

Legislative Watch

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No Legislative Watch Next Week

Please be advised that the OCC will not be publishing the Legislative Watch on Friday, April 30, 2004, due to the AGM & Convention. The next issue will appear on May 7, 2004. Please be sure to check the OCC website on Monday, May 3, after the AGM, to view the adopted policy resolutions.

What Do Technological Education, Electricity, Offshore Outsourcing, Insurance Premiums, College Funding and Border Infrastructure Each Have In Common?

These are just some of the topics that will be debated at next week's 92nd Annual General Meeting & Convention in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Thank you to all the delegates who have registered. This year's program promises to be chock full of exciting policy debate, interesting guest speakers and Northern Ontario fun!

Please note that the **final** updated book of proposed policy resolutions has been posted on the OCC website, www.occ.on.ca, as it will appear in your **delegate kit** when you arrive in Thunder Bay. Also posted is the final agenda for the AGM & Convention – new additions include guest speaker The Honourable **Chris Bentley**, Minister of Labour; and **Doug Switzer**, Manager of Government Relations, Ontario Trucking Association, joins our Canada-U.S. Panel.

Several resolutions have been revised which are:

- Provincial Sales Tax Rebate
- Affordable Housing
- Highway Traffic Act
- Funding for Drinking Water
- Strategic Re-investment in Ontario Universities
- Funding for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology

Several new resolutions have been added which are:

- Ontario's Long-Term "Tax Package" Strategy
- Offshore Outsourcing
- Coal Fire Energy Plants
- Energy Pricing and Supply
- Supporting Technological Education in Ontario's Curriculum
- Eliminating Barriers for Internationally-Trained Professional and Trades People

The format of the policy plenary sessions on Saturday, May 1, will begin with a brief presentation by each of the committee and task force chairs and then the moderator, Ron Chapman, will introduce the submitted resolutions for debate and approval. Please take a few moments to review the Rules for Discussion which appear in the resolutions book and below.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED DURING THE POLICY DEBATE

1. *The discussion of each resolution will open with the Moderator identifying the resolution and inviting the submitting Chamber/Board to comment on the resolution before opening discussion to all delegates. Please note that only the recommendation portion of the resolution will be debated; the background is not debatable as it is only intended to be a source of information.*
2. *All attendees are encouraged to participate in the debate, however only OCC voting delegates have the right to move or second amendments or to vote on the resolutions.*
3. *When participating in the debate please use the floor microphones located in the meeting room.*
4. *Wait to be recognized by the Moderator and then identify yourself and your Chamber/Board before you begin your remarks.*
5. *Please keep your comments on any resolution, motion or amendment concise. You are asked to observe a two-minute speaking limit.*
6. *There are three possible courses of action for each resolution:*
 - a. ***ADOPT*** it – *with or without amendments, therefore converting the resolution into official Ontario Chamber of Commerce policy that will be lobbied to the provincial government promptly;*
 - b. ***DEFEAT*** it; *or*
 - c. ***REFER*** it to the OCC Board of Director's.
7. *When voting, raise your voting card high and keep it there until the Moderator directs you to lower it.*

For more information on the 92nd Annual General Meeting & Convention, please visit the OCC website's AGM page at <http://www.occ.on.ca/members/2agm.asp>, or contact Colleen MacIntyre, Events Coordinator, at colleenmacintyre@occ.on.ca or by telephone at (416) 482-5222, extension 222. Please note that Colleen will only be in the OCC offices on Monday, April 26, 2004, and will be departing for Thunder Bay on Tuesday. If you require assistance thereafter please call the OCC offices at (416) 482-5222 for general inquiries.

Ontario Budget Date Announced

On April 19, Finance Minister Sorbara announced in the Legislature that he will present the 2004 Ontario Budget on **Tuesday, May 18**, at approximately 4:00pm.

The Ministry's official news release is at: www.gov.on.ca/FIN/english/media/2004/nre-bud04.htm.

Premier Announces Plans to Encourage Energy Conservation

On April 19, 2004, Premier Dalton McGuinty, set a target of reducing Ontario's energy consumption by 5% by 2007 as part of the government's plans to make Ontario a North American leader in energy

efficiency. This announcement comes on the heels of last week's announcement by Energy Minister Duncan's address to the Empire Club of Canada where he unveiled the government's energy strategy.

The Premier announced plans to embark on a \$400 million program which would see every household in Ontario fitted with 'smart' electricity meters to encourage consumers to use energy at less expensive, off-peak hours. He estimates that initially about 800,000 homes in Ontario will be fitted with smart meters by 2007.

Consumers will likely pay the cost of the meters which are now \$400 a unit, but the government estimates the cost will be reduced to \$100 a unit once more companies begin making them. It is estimated that the smart meters will add about \$2 or \$3 a month to consumers' hydro bills and the government hopes to lower that figure further.

Electricity drawn between the peak hours of 6:00am and 8:00pm will cost significantly more than power drawn outside of the peak hours, after 8:00pm and before 6:00am.

McGuinty was quoted as saying: "The more we reduce our demand for electricity, the less we'll need to spend increasing supply by building new sources of power." The OCC has been a long-time advocate of having a fair and stable power market and its Energy Task Force has been reviewing different demand-side management options, one of which has been the use of smart meters. Energy conservation remains a priority for the OCC and earlier this year the task force unveiled its *Power Out? Energy Savings Kit Brochure*, available online at <http://www.occ.on.ca/2poweroutenergysavingskit.asp>.

The government's conservation plan includes:

- Creating an Ontario Power Authority that will include a Conservation Secretariat led by a Chief Conservation Officer
- Launching a public education and outreach campaign, including town hall meetings, to encourage conservation
- Setting aggressive targets to put smart meters into every home by 2010, with an interim target of 800,000 meters in place by 2007 -- together with more flexible pricing, this would allow Ontarians to save money if they run appliances in off-peak hours
- Developing regulations to provide province wide access to net metering, which enables homeowners and businesses generating renewable electricity to receive credit for the excess energy they produce
- Allowing local distribution companies to begin investing approximately \$225 million for local, community-based conservation programs
- Creating incentives for local distribution companies and Hydro One to reduce expensive, wasteful "system loss" that can occur when transmitting electricity to consumers.

Please visit the Premier's website at <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/news/Energy041904.asp> for a complete copy of the media release, accompanying background information and the remarks made by Mr. McGuinty to the Legislative Assembly.

Don't Forget: Economic Opportunity Tours Kickoff in May!

The OCC Economic Opportunity Tours are set to begin mid-May. The OCC's first stop will be in Detroit, Michigan on May 17 and 18. Next will be Buffalo, New York, on May 19 and 20. The tours

are being held in cooperation with private and public sectors to convey the message that Ontario is a great place to do business in and visit. Additional tours are being planned over the next coming months in Albany, Rochester, Dayton/Columbus, Cleveland and Lansing/Ann Arbor. Information on them tours will be communicated shortly.

If you require additional information or think one of your member companies would be interested in taking part, or being profiled, in one of the stops, please contact Stuart Johnston at stuartjohnston@occ.on.ca or by telephone at (416) 482-5222, extension 232, for further information.

OCC Talks “Trash” with Michigan State

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce participated in a meeting with legislators from the Michigan House of Representatives April 14, organized by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. The Toronto Board of Trade was also in attendance. David Gavsie, chair of the OCC Borders and Trade Development Committee, Stuart Johnston, OCC Vice President Policy & Government Relations and others met with Bill Huizenga (State Representative, 90th District), Daniel Acciavatti (State Representative, 32nd District), Joseph Rivet (State Representative, 96th District) and Maggie Sans (Policy Advisor) on a wide range of issues affecting Canada, Ontario and Michigan.

OCC discussed the importance of stronger infrastructure and policies as they relate to the border with Michigan, while the state representatives offered their views on security and the issue of receiving Toronto's and Ontario's trash. They noted the trash situation is probably the single most important issue facing them as state legislators, as it is a 'political hot potato' with constituents on their side of the border. In fact, they argued that the trash issue is impeding progress on many other, unrelated policy issues with Ontario and Canada, as U.S. constituents are becoming increasingly agitated with their Canadian neighbours because of the trash.

It was suggested that the Ontario Chamber facilitate a joint meeting with its Michigan counterpart as well as the provincial and state governments to discuss such important issues as trash, borders and trade, among other topics. It was also suggested, and enthusiastically received by all parties, that a more formal relationship between the four groups be established for ongoing dialogue.

Upcoming Events

Listed below are some upcoming events that may be of interest to chambers and boards:

- Ontario Business Advisory Council with Premier Dalton McGuinty, April 28
- 92nd Annual General Meeting & Convention, April 30 – May 2, 2004
- Health Committee Meeting, May 4, 2004
- Education Committee Meeting, May 6, 2004
- Energy Task Force Meeting, May 12, 2004
- Finance & Taxation Committee Meeting, May 13, 2004
- Ontario Business Advisory Council with U.S. Ambassador Paul Cellucci, May 14, 2004
- OCC Economic Recovery Tours, May 17 – May 20, 2004
- Borders & Trade Development Committee, Buffalo, May 19, 2004
- Victoria Day, OCC Offices Closed, May 24, 2004
- Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, May 26, 2004

