

And they're off! Dufferin-Caledon candidates step up ahead of September 20 election

By Rob Paul

Canadians will be heading to the polls September 20 after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called a federal election on Sunday.

Trudeau and the Liberals were reduced to a minority government in the 2019 election, leading to Trudeau calling an early election to try and regain a majority in the House of Commons.

To call an early election, a Prime Minister can request the governor general dissolve Parliament, and after meeting with Governor General Mary Simon, Trudeau's request was granted.

"Canadians need to choose how we finish the fight against COVID-19 and build back better, from getting the job done on vaccines to having people's backs all the way to and through the end of this crisis," said the Liberal leader. "The decisions your government makes right now will define the future your kids and grandkids grow up in. So, in this pivotal, consequential moment, who wouldn't want a say? Who wouldn't want their chance to help decide where our country goes from here? Canadians need to choose how we finish the fight against COVID-19 and build back better."

The next fixed election was set for October 2023, now there are under five weeks until the federal election.

The Party Leaders heading into the election are Trudeau (Liberal), Erin O'Toole (Conservative), Jagmeet Singh (NDP), Annamie Paul (Green), Maxime Bernier (PPC), and Yves-Francois Blanchet (Bloc Quebecois).

O'Toole, the Opposition Party leader, has questioned Trudeau's decision to hold an election given the circumstances with the pandemic.

"We're finally at a point thanks to the efforts of all Canadians who've stayed at home, got tested, got vaccinated, where we can see our loved ones, our friends and our families again," said O'Toole. "We shouldn't be risking that for political games or political gain."

Prior to Trudeau calling for an election, the NDP's Singh criticized the thought of heading to the polls this fall in a letter to the Prime Minister.

"The pandemic isn't over," wrote Singh. "Calling an election is selfish. PM Trudeau can bring bring his Ministers back from the pre-campaign trail, recall the House and get to work. I've written him reminding him that the New Democrats are ready to return to Parliament and keep fighting for Canadians."

With the election right around the corner, four MP candidates have been announced thus far for Dufferin-Caledon. Incumbent Kyle Seeback represents the Conservatives with Lisa Post (Liberal), Jenni Le Forestier (Green), and Brian Frazer (PPC) the NDP has yet to name a candidate in the riding. Russ Emo will be representing the Christian Heritage Party.

In the last federal election in 2019, Seeback won with 42 per cent of the vote beating Liberal Michele Fisher (33 per cent), NDP Allison Brown (11.6 per cent), Green Stefan Wiesen (10.6 per cent), PPC Chad Ransom (2.2 per cent), and Emo (0.5 per cent).

Seeback took over as MP in Dufferin-Caledon for Conservative MP David Tilson who had been MP since 2004 when the riding was created.

"Canadians don't want an (election), Justin Trudeau does, so be it," said Seeback in a statement. "I've kept every promise I made, and I've worked hard to represent Dufferin- Caledon over the last two years. It'll be my honour to serve again as your voice in

Ottawa.?

Post was acclaimed as the Liberal candidate in April and serves as a member of Orangeville Town Council.

?It's official, Parliament has been dissolved and a very busy 36 days are upon us before we head to the polls on September 20,? Post wrote in a statement.

Le Forestier is a known environmental activist in the Caledon area and was announced as the Green Party's MP candidate in August.

?If I can get the 18 to 35 vote I will consider the campaign a success,? wrote Le Forestier in a statement. ?They know what is at stake. It's their future. A few new Green MPs can get more action in Ottawa than a whole row of backbenchers. I want to be one of them.?

Frazer is a Caledon resident who works in Bolton and previously spent time as his father Keith's campaign manager in Dufferin-Caledon.