

forum

Holding an election unnecessary, costly

On Tuesday, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty delivered our government's federal budget. I think this is a tremendous budget for Canadians and I hope the opposition will support it. We certainly do not need an unnecessary and early election costing \$300 million to taxpayers. Parliament should be at work and focused on our economy and job growth.

Over the past few months, I have held a number of consultations and round-table discussions on the budget with many local business leaders, Barrie staff and elected officials. In my pre-budget submissions to the finance minister, I touched on environmentally friendly retrofits and fixing the doctor shortage for under-served areas with help on loan repayments. Doctors Rob Ballagh and Brad Dibble advocated for help for new doctors and addressing under-served areas, and I am pleased these submissions made it into the budget.

During my consultations, I also heard a unanimous call from our small business owners for politicians to live up to the promises made over business tax reductions.

In 2007, our government announced a series of graduated business tax reductions designed to keep Canada competitive with our trading partners and this strategy has been supported by a majority of parliamentarians in two federal budgets since.

Sybil Goruk, executive director of the Greater Barrie Chamber of Commerce, put it best when she wrote to me last month to voice her concerns. "Consistency and reliability in government policy are critical factors in business decision-making," she said. "Businesses across the country have invested with the understanding that taxes would decline. A sudden change of course would constitute a broken promise to thousands of businesses and the many people they have employed based on that promise."

I wholeheartedly agree with Sybil. A tax increase on small businesses would be reckless at this time. The opposition proposal would have caused tax increases on at least 310 federally and provincially incorporated Barrie small businesses that my office has already been able to identify in collaboration with the Library of Parliament. Small businesses are the growth engine of the Canadian economy and this budget offers help. We reject ill-advised opposition tax increases and our budget provides a hiring credit for new employees.

I think there are many initiatives within this budget that can help the people of Barrie right now. Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) was certainly something I heard about in Barrie when I met with members of CARP and when I visited local senior homes. I am happy our government responded with at least a modest increase.



Patrick Brown
PARLIAMENT HILL

I think the tax credit for home caregivers is a terrific initiative. I see so many families in Barrie with loved ones suffering from a variety of illnesses and they want to be by their loved one's side. In numerous cases, loved ones take long periods off work to help with care. It is only fair that we help to ease that burden on families during these traumatic times.

Local energy experts Adam Smith and Wilco Vercoelen advocated for continuing the investment in eco-energy and I think it makes a lot of sense. We should encourage more residents to invest in alternative energy. I had solar panels installed on my house three years ago. It is fantastic technology. It really does work.

We need to get more Canadians to go solar and geo-thermal. Continuing this program would help by providing a financial incentive.

The children's art tax credit would allow parents to claim 15% (or up to \$500 per child) for organized activities such as art, music, drama, painting, languages, photography and chess.

My good friends Coun. Lynn Strachan and William Moore told me they hoped the budget would include some investment in the arts for young people. This incentive would be a great compliment to many of the programs available at the MacLaren Arts Centre, as well as through Barrie's recreation department.

As the government, we have an obligation to look at the big picture and respond to the challenges ahead in a responsible and practical way. I feel strongly that this budget follows those principles.

I am hosting a 'tele-town-hall' starting at 7 p.m. tonight with Senator Mike Duffy and Defence Minister Peter Mackay to discuss the federal budget. If you wish to join in on the conversation, please call 705-252-8007 and we will add you to the live conference call.

Patrick Brown is Barrie's MP

LETTER OF THE DAY

More policing, and less politics

When we first moved to Barrie in the 1980s, it was such a safe place to live.

Police patrols had a heavier presence on the streets and crime was low.

Police officers in general had physical statures that commanded respect and they were able to deal with many situations on their own, whereas now it requires a small army to do the same job.

Police administrators seem to have lost sight of the fact that crime prevention is cost effective as opposed to dealing with the end results of criminal activity.

A more proactive approach to crime prevention and traffic violations would also save millions of dollars in healthcare costs, lost productivity and court costs.

The political obsession with diversity and multiculturalism has resulted in revised hiring

practices which means that this dangerous situation will not change anytime soon.

Hiring more officers each year will not solve the crime problem in this city. Quality police officers will.

However, strategies for policing need to change too.

There needs to be a much greater visible police presence in our city, for example more police patrols, in vehicles and on foot (not just in the downtown).

There needs to be more community type policing, getting to know residents and talking to them about any concerns they may have in their neighbourhoods.

In conclusion, take the politics out of policing and get back to the job of serving and protecting us in this great city.

J. L. Bennett
Barrie

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

United Way says thanks for helping

Open letter of thanks to Greater Simcoe County

Wow, \$1.62 million.

A heartfelt thanks for the generosity of individuals, businesses and media across this region for your incredible support in this year's annual campaign.

Because of you, United Way of Greater Simcoe County was able to surpass its goal, which will further enable the most efficient and impactful of local charitable programs and services. Back on Sept. 24, 2010 at CFB Borden, United Way of Greater Simcoe County launched the most ambitious annual fundraising campaign in its 51-year history, setting its sights on a \$1.6-million goal.

More than 150 employees stepped up to engage their staffs in short, but highly effective, workplace campaigns that comprised about 80% of the overall total raised this year.

Corporations like Innovative Automation, LCBO, Power-Stream, Baxter, General Mills, Bell Technical Solutions, Busch Systems International, The Source and Scotiabank were inspiring; while public-sector organizations, including the County of Simcoe and area municipalities, OPP, CFB Borden, Royal Victoria Hospital, Canada Revenue Agency and the Community and Social Services Ministry re-invigorated their already-productive teams to achieve record results.

The employees of local non-profit agencies like Simcoe Community Services and Independent Living Services, which have both received UWGSC funding, also did their part to contribute to the Community Fund.

These are obviously just a representation of the community leaders who see the all-around benefits of strengthen-



Letters: We want to hear your opinions. Send your letters to: news@thebarrieexaminer.com Make sure to provide us with your name and city or town.

ing our regional neighbourhood.

When dignitaries and good sports like Barrie MP Patrick Brown, CFB Borden Commander Col. Louis Meloche, Barrie Police Chief Mark Neelin, Barrie Colts' owner Howie Campbell, Rogers TV personality Jennifer Robinson, Barrie City Coun. Alex Nuttall, B101 radio host Jamie Hall, and Barrie's new Mayor Jeff Lehman agree to have a pie thrown in their faces, we count ourselves very fortunate indeed.

On behalf of our tireless 2010 campaign cabinet co-chairs Brad Truelove and Lt. Col. Robert Hart, the UWGSC board of directors and all of our other very valuable volunteers, the tremendous staff here and the agencies and the 150,000-plus end-users we support, I send thanks across this beautiful region for more than a half-century of investing in the UWGSC mission.

What truly remarkable things can be accomplished by a group of motivated individuals working together for a shared goal. Stay tuned for more wonderful things to come.

Check out our website (www.UnitedWaySimcoeCounty.on.ca) to learn more.

Most sincerely,

Alison Pickard
CEO, United Way of Greater Simcoe County

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Please keep city clean

It's a pleasure to see the changing of seasons from winter to spring.

Lawns are freed from the grip of icy snow, tulips and daffodils are showing their pointy tops through the cold soil and the longer days let us know that more warmth and sunshine will soon be here.

Besides these signs of seasonal change there is something else that must be noticed — the ground is littered with all kinds of debris which Barrie citizens over the winter were reluctant or too lazy to put in one of the many containers put out by the city.

Seeing this takes some of the joy away for those taking a stroll. You've seen them too: paper cups and water bottles which are

recyclable, cigarette butts as well as the accompanying cellophane wrappers and packages, beer cans and pop bottles, etc.

It gets messier; dog droppings which ought to have been picked up by pet owners and even diapers that reappear in melting snow banks.

The garbage we leave in public places is a reflection of who we are and what our values are.

I like to be proud of our city and have it as beautiful as possible.

Let's be more responsible and considerate and do Barrie proud by doing our part in making our city as pristine as she can be.

Richard Strikwerda
Barrie

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Harper and MP not real tax fighters

I see that Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Barrie MP Patrick Brown are telling us that they cut taxes. However, they are omitting that they raised our payroll taxes this January by 5.7%. Some tax fighters.

John Gilbride
Barrie



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Councillors are working hard

(Re: 'Councillors' work could get taxing' in the March 18 edition of the Examiner)

I agree that our newly elected city council, along with Mayor Jeff Lehman, have been very hard at it since the election last fall.

Our councillor, Peter Silveira, has already held a 'Budget 2011 Town Hall' where he and the mayor met with more than 60 residents in an attempt to gauge public opinion on the upcoming budget.

Mr. Silveira also hosted the first of what will be many ward committee meetings.

It's a smart idea designed to get the Ward 5 residents involved in identifying problems with graffiti, vandalism and poor roads, and coming up with ideas to help solve them.

It has been a long time since a city councillor in this ward paid any attention to our concerns.

Dinis Tavares
Barrie

With offers* like these, this† is an‡ event that you can't afford to miss.¶
Even our legal department thinks so.**

The Audi INCREDIBLY SIMPLE SALES EVENT

This incredible offer is for March 2011

\$0 FIRST MONTH'S PAYMENT **\$0** SECURITY DEPOSIT **FINANCE AND LEASE RATES AS LOW AS 3.9%**

*"By offers" we mean "sweet deals that you'll physically kick yourself for not getting in on." **Also refers to the amazing offers we just talked about after that first asterisk. †Pretty self-explanatory. ‡"an" is an indefinite article preceding a vowel. ‡ Why "you" is the person reading this ad right now, silly. In of course you ARE legally allowed to miss it, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. ¶ Should you try to take advantage of said deals after March 31, 2011, it is our professional opinion that you will be disappointed. ¶¶Our lawyers have crunched the numbers, re-crunched the numbers, then had them looked over by other lawyers and have determined with 99% accuracy that it would be in your best interests not to miss this event. ©2010 Audi Canada. Offers and lease rates start at 2.9%. These offers are valid on all 2010 Audi A3, A4, A5, A5S, A5S coupe and cabriolet, A6, A6S, A6S coupe and roadster models. Offers not valid on 2010 Audi Q5, Q7, R8, R8 and R10 models. †† Security deposit and ††† first monthly payment up to a maximum of \$850 for the A3, \$1,000 for the A4 and \$1,200 for the A5, A6 and A8. ††††† Finance and lease rates start at 2.9%. Limited time finance and lease offers available through Audi Finance on approved credit. 2010 Audi A4 2.0 TFSI quattro Sedan, base MSRP with 6-speed tiptronic automatic transmission is \$42,462, which includes freight (\$880), PDI (\$1,115), air tax (\$100), EH for tires (\$50), Ontario Fuel Tax (\$75), PPSA (\$58), OMVIC fee (\$5) and Dealer Admin Charge (up to \$585). Whether you lease or finance, licensing, insurance, registration, other charges, options, and other applicable taxes are extra. Dealer may sell or lease for less. See your dealer for details. †††† If you were to lease and make a down payment of * \$4,346 you would make payments of * \$36 per month with \$0 first monthly payment (up to \$1,500) and \$0 security deposit (taxes included - no cash value). Based on 3.9% APR for 36 months. Your down payment or equivalent trade-in, \$1,995 for freight and PDI, air tax (\$100), EH for tires (\$29), Ontario Fuel Tax (\$75), PPSA (\$58), OMVIC fee (\$5) and Dealer Admin Charge (up to \$585) are due at lease inception. The total lease obligation, then, would be * \$23,117 (including taxes). In this case, you would have a 16,000-year kilometre allowance, and be charged \$0.30 / km for excess kilometres. If you were to finance a 2010 Audi A4 2.0 TFSI quattro with base MSRP with 6-speed tiptronic automatic transmission of \$43,462 at a 3.9% APR for 72 months, you would make payments of \$610 per month with \$0 first monthly payment (up to \$1,500). Dealer may sell for less, \$4,346 down payment or equivalent trade-in, \$1,995 for freight and PDI, air tax (\$100), EH for tires (\$29), Ontario Fuel Tax (\$75), PPSA (\$58), OMVIC fee (\$5) and Dealer Admin Charge (up to \$585) are due upon signing. The total finance obligation, then, would be \$47,670, and the cost of borrowing would be \$4,208. European models shown with optional equipment that may not be available at the time of purchase. Audi, "A4", "quattro", "TFSI", "Yorsprung durch Technik", and the four rings emblem are registered trademarks of Audi AG. To find out more about Audi, visit your Audi dealer, call 1-800-FOR AUDI or visit us at AutobahnBarrie.com or www.audiosales.com

Spring time at Whispering Pines
Make your dreams a reality

Sit and enjoy the tranquil sound of the wind whispering through the pine trees as butterflies flutter from flower to flower while you sip on ice tea. Or simply entertain friends and family on your private patio and share fun and laughter in the sun.

Don't wait till spring to make the move, call and book your tour today

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