

Car and driver's licence fees up next week

By Bill Rea

Drivers and vehicle owners who have a birthday coming up can look forward to a present from the Provincial government, and it's not likely to be a very nice one.

Fees to renew licences and vehicle validation are increasing, effective next Thursday (Sept. 1).

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones stated she's not impressed with the coming hikes.

"I think it's just another indication that life gets more and more expensive under Kathleen Wynne and Liberals," she commented.

Come next week, the cost of a licence will jump from \$81.50 to \$90. Vehicle validation in southern Ontario will see a hike from \$108 to \$120. According to published reports, the price of the licence plate sticker has gone up some 62 per cent in the last five years.

There are other fee increases slated to come into effect Jan. 1, including the reinstatement fee for a driver's licence after a suspension. It will be going from \$180 to \$198.

"Updated fees help maintain the province's transportation infrastructure and provide resources to help keep Ontario's roads safe, and are consistent with recommendations from the Auditor General of Ontario to achieve full cost recovery for delivery of services," stated a news release issued by the government Tuesday.

But Jones questioned whether this money will be going to transportation infrastructure, commenting it's going to wind up in general revenues.

She was also concerned about the size of the increases, commenting she's not aware of the cost of anything increasing that fast, with the possible exception of hydro.

And Jones said she gets a lot of calls about that too, as people are struggling to pay those rates. She said about eight per cent of Ontario households are in arrears in their hydro.

"That's frightening," she declared.