



ERNIE HARDEMAN

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From Ernie's Desk

April 2024

Hello,

It's officially spring! However, the weather seems like it's still trying to figure that out. This past Easter long weekend, I hope you had a joyful holiday with your friends and family.

March 26th was budget day in Ontario, and we released our 2024 Budget titled *Building a Better Ontario*. Even in the face of continued global economic uncertainty and high interest rates, Ontario will continue to invest in infrastructure, attract jobs, and keep costs down. The proposals in the Budget continue on our election pledge to Get It Done for Ontarians. More information can be found below in this newsletter.

Happy spring,

Ernie Hardeman, MPP Oxford

How Can My Office Help You?

- Birth Certificates
- Commissioner of Oaths
- Congratulatory Certificates
- Driver's Licences
- Family Responsibility Office
- OHIP
- Ontario Works / ODSP / WSIB
- Or Any Other Provincial Matter

Trending Questions

Q: What is the Ontario Government doing to oppose the federal carbon tax?

A: Our government is strongly against the federal carbon tax and the 23 per cent increase that kicked in April 1st. In fact, we took our fight against this tax all the way to the Supreme Court. Premier Ford also recently sent a letter to the Federal Government reiterating our call for them to cancel the federal carbon tax.

Provincially, we extended the 5.7 cent per litre gas tax cut to the end of 2024 to combat the increase in the carbon tax. This has helped the average Ontario household save \$320 over the two and a half years since the tax cut was first introduced.

Q: What is the Ontario Government doing to reduce auto insurance rates?

A: With the rising cost of living, I know that taking action on auto insurance rates can make a meaningful difference for drivers.

Starting this year, drivers are able to reduce payments by having the option to opt-out of not-at-fault property damage coverage. In our 2024 Budget, we're proposing to further increase consumer choice by making benefits optional aside from medical, rehabilitation, and attendant care benefits. Many drivers already have access to certain benefits through their workplace benefit plans, and this will give them the choice to not pay twice through their insurance policy.

We're cracking down on fraud, which is a major driver of costs, by tracking fraud and holding insurers accountable. Car theft is also a major driver of costs, and we're investing to help police services acquire equipment, train, and expand data collection on thefts.

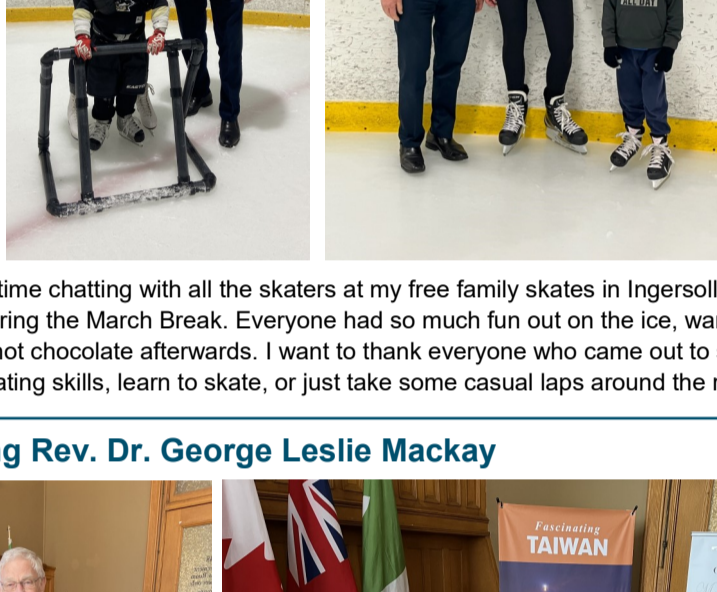
Finally, the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario launched a consumer information hub so that drivers can compare their premiums to the Ontario average and search rate filings. This helps drivers be better informed and helps them make decisions on their policy and insurer they choose.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE CONSUMER HUB](#)

If you would like to ask a question and have it answered here next month, email ernie.hardemanco@pc.ola.org and write in the subject line "Trending Questions." Please note, I will not be able to answer everyone's question here every month due to limited space.

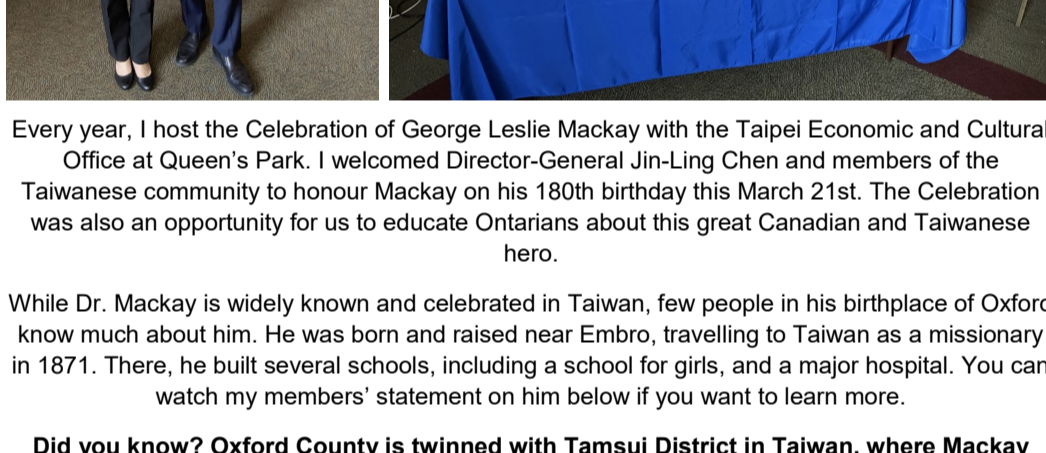
What I've Been Up To

Free Family Skates



I had a great time chatting with all the skaters at my free family skates in Ingersoll, Norwich, and Tillsonburg during the March Break. Everyone had so much fun out on the ice, warming up with a cookie and hot chocolate afterwards. I want to thank everyone who came out to show off their skating skills, learn to skate, or just take some casual laps around the rink.

Celebrating Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay

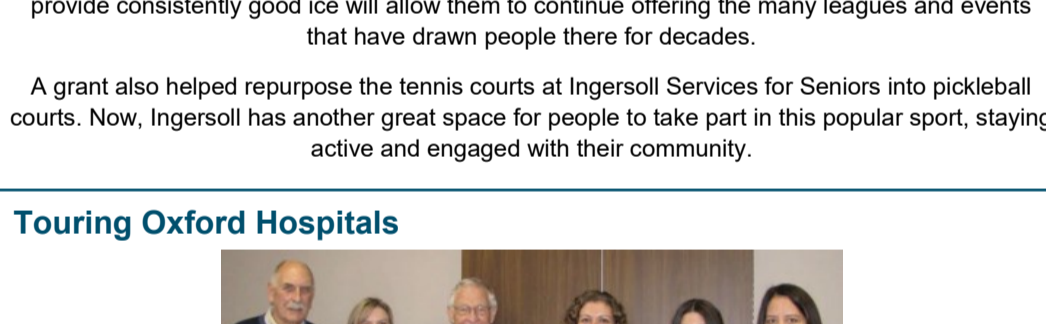


Every year, I host the Celebration of George Leslie Mackay with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office at Queen's Park. I welcomed Director-General Jin-Ling Chen and members of the Taiwanese community to honour Mackay on his 180th birthday this March 21st. The Celebration was also an opportunity for us to educate Ontarians about this great Canadian and Taiwanese hero.

While Dr. Mackay is widely known and celebrated in Taiwan, few people in his birthplace of Oxford know much about him. He was born and raised near Embro, travelling to Taiwan as a missionary in 1871. There, he built several schools, including a school for girls, and a major hospital. You can watch my members' statement on him below if you want to learn more.

Did you know? Oxford County is twinned with Tamsui District in Taiwan, where Mackay founded his mission.

Ontario Trillium Foundation Grants



This past month, I saw the results of the funding received from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport for local organizations through Ontario Trillium Foundation grants. Tillsonburg Curling Club received a grant to replace their over 40 year old ice scraper. Having the ability to provide consistently good ice will allow them to continue offering the many leagues and events that have drawn people there for decades.

A grant also helped repurpose the tennis courts at Ingersoll Services for Seniors into pickleball courts. Now, Ingersoll has another great space for people to take part in this popular sport, staying active and engaged with their community.

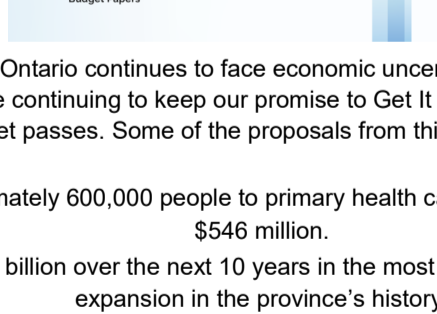
Touring Oxford Hospitals



It was great to see all the advanced equipment and the wonderful work that Woodstock Hospital, Alexandra Hospital in Ingersoll, and Tillsonburg Hospital are doing as I toured their facilities over the last couple of months. I enjoyed seeing all the recent upgrades to their facilities and how they are working to keep healthcare close to home.

Government Announcements

Ontario's 2024 Budget: Building a Better Ontario

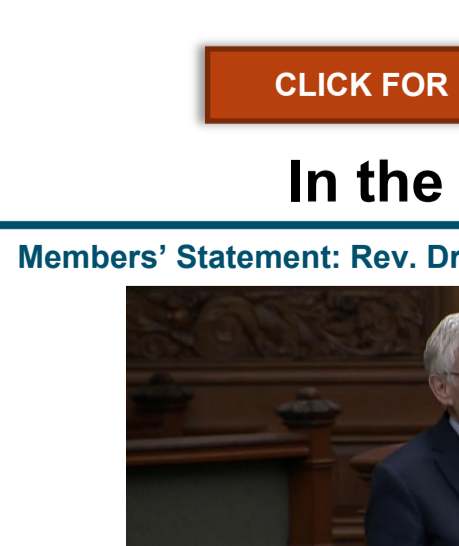


Like the rest of the world, Ontario continues to face economic uncertainty due to high interest rates. That's why we are continuing to keep our promise to Get It Done with a path back to balance if our 2024 Budget passes. Some of the proposals from this year's budget are below:

- Connecting approximately 600,000 people to primary health care with a total investment of \$546 million.
- Investing over \$50 billion over the next 10 years in the most ambitious plan for hospital expansion in the province's history.
 - Extending the temporary 5.7 cent per litre gas tax cuts until December 31, 2024.
- Investing more than \$190 billion over the next 10 years to build critical infrastructure, such as roads, transit, homes, and high-speed internet.
- Making Ontario a world EV manufacturing hub by helping transform the Ingersoll CAMI Assembly Plant to build the BrightDrop EV van, which will begin building battery modules in the second quarter of this year.
- Expanding and rehabilitating provincial highways, including Highway 403 between Highway 401 and West Quarter Townline Road.
- Investing an additional \$152 million towards supportive housing initiatives and mental health, including expanding the Youth Wellness Hub network to Oxford.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE BUDGET](#)

Investing \$1.8 Billion to Build More Homes



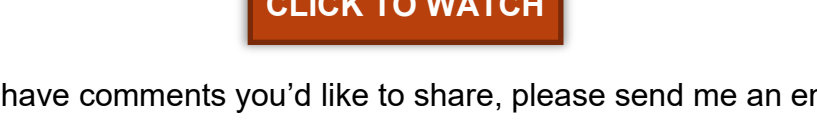
To bring home ownership into reach for more people, our government is investing more than \$1.8 billion in housing-enabling infrastructure funding. This funding was announced in our 2024 Budget, and will help us reach our goal of at least 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

A lack of infrastructure is one of the biggest barriers preventing housing construction. On top of the billions we're already investing in infrastructure, this new investment will help get more shovels in the ground faster and keep the dream of home ownership alive.

[CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

In the Legislature

Members' Statement: Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay



On the same day I held the Celebration of George Leslie Mackay, I rose in the Legislature to honour him and educate Ontarians about all the good he did helping to build modern Taiwan.

[CLICK TO WATCH](#)

If you have comments you'd like to share, please send me an email at ernie.hardemanco@pc.ola.org