

## **OCC Requests Your Feedback for 2004 Federal Pre-Budget Consultations**

For the past two years the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has enjoyed the opportunity to present its budget priorities, reflecting Ontario's response to national issues, in the federal government's pre-budget consultations. Once again the OCC will be participating in the federal government's upcoming consultations. As in previous years, we will be preparing a submission reflecting our members budget priorities. This year to better capture member input we are preparing a survey to identify federal policy issues that are important to chamber members from an Ontario perspective. The OCC will use the results of this survey to develop its 2004 Federal Pre-Budget Submission and prioritize areas of focus to assist in the development of policy positions. The OCC is planning to launch the survey sometime next week. Your feedback is very important for the Chamber's submission. We appreciate if you will take the time to complete the survey once it is sent to you and posted online, and to forward it to your members to ensure an adequate representation from across the province.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance will be holding public hearings on the 2004 pre-budget consultations from Monday September 27 to Friday November 5, 2004. Hearings will be held across the province. The Committee will also be proceeding with a pilot project, by holding two Town Hall meetings in Saskatoon, on Thursday, October 23 and in St-John's on Monday, October 25, both these meetings will be televised on CPAC. Additional information on the pre-budget consultations can be found at [http://www.parl.gc.ca/InfocomDoc/Documents/37/3/parlbus/commbus/house/reports/FINA\\_ConstBuddget-e.htm](http://www.parl.gc.ca/InfocomDoc/Documents/37/3/parlbus/commbus/house/reports/FINA_ConstBuddget-e.htm).

## **Team Ontario Starts with a Bang; Proxies Still Needed for Convention**

In preparation for its upcoming AGM in Calgary, September 18-20, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has posted its proposed policy resolutions which will be debated at the convention. The complete book of resolutions can be found at <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/ProposedResos2004.pdf>.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has once again initiated its Team Ontario process whereby chamber and board executives from across the province meet twice a week via teleconference to review and evaluate the proposed resolutions. Viewing the resolutions from an Ontario wide perspective, the Team coordinates responses and prepares recommendations on each. Yesterday kicked off this year's Team Ontario season and we got off to a great start. The Team will meet regularly for the month of August and into September if necessary.

To ensure that Ontario has a substantial voice at the convention, the OCC requests that if you have not already done so, to **PLEASE** send your proxy to the OCC as soon as possible. If your chamber or board is a member of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and is **unable** to attend the Convention, please fax the proxy form that was sent to you to **(416) 482-5879 as soon as possible**. If you have not received the proxy form or have a question, feel free to contact Rachel Kagan at [rachelkagan@occ.on.ca](mailto:rachelkagan@occ.on.ca) or at (416) 482-5222, ext. 233.

## **Energy in Ontario: Reliability Today, Sustainability Tomorrow?**

On August 12, 2004, the Premier Dalton McGuinty with Energy Minister Dwight Duncan, announced Hydro One's new Grid Control Centre to help make the province's electricity system more reliable. The \$125 million centre will employ over 200 who will manage Hydro One's distribution and transmission system for the facility. Construction began in September 2001 and it is expected to be fully operational by the end of August.

In the news release, which can be found at <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/news/HydroOneControlCentre081204.asp>, the Premier reiterated his government's commitment to making Ontario a North American leader in energy conservation and management. The government is looking for more renewable energy, such as wind and solar power, and for more generating power at Niagara Falls and Pickering A. The Premier also said that it is important for all Ontarians to help manage demand and create a culture of conservation in the province.

In other energy news, Energy Minister Duncan has proposed an idea to build a national electricity grid that would connect Ontario to other provinces in order to enhance the reliability of the country's electricity supply and to provide the province with lower-cost imported power. The Canadian Press has reported that analysts believe this idea is not economically feasible. It is impractical because electricity cannot be shipped over long distances without significant line losses. However the Premier believes that if the province could get more hydro-electric power from other provinces, it would help Canada meet its Kyoto targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions. One energy analyst said that the proposal would cost taxpayers billions of dollars and that Ontario should instead focus on solutions including investing in conservation and renewable sources of energy.

The OCC is currently preparing its submission for the Standing Committee on Social Policy on Bill 100, the Electricity Amendment Act. If you have any comments or input on the Bill please send them to Rachel Kagan at [rachelkagan@occ.on.ca](mailto:rachelkagan@occ.on.ca) as soon as possible. The Energy Task Force next meets on Thursday, August 19, so please send your feedback ahead of the meeting.

## **Dispute Over Highway 407 May Threaten Canada-EU Trade Agreement**

A disagreement over Ontario's Highway 407 has caused the Spanish Government to threaten that it may refuse to negotiate in the proposed Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement, which would see Canada enter into a trade deal with the European Union.

The toll road is owned by a large Spanish conglomerate who announced a rate hike in February. The McGuinty government disputed the toll increase saying that they should have been consulted first. An arbitration panel ruled in July that the Ontario government had no case, but they have appealed that decision and since then the Spanish government has intervened on behalf of the highway's owners and have threatened to veto the proposed trade agreement between Canada and the EU unless the Ontario government allows the company to raise tolls on Highway 407.

The planned trade agreement would mean that Canada could allay its reliance on the United States, its largest trading partner. This deal is key to improving Canada/Ontario-Global relations. However, serious negotiations have not yet begun.

In a article published on August 11, the Globe and Mail reported that a Foreign Affairs spokesperson said there has been no official communication saying that the government will block the deal. Today, the Associate Press reported that the EU is working to resolve this dispute. According to a European Commission spokeswoman, the Commission has contacted Canadian officials on this issue. The OCC will continue to monitor this matter.

### **OBAA Awards Nominations Deadline Quickly Approaching**

Thank you to all the chambers and boards who have already submitted their nominations for this year's Outstanding Business Achievement Awards (OBAA) Gala Dinner recognizing business excellence in Ontario. The dinner will take place on November 10, 2004 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. In order to continue to publicly recognize the excellent businesses and entrepreneurial spirit in Ontario, local chambers of commerce and boards of trade are requested to send in their nominations by **August 31, 2004**.

Four OBAA awards will be presented to those businesses whose achievements in sales, innovation, entrepreneurship, and overall business excellence and acumen.

The Community Export Development Award recognizes a community – as represented by a chamber of commerce, board of trade, or business development organization – that has successfully created an environment which fosters business and export development.

The Bell Innovation Technology Award recognizes Ontario businesses that have demonstrated excellence in innovation, adaptability, and the successful application of new technology to the development & growth of their products and/or services.

Additionally, the OCC is very excited to present two new awards at this year's OBAA. The Skills Development Award will recognize business excellence in the area of skills development and training, and the Corporate Governance Award will honour an Ontario business that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment in the area of corporate governance.

To view the complete nominations guideline please visit our website at <http://occ.on.ca/2obaa.asp>. For information about the nominations process or about reservations for the OBAA Awards Dinner Presentation, please contact Colleen MacIntyre via email at [colleenmacintyre@occ.on.ca](mailto:colleenmacintyre@occ.on.ca) or by telephone at (416) 482-5222, extension 222.

### **Message from Chamber Manager on Peterborough Flood Relief**

As you may have seen or heard in recent news reports a flood devastated the Peterborough Ontario area on July 15. Mother Nature was extremely unforgiving, dumping approximately 7- 9 inches of rain in about 6 hours. As a result there are an alarming number of homeowners and businesses that are facing dramatic losses. Approximately 2,700 homeowners, and 260 businesses find they are not covered by their insurance policies, typically because their damage has been caused by a flood, not sewage back-up.

Fortunately the majority of businesses/homeowners are covered, but we as a Chamber would like to help those who are not. We feel that the flood was a great equalizer. The Insurance Companies are certainly keeping up their end of the bargain, but we feel those businesses/homeowners who find themselves without coverage ought to have some help.

Our Chamber of Commerce has approved a \$25,000 donation to the Peterborough Flood Relief Fund. We have encouraged our 850 members to contribute as well.

We are asking you to consider a donation on behalf of your company. There are three reasons:

1. The Province of Ontario will match your donation on a two-to-one basis (see below).
2. Your donation will be tax-deductible.
3. When coupled with donations from other like-minded businesses across the Country, along with the matching funds, your donation will have a significant impact, helping fellow businesses and homeowners.

Please make your cheque payable to:

Peterborough Flood Relief Fund  
C/O City of Peterborough  
500 George St. N.  
Peterborough, ON K9H 3R9  
Attention: RoseMary Reid, City Administrator's Office.

Or you can also make a donation at your local Red Cross Branch, but please indicate that your donation is to go to the Peterborough Flood Relief Fund.

The Province will match this money on a two-for-one basis under the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP). The ODRAP fund is used to compensate all businesses and homeowners who are not covered by their insurance. The ODRAP fund can cover eligible losses up to 90%, as long as the fund is large enough, thus the need to raise as much money as possible, as soon as possible.

Other flood-related information, is available on the City of Peterborough website at <http://www.city.peterborough.on.ca>

We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

**Stuart Harrison**

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### **Upcoming Events**

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

- OCC Energy Task Force Meeting, August 19
- OCC Borders and Trade Development Committee, August 24
- OCC Finance and Taxation Committee, August 26
- OCC Education Committee Meeting, August 31
- OBAA Nominations Deadline, August 31
- OCC Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, September 1
- Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC) with Minister Cordiano, September 22
- Ontario Economic Summit (OES), Niagara-on-the-Lake, October 6-7
- Outstanding Business Achievement Awards (OBAA) Gala Dinner, November 10
- Governing Council, November 19