

## **Legislative Watch**

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### **Cost of Border Delays to Ontario Billions of Dollars**

In a report to be launched on Monday, June 7, 2004, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce delves into the mounting problem of border delays. The *Cost of Border Delays to Ontario* report, developed by the OCC Borders and Trade Development Committee, will be delivered to the government and media at the Main Legislative Building at Queen's Park.

The report is a thorough review of the issues related to delays at Ontario-US border crossings. It reviews the effects of these delays on families, businesses and the Ontario economy as a whole. Section seven of the report breaks new ground by quantifying the costs of these delays on businesses and the economy.

Len Crispino, President and Chief Executive Officer of the OCC, David Gavsie, OCC Chair and Chair of the Borders and Trade Development Committee, along with Harold Heffernen, General Manager of Celadon Canada, will be at the event to deliver the highly anticipated report.

*Cost of Border Delays to Ontario* will be delivered to members of both federal and provincial levels of government, key stakeholders, as well as to our members on Monday. Please visit our website at [www.occ.on.ca](http://www.occ.on.ca) at 10:00am to download a copy of the report.

The OCC will be delivering this report, along with other key policies, to Premier Dalton McGuinty, the Honourable Harindar Takhar, Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Joseph Cordiano, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and the Honourable David Caplan, Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, scheduled for next Thursday, June 10, 2004.

### **OCC Keeps a Close Eye on Campaign 2004**

The second issue of the OCC's Election Watch newsletter was released on Wednesday just before Liberal front-runner Paul Martin released his party's platform yesterday in Windsor for the upcoming June 28 election. NDP leader Jack Layton released his party's platform May 26, while the Progressive Conservative party is set to release its platform shortly. The latest edition of the Watch can be viewed by following this link:

<http://occ.on.ca/members/2electionwatch/06022004/index.html>.

In the most recent SES Daily Election Update, the Progressive Conservatives are closing the gap on the Liberals. Yesterday's results show that the Liberals have 35% of the vote, down six points since the start of the polling on May 25, Tories follow with 32%, up four points, and the NDP are in third with 19% of the vote.

SES has teamed up with CPAC to conduct these nightly polling results. For more information on SES and the methodology used to conduct the poll please visit its website at [www.sesresearch.com](http://www.sesresearch.com).

## **OCC Supports Fixed Election Dates**

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is pleased to see the Ontario Liberals move forward on an election promise to set fixed dates for all provincial elections.

The OCC views a mandatory, four-year term as a positive initiative, as it entrenches a finite period of time for any given mandate. The proposed legislation sets the first Thursday of October every four years as Election Day. It also includes setting the length of the campaign at 28 days, a change from the current rules of campaigning anywhere from 28 to 56 days.

While viewing the proposed legislation as positive, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce would strongly urge this and all future governments to stay the course on responsible, prudent fiscal policies and refrain from typical pre-election spending sprees in the weeks and months leading up to the fixed election day.

The OCC would also encourage the leaders of the federal parties to follow Ontario's proposal and set fixed dates for all future federal elections.

## **Gearing Up For Team Ontario 2004**

It's that time of year again, Team Ontario will soon be gearing up to begin preparations for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Annual General Meeting, to be held September 18-20 in Calgary, Alberta.

The deadline for resolutions was yesterday, June 3, with late resolutions being excepted until early August, which means the proposed policy resolutions book should be available on the Chamber's website shortly. Once the Canadian Chamber releases the proposed policy resolutions, the OCC will develop a conference call meeting schedule to review them, likely late June.

Team Ontario coordinates responses and provides recommendations to each of the proposed resolutions on an Ontario-wide basis. The OCC's policy resolutions review process will consist of a thorough review of all of the proposed resolutions so that a united consensus is demonstrated at the federal level.

Local chambers of commerce and boards of trade are encouraged to participate in Team Ontario. If you or a member of your chamber or board is interested in participating please contact Rachel Kagan via email at [rachelkagan@occ.on.ca](mailto:rachelkagan@occ.on.ca).

## **Is Canada an Attractive Destination for Foreign Investment?**

Yesterday the Conference Board of Canada released a new report on the country's business environment. According to the report, *Open for Business? Canada's Foreign Direct Investment Challenge*, Canada needs to do a better job of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), otherwise its competitive position and economic potential could weaken.

Canada's share of FDI fell from 7.7 per cent in 1980 to 3.1 per cent in 2002. The report states that this decrease cannot be attributed to increasing investment flows to other rapidly growing countries including India, China and others, because developed economies such as the United States and the European Union have been able to maintain or even increase their share of global investment.

The Board reports that the three factors that do the most harm to the country's business environment are the quality of local suppliers and employees, the state of business infrastructure, and the tax and regulatory market.

Investment decisions are based on a number of factors including access to markets and access to resources. The Conference Board goes into greater detail in these areas and also reviews the country's infrastructure, work force, tax system, and other investment elements. The Board surveyed over 100 global business executives to learn how they view Canada's business environment and how it measures up a desirable country to invest in.

The report is available at no cost on the Conference Board's website at [www.conferenceboard.ca/boardwise](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/boardwise), through Boardwise – which is part of The Canada Project – a three-year program to research and encourage dialogue on issues that will help improve Canada's quality of life and its global positioning. There is no charge to register with Boardwise but you must register in order to download a copy of the report.

### **Chamber Credit Card Program**

TD Canada Trust continues to offer an excellent service hotline for you and your members. It is 1-800-363-1163. Should there be member enquiries about the VISA program, current rates, etc., the 800-number is your best resource.

### **Upcoming Events**

Listed below are some upcoming events that may be of interest:

- OCC Finance and Taxation Committee, June 10, 2003
- OCC Energy Task Force Meeting, June 23, 2004
- Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC) with The Honourable David Caplan, Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, June 14, 2004
- OCC Borders and Trade Development Committee, June 16, 2004
- OCC Board of Directors Meeting, June 17, 2004
- Queen's Park Liaison Forum (QPLF), London, Ontario, June 18, 2004
- Federal Election, June 28, 2004
- Ontario Economic Summit (OES), Niagara-on-the-Lake, October 6-7, 2004