

Your monthly news & updates

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WOWC Sets 2024-25 Strategic Priorities



**2024-2025
PRIORITIES**



Members of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) met virtually today with their regional Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) to unveil the WOWC's priorities for 2024-25 as well as to present and discuss strategic approaches and mutual opportunities for collaboration and advocacy over the coming year.

The Caucus has identified the following key priorities for the coming year:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Workforce to Support Economic Growth

- Mental Health, Addictions and Homelessness

“The WOWC members have conducted extensive research and significant discussions over the past few months, and as a result have decided on a renewed and strengthened focus on these priorities for 2024 and early 2025,” stated WOWC Chair Glen McNeil.

“These four issues have consistently been identified as the primary concerns for small and rural municipalities in Western Ontario,” added Chair McNeil. “The Caucus is therefore staying the course, given its significant familiarity and advocacy efforts with these matters over the past few years.”

[View the Strategic Priorities](#)

WOWC: Appearance Before the Standing Committee of the Interior



On Tuesday, April 9th, Chair Glen McNeil was invited to appear before the Standing Committee of the Interior to speak on Bill 165, Keeping Energy Costs Down Act, 2024.

Chair McNeil expressed the WOWC's support for the Province of Ontario's proposed modernization of the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) Leave to Construct (LTC) process, modernizing these regulations will reduce delays and costs for economic development initiatives including new industries seeking to locate in Ontario and create jobs, transit projects, community expansion projects, housing developments, as well as residential and business customer connections.

[View the full submission](#)

WOWC Celebrates Tourism Week



On Friday, April 19th, the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, Economic Development Committee was pleased to welcome Andrew Siegart, President and CEO of the Tourism Industry Assoc. of Ontario to their meeting.

TIAO is the voice of Tourism across Ontario. They drive advocacy & deliver member programs which ensure the tourism industry's economic sustainability and growth.

Ontario's tourism industry is progressing towards recovery and is closing-in on 2019 performance levels – however, work is needed in 3 key areas to carry forward:

- Stimulate Growth & Strengthen Capacity
- Tackle the Labour Shortage
- Tourism Management: Transportation & Sustainability

To learn more about TIAO and their work visit:

[TIAO - Tourism Counts](#)

Image: L to R: Andrew Siegart TIAO, Kate Burns Gallagher WOWC Executive Director, Mayor Jim Ginn Chair WOWC Economic Development Committee

Honda to Build Canada's First Comprehensive Electric Vehicle Supply Chain, Creating Thousands of New Jobs in Ontario



On Thursday, Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, today welcomed Honda Canada's milestone investment of approximately \$15 billion to create Canada's first comprehensive electric vehicle supply chain, located in Ontario.

This large-scale project will see four new manufacturing plants in Ontario. Honda will build an innovative and world-class electric vehicle assembly plant – the first of its kind for Honda Motor Co. Ltd. – as well as a new stand-alone battery manufacturing plant at Honda's facilities in

Alliston, Ontario. To complete the supply chain, Honda will also build a cathode active material and precursor (CAM/pCAM) processing plant through a joint venture partnership with POSCO Future M Co., Ltd. and a separator plant through a joint venture partnership with Asahi Kasei Corporation. Once fully operational in 2028, the new assembly plant will produce up to 240,000 vehicles per year.

Honda's investments in an electric vehicle assembly plant and a battery manufacturing plant in Alliston will create over one thousand well-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario, with the CAM/pCAM processing plant and separator plant helping to create thousands of additional direct and indirect jobs in Ontario and across Canada, including during the construction phase and across Ontario's leading auto parts supplier and research and development ecosystems.

"On behalf of the County of Simcoe, I would like to extend our best wishes and thank Honda Canada Inc. for choosing our region to expand operations. I would also like to thank the Prime Minister, Premier and all our

municipal partners for our continued collaboration and support to make this happen," County of Simcoe Warden Basil Clarke.

[View the press release](#)

Ontario Connecting Over 23,000 People to Primary Care Teams in Elgin, Lambton, and Chatham-Kent



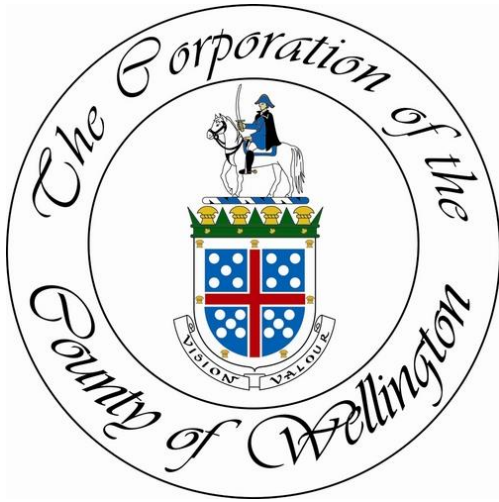
The Ontario government is investing nearly \$6.4 million to connect over 23,000 people to primary care teams in Elgin, Lambton, and Chatham-Kent. This is part of Ontario's \$110 million investment to connect up to 328,000 people to primary care teams, bringing the province one step closer to connecting everyone in Ontario to primary care.

Ontario currently leads the country with nearly 90 per cent of people connected to a regular health care provider. As a next step to close the gap for those not connected to primary care in these areas, the province is supporting seven new and expanded interprofessional primary care initiatives that will connect over 23,000 Ontarians to primary care teams and provide services including:

- New mobile services for an Indigenous Primary Health Care Organization that will support First Nations, Inuit and Metis community members in Middlesex County.
- A new mobile bus to connect Indigenous people in rural and urban areas of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex with Indigenous led, culturally relevant primary care services in person and virtually.
- An expanded Family Health Team in Elgin County that will partner with another Family Health Team and Community Health Centre to increase the number of people who can connect to team-based primary care services.
- A new rural site along with expanded capacity at an urban clinic in Lambton County, focused on connecting isolated seniors, socioeconomically disadvantaged and vulnerable people, newcomers, and refugees to primary care.
- New mobile primary care services in Chatham-Kent, including clinics for respiratory and diabetes management, cancer screening and traditional healers to help provide culturally appropriate care.
- Primary care service expansion in Tillsonburg to connect vulnerable and medically complex community members to comprehensive, convenient and connected primary care closer to home.

[View the press release](#)

County Receives 2023 John Niedra Better Practices Award



The County of Wellington, and its project team, received the 2023 John Niedra Better Practices Award at the annual Ontario Good Roads Association Conference.

The John Niedra Better Practices competition aims to highlight a municipality's ability to adapt and innovate to unique and challenging conditions, while solving problems in an inventive and original way. These solutions help a municipality streamline a process or use equipment in ways never envisioned before.

Wellington County utilized cellular concrete lightweight fill to reduce the road structure load on two sections of Wellington Road 32 (Lake Road) in Puslinch. The use of lightweight fill allowed the County to raise the road grade to address road drainage issues and is expected to extend the road service life. Extensive geotechnical testing will continue over the next year to determine whether the half load restriction on Lake Road is still required.

"I'd like to congratulate the County's Road Division on their 2023 John Niedra Better Practices Award," said Warden Andy Lennox. "It's wonderful to have the County's important work recognized at the provincial level."

[View the Press Release](#)

Bruce County Creates Government Relations Department



Bruce County has created a new Government Relations Department as a key piece in the County's organizational restructuring and strategic planning.

The mandate of the Government Relations Department is to support Council and staff to define and deliver on its mandate to serve the citizens of Bruce County. It does this through a series of a strategic activities including:

- Providing secretariate support for achieving the goals of the strategic plan
 - Leadership of government and external relations management
 - Leadership of strategic communications and issues management
 - Management of intergovernmental initiatives
- Governance and project management advisory support

Current Employment Services Manager, Aaron Stauch, will become Bruce County's Director of Government Relations, effective April 8, 2024. Aaron Stauch is an experienced leader with expertise in partnership development and the delivery and system stewardship of government funded programs. Aaron has led the Employment Service System for Bruce, Grey, Huron, and Perth since July 2022. He has also served in senior management roles with multiple provincial ministries. Aaron holds a Master of Environmental Studies and a Master of Business Administration.

[View the Press Release](#)



Bill 185: Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act

On April 10th the Government [introduced Bill 185](#), the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act. This omnibus bill includes changes to [a range of legislation](#) including changes to development charges and Ontario's land-use planning framework with the stated intent of removing barriers to building 1.5 million homes by 2031.

Changes to Development Charges

In response to AMO advocacy, Bill 185 would make significant steps towards restoring municipalities' ability to fund growth-related infrastructure.

Minister's Zoning Orders

Bill 185 would replace the Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator (CHIA) tool with a new Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) [framework](#).

Land-Use Planning Changes

Bill 185 includes a number of changes intended to streamline planning processes and speed up housing development.

[View the full policy brief](#)

Southwestern Ontario Development Fund Open

The Southwestern Ontario Development Fund is now open for applications.

SWODF provides support for projects and investments to existing businesses, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations for economic development in southwestern Ontario. The objective of the program is to provide financial support and services to help growing companies in eastern and southwestern Ontario make investments to:

- grow their businesses
- improve productivity
- invest in innovation and skills development
- pursue new markets
- generate broad positive regional - economic impact
- create new good, sustainable jobs

Types of support available:

- funding support
- complementary services and support

The fund supports business and community economic development projects.

[Apply Now](#)

Recent Developments in the Canadian Economy

This article provides an integrated summary of recent changes in output, consumer prices, employment, and household finances. It highlights changes in the economic data during the second half of 2023 and into the winter months. The article also examines how economic conditions have changed as borrowing costs have risen.

Business productivity edges higher after steady declines.

Business labour productivity, a measure of the volume of goods and services produced per hour worked, rose 0.4% in late 2023, the first increase in seven quarters.

Output expands as oil and gas extraction ramps up

After edging down in the third quarter of 2023, economy-wide output rebounded in the fourth, supported by increases in oil and gas extraction following maintenance and turnarounds in the summer and early fall.

[Read the full article](#)

Community Futures Western Ontario AGM



The poster features a background image of a man in a white shirt and apron standing in a coffee shop. The text on the poster reads:

Community Futures Western Ontario
13th Annual General Meeting
Honouring the Businesses that Make Our Communities Great.
Wednesday, June 12, 2024
Elm Hurst Inn, Ingersoll, ON
Creating Jobs, Fostering Innovation, and Building our Rural Economy.

Community Futures Western Ontario would like to invite you to our 13th Annual General Meeting on June 12th, 2023, at 10 AM.

(Doors open at 9:45 AM)

Elm Hurst Inn & Spa, 415 Harris St., Ingersoll, ON N5C 3J8
(The event will be held in the Carriage House)

We look forward to sharing our highlights and successes from this past year.

To register for this event please use one of the 3 links below that applies to you.

Please register by Thursday, May 30th, 2024

We look forward to your attendance.

In-Person – Board Member

<https://survey.tractus.ca/#/pp/CFWO24/14C5571DD4774503A689800F6DABC897>

In-Person – Non-Board Member (Guest/Partner)

<https://survey.tractus.ca/#/pp/CFWO24/C2F691E5CBEB4C9EA724E4B7CAC744DF>

Join in Virtually

<https://survey.tractus.ca/#/pp/CFWO24/AF93C5275F2E4250B5F8631679DF98F1>