don't come cheap. Leading up to Wednesday's provincial budget, Wynne's announced an orgy of promised spending, allegedly to improve our lives after 15 years of Liberal rule.

But we'll only get it, the politically corrupt Liberals say - see their gas plant scandal, green energy scandal, hydro scandal, Ornge scandal, e-Health scandal, and, according to the Auditor General, their cooking the books scandal - if we elect them to a fifth consecutive term since 2003.

In reality, there's no guarantee we'll get any of these election goodies because the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. And the Liberals have a record of saying one thing before an election and doing another after.

See Wynne's predecessor, Dalton McGuinty, and his broken promise not to raise taxes in 2003. See Wynne's broken promise in 2013 to cut auto insurance rates by 15%, which postelection she dismissed as a "stretch goal."

Now Wynne's promising:

$2.4 billion to redevelop Sick Kids hospital, part of a $19 billion province-wide hospital capital improvement plan over 10 years.

An $822 million (4.6%) boost to hospital operating budgets in 2018-19, after years of underfunding.

$2.2 billion for free daycare for children from age 2½ until they enter kindergarten.

$2.1 billion in increased mental health care spending over four years.

$300 million over three years for children with special needs.

$575 million annually for "free" prescription drugs for seniors by 2020-21, to go along with Wynne's earlier promises of "free" drugs for everyone under 25 years old, and "free" college and university tuition for 200,000 students.

Of course nothing's "free." We'll pay for it. So will our children and grandchildren.

Already the world's most indebted subsovereign borrower - Ontario's $311.9 billion in debt - it took the Liberals just one year to abandon their 2017 promise of balanced budgets for three years.

And if the Liberals don't win, they'll accuse the next government of heartlessness for having to clean up 15 years of Liberal financial scandals. Enough is enough. Time to end this madness.

Back to Top

Festival Hydro hopes for e-bills

The Beacon Herald

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Wed Mar 28 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Terry Bridge

Ad Value: $523
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A1 / Front

Festival Hydro and felines? Well, for this month anyway. In an effort to convince its customers to sign up for paperless billing, the local electricity distributor is offering them a chance to win some cash while benefiting a local charity.

"Basically it's a contest," Festival Hydro CFO Kelly McCann said Tuesday.

Utility users who have signed up to receive their bills electronically as of Feb. 1 are entered in a monthly draw. The winners take home $100 and get to choose a charity that will receive an additional $200 on their behalf.

"We've specified local charities in our distribution territory, so if they're not in

Stratford they might choose somewhere in Hensall or Dashwood," McCann said.

The winner of the March 1 draw was Cathy, who declined to have her last name or location publicized, but she chose to direct the funds towards the Stratford-Perth Humane Society.

Christine Jones, the local humane society's **centre** manager, said the donation is welcome.

"It's going to help us better take care of all of our animals here at the shelter," she said Tuesday at the humane society's headquarters on Griffith Road. "Kitten season's coming up so we know we're going to be busy; any financial contribution is just huge and greatly appreciated.

"We thank Cathy immensely."

Jones added the funds will be used to give two lost pets their first vaccines before they are ready for adoption.

The winner of January's draw chose the Stratford Perth Hospice Foundation. The third draw - they're automated - will be held Monday.

Aside from providing a boost to local non-profit organizations, McCann said electronic billing is beneficial in several ways.

"Send out less paper bills, and just to show people the information that they can get from our website," she said. "Often times as they get e-bills then they can just click through and look at their usage and all that stuff under their My **Festival Hydro** account."

Around 3,200 of the company's approximately 20,000 customers - **Festival Hydro** serves Stratford, Brussels, Dashwood, Hensall, St. Marys, Seaforth and Zurich - have currently signed up. The relatively low ratio is due to the company only focusing on the push to switch to e-bills over the past couple of years.

"We're really starting to promote it more to the **public**. We're just starting to get that snowball rolling," McCann said. "We expect that it's going to pick up."

The cash-and-charity promotion will continue through the end of 2018. The final draw is on Jan. 1, 2019.

Festival Hydro executive assistant Courtney Courtnage said last year there was a campaign connected to United Way-Perth-**Huron** by making a $5 donation per **customer** who signed up over two four-month cycles.

Back to Top

Peterborough Parkway and PDI topics rescheduled for April council meeting

Peterborough This Week - Tue Mar 27 2018
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Anyone interested in seeing **Peterborough** council's decisions for The Parkway or the future of **Peterborough Distribution** Inc. (PDI) will have to wait awhile longer.

On Monday, March 26, council voted to end the general committee meeting with key items still on the agenda.

Two major items seen included the community rebranding update, including the city's new tag line "Outside the ordinary" being approved and a presentation on the replacement of the Memorial **Centre**.

Meanwhile reports on what to do next for The Parkway and PDI were deferred to a later date.

Chief administrative officer Allan Seabrooke says earlier presentations took longer than expected and council chose to end the meeting shortly after 10 p.m.

The reports that went unheard are expected to be brought back next month.

"We will probably bring them back to general committee on April 6," says Seabrooke.

He adds none of those issues are time sensitive and there's no immediate need to have them resolved.

The Parkway was on the agenda after the Ministry of the Environment and **Climate** Change ordered the city last year to complete an individual environmental assessment for The Parkway, regardless of whether it was for the complete project, just in part or if it sought alternatives.

A report was also being presented to council about PDI after the sale to **Hydro** One fell through earlier this month.

The president of PDI says while there's no need for immediate action but eventually changes need to be made to keep **Peterborough** **hydro** **rates** affordable.

Both of those issues have drawn significant interest from the **public**.

Back to Top

Northern Daily News

KLers on 'Sunshine List'; Nine municipal employees among those who earned more than $100,000 last year

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The annual **Ontario** "sunshine list" of those who make over $100 thousand dollars was released and in 2017 a number of Kirkland Lake and area professionals were named to the list.

For the Town of Kirkland Lake, in 2017 Director of Community Services Bonnie Sackrider made $118,297.59. Director of Economic Development and Interim CAO Wilf Hass had a salary of $115,717.00. Teck Pioneer Residence Administrator and Director of Care Nancy Loach-Fougere had a salary of $104,558.00.

Fire Chief Rob Adair's salary last year was $115,638.42. A number of other KL firefighters were also named to the list.

Randy Bukovec's salary was $112,489.01 .Steven Fry's salary was $118,968.97. Jody Gavin's salary was $117,614.41. Danny Sasseville's salary was $104,439.04.

Over at the Kirkland and District Hosptial, In 2017 hosptal President and CEO Gary Sims had a salary of $241,502.74. It should be noted that a dozen health care professionals at KDH also made the list.

Meantime the CEO of Ontario Power Generation earned nearly $1.6 million last year, making him the highest-paid public-sector employee in the province on a growing list of those earning $100,000 or more.

Jeff Lyash, whose salary was $1,554,456 and $6,864 in taxable benefits, topped Ontario's socalled 2017 "Sunshine List" of the highest paid public-sector employees, which was released Friday in six thick paper volumes.

Lyash's salary was about $400,000 more than what he made last year, when he was also the highest-earning employee on the list.

The top ten spots on the list were rounded out by several other Ontario Power Generation executives, a pair of hospital CEOs, and the president of a corporation that manages investments for a university.

Liberal premier Kathleen Wynne, who is headed for a spring election, defended the need to pay a premium for some of those at the top of the list.

"There are situations where there are particular skill sets that are needed that we want to make sure we have the very best," she said.

Wynne made her comments while making an announcement at SickKids Hospital in Toronto. That's hospital's CEO, Michael Apkon, made $719,694 and $20,586 in taxable benefits last year, making him the 10th highest paid public sector worker in Ontario.

"I think we're standing in a place where we want the world's best here," Wynne said. "That's quite simply what we need. We need the very, very best people in our children's hospitals but also in our public services."

In 2017, there were 131,741 workers on the list, up from 123,410 last year, earning salaries and benefits that total over $16.8 billion.

The $100,000 threshold for those on the list has not changed since it was introduced by then-premier Mike Harris in 1996. Wynne said she won't be increasing the threshold because $100,000 is still a lot of money.

"We're committed to transparency," she said. "We think people in the province have a right to know what folks are earning and to the vast majority of people in Ontario $100,000 a year is still a lot of money. The threshold is not changing."

The province's second-highest earner last year was Daren Smith, president of the University of Toronto Asset Management Corporation, with a salary of $936,089. OPG's Chief Nuclear Officer Glenn Jager ranked third on the list, making $858,445.

Hospital CEOs also ranked amongst the highest paid public servants. Along with the SickKids CEO, the CEO of Baycrest Centre For Geriatric Care in Toronto, William Reichman, made the top ten bracket, with a salary of $722,875.

Wynne made $208,974 last year.

Former Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown, who resigned abruptly in January amid sexual misconduct allegations, made $180,885, and NDP leader Andrea Horwath made $158,157.

Newly minted Progressive Conservative Leader Doug Ford called the disclosure a list of "Ontario's richest political insiders."

He singled out OPG CEO Lyash as an example of the "insiders and fat cats" getting big raises while people across the province struggle to pay their hydro bills.

"I don't know how many people out there can go back after hard day's work and tell their family they ended up getting (a) $400,000 raise," Ford said. "I just can't believe it."

The **OPG** said in a statement that Lyash has a base salary of $775,000 and the remainder of his pay is based on performance.

"The president and CEO is responsible for running the most complex and diverse **electricity** generator in Canada," said Ted Gruetzner, **OPG**'s vice-president of stakeholder relations.

Meanwhile, the Liberal Party Caucus pointed that during Ford's term as a **Toronto** city councillor and key adviser to his brother, late former mayor Rob Ford, the number of city employees on the Sunshine List jumped from 5,415 in 2010 to 11,282 in 2014.

Horwath said the Sunshine List shows **Ontario**'s top ten executives are "raking in millions" while people across the province wait for better health care.

"It doesn't have to be this way," Horwath said in a statement. "This time people can choose change for the better. It's time for a new premier who will invest in the needs of Ontarians."

Back to Top

Liberal climate plans not enough to meet 2030 emissions target, new report shows | Toronto Star

www.thestar.com · Wed Mar 28 2018
Tone: Neutral

The Liberal government’s signature climate change plan — which imposes carbon pricing across the country and has been used to justify the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion — isn’t enough to ensure Canada meets its emissions target under the Paris Agreement, according to a new report tabled Tuesday in the House of Commons.

Back to Top

No clear plan for climate change: Audit; Canada, provinces lack detailed map to reach emissions cutting goals, report says

Kingston Whig-Standard · Wed Mar 28 2018
Tone: Negative
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Neither **Ottawa** nor the provinces have really assessed the risks a changing **climate** poses to the country and have no real idea what might be needed to adapt to it, said a new audit released Tuesday.

The joint audit, conducted by federal environment commissioner Julie Gelfand and auditors general in nine provinces, looks at **climate** change planning and emissions reduction progress between November 2016 and March 2018.

It says while many governments have high-level goals to cut emissions, few have detailed plans to actually reach those goals, such as timelines, funding or expected results from specific actions.

The audit says assessments to adapt to the risks posed by **climate** change have been haphazard, inconsistent and lacking in detail, with no timeline for action and no funding.

The country's emissions goals are also a hodgepodge of different targets, with no consistency in how emissions are measured or whether cuts will target overall greenhouse **gas** outputs or just those from specific economic sectors.

The auditors say that means there is no clarity on how Canada and the provinces and territories are going to measure, monitor and report on their contributions to meeting Canada's international commitment to cut emissions by at least 30 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030.

As of 2015, the most recent year for which full statistics are available, Canada was nearly 200 million tonnes short of that goal, which is the equivalent of the emissions produced by about 44 million cars each year. That is twice the number of vehicles registered in Canada.

Environment Minister Catherine McKenna said it is the first time auditors have completed such a **review** of Canada's **climate** change policies which is an important recognition of the priority **climate** change should have in government business. But she says the audit, as Gelfand herself notes, looks backwards and does not actually take into account the Pan-**Canadian** Framework on Clean Growth and **Climate** Change.

That **plan** was released in December 2016, after the audit's scope was already established. It too falls short of reaching the 2030 goals, however.

McKenna said the **plan** addresses many of the concerns in the audit, including outlining how certain policies will achieve specific emissions cuts.

"The previous government did nothing for a decade but we're 100 per cent committed to our target," McKenna said. "Hard things are hard, we have a **plan** and we're already seeing measurable results."

Catherine Abreu, executive director of the **Climate** Action Network, said this audit looks at what progress was made to meet Canada's existing targets including the 2020 commitment, which Canada has abandoned knowing it has no hope of meeting it.

That target was to be 17 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020.

Abreu notes that is the third international emissions target Canada has set and will miss and the Gelfand report points out the 2030 **plan** is at risk if Canada and the provinces don't step it up.

All provinces but Saskatchewan are currently signed on to the pan-**Canadian** framework, which requires every province to put a price on pollution by the start of next year.

The four biggest provinces already have one, Manitoba will add a $25-a-tonne carbon tax in September and every other province will either have to establish their own price or have a federal price imposed as of next Jan. 1.

There are potentially rough waters ahead. Saskatchewan hasn't joined the framework and says it will sue if the federal government tries to impose a carbon price. **Ontario** and Alberta both have a carbon price **plan** in place - **cap and trade** for **Ontario** and a carbon tax system with hard caps on emissions from the oil sands for Alberta - but coming provincial elections could bring to **power** premiers who are running on a promise to end carbon pricing.

McKenna said not only is the clean technology industry developing in response to **climate** change an enormous economic opportunity, not taking **climate** change action will cost the government money.

"It is disappointing when you have politicians pretending that there is no cost to climate change," she said.

"Right now the cost to the federal government is in the billions of dollars to deal with the impacts of climate change, whether it's floods, whether it's forest fires, a melting Arctic, we need to be taking action."

Back to Top

Municipalities must work with the party in power, says mayor

Kawartha Lakes This Week - Tue Mar 27 2018
Tone: Negative
Ad Value: $76
Reach: 29544 **Page:** 1

City of Kawartha Lakes Mayor Andy Letham says the municipality's relationship with the Province of Ontario had seriously deteriorated when he first took office in 2014.

He, his council and staff have worked hard to rebuild it, he said.

"It needed rebuilding. But, it is much better now. We're in a better place."

With a provincial election coming in June, This Week asked the mayor if rural municipalities are forgotten in the clamour for upper-level funding for much-needed projects.

"Municipalities are also an entity of the province," the mayor said. "We have received funding for several projects. Sometimes, it's hard to separate the funding because it can be combined with the federal government."

Other times, he noted, a project is funded from the federal, provincial and municipal governments in one-third shares.

"Grants are also structured in different categories. Money can be for a specific project or the municipality can be given funding to use as we see fit. For example, we received $5 million for our cast-iron water mains. We are still working on them. That money took the pressure off water/wastewater users. If we didn't get that funding, the work still had to be done, and we would have had to finance it over 10 years and the users would have had to pay."

Mayor Letham said 13 rural municipalities, including the city have a strong voice through the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus.

"The province does listen to us."

But, he said no matter which political party is in power, municipalities must build the positive partnerships and relationships.

The city budget is more than $200 million, and of that, more than $58 million is funded by federal and provincial governments.

City staff provided some highlights, noting they include federal and provincial funding as many programs are blended.

Operating funding:

Provincial and federal funding to the city's operating budget has grown by $5.2 million since 2014.

In 2018 the city will receive an estimated $51.6 million in funding. (This number is an estimate as some allocations are yet to be finalized.) In 2017, the municipality received $49.4 million in funding.

These grants spanned multiple services including waste management ($900,000), Victoria Manor long-term care ($7.7 million), housing (over $2 million), **Ontario** Works, child and family services ($26 million), **public** library ($178,000), policing and corrections ($1 million), paramedics ($4.6 million), provincial **gas** tax ($640,000) and the **Ontario** Municipal Partnership Fund ($7.2 million) that funds the operating budget across many services.

Capital contributions:

In the capital budget, the city has $7.3 million in grants combined from the federal and provincial governments. These grants have grown by more than $2.5 million since 2014 and span a variety of services including green **energy**, downtown revitalization and community development, affordable housing, transit and water/wastewater.

The mayor pointed out the province controls much of what municipalities are able to do. He is aware, for example the **Green Energy Act** has been contentious in many communities, especially the **wind turbine** issue in the city's south region.

"I know we need to look at green **energy** and getting away from fossil **fuels**, but I think they could have done a better job of rolling (the Act) out. I was in Cape Breton and they had **wind** turbines out in the middle of nowhere. Same thing in California, they are out in the desert. They're working and not bothering anybody.

"So, why do we have to put them on the Oak Ridges Moraine?"

Mayor Letham said planning and development is also subject to provincial regulation, which limits the city's ability to determine its own land use and zoning as it must follow the Planning Act. "Our policy must adhere to provincial policy; we are obligated to follow it. And, sometimes that creates more red tape for development.

"But, I think any time you don't have a say in planning it causes problems. If you want people to buy into something, they need to understand what's being proposed and have a say. That is a lot better than forcing it on them."

The mayor said his personal opinions and political stripe don't matter when dealing with the Province, because his job is to represent the municipality "no matter who gets in."

But, using words like "hate" (toward the Wynne Liberals) is "unhelpful and very counterproductive" to building relationships, he said.

"The Liberals were democratically elected."

As for funding, the mayor said there are "a couple more grants on the way" that he is not at liberty to discuss at this time.

"I can't say anything yet, but, they're big ones."

Back to Top

Is 'phase out farming' next?

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The coal burning plant at Nanticoke could produce 4400 megawatts of **electricity**. By 2020, the Nanticoke **Solar** Project will produce 44 megawatts.

Forgive my cynicism. If I was tasked with supplying **power** to a (supposedly) growing economy, and my new **energy** project was projected to generate one per cent of the old project, I wouldn't tell anyone.

We could spend a zillion dollars covering the county with turbines and **solar** panels. But since we have no way to store the **power** they generate, most of it would be sold outside the province at fire sale prices or given away. (It's rumoured that we'd even pay others to take it!)

We'd still be unable to reliably supply the quantity of **power** that the coal plant did. We'd still be dependent on nukes (no carbon, but I'd take a ton of carbon over an ounce of radiation), or plants outside of **Ontario** that burn **natural gas** (carbon!) or coal (**gasp**!) and we'd pay market value.

Since the fashionable concern is carbon (at least in **Ontario**) know this: some scientists claim that agriculture (tilling the soil) releases more carbon to the atmosphere than industry - including coal-burning plants.

Given how brilliantly they've handled the **energy** file, if the Liberals stay in **power**, their new motto might well be "Phase out farming!"

Doug Fleming

Cayuga

Back to Top