

## Christine Elliott outlines her vision

By Bill Rea

Christine Elliott has the backing of Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones in her bid to be the next leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative party.

Jones showed her support for Elliott Saturday by hosting a meet-and-greet session in Orangeville.

Jones commented on the respect Elliott has gained from members of the Tory caucus at Queen's park, adding she already has several MPPs lined up.

Elliott said she has the backing of 10 of her caucus colleagues, as well as former premier Bill Davis, who spoke at the launch of her campaign.

"I'm offering experienced leadership," Elliott commented, citing her eight years as an elected official, on top of her years running a law firm prior to that in partnership with her late husband Jim Flaherty.

She also cited her life experiences, including the raising of three 23-year-old sons.

"Youth unemployment is one of the most serious issues we're facing right now," she remarked. "We don't want to lose a whole generation of young people."

Jones commented she's worked on two select committees with Elliott.

"I've seen her being able to work with people from all over Ontario," she remarked, adding she gets along well with representatives from all parties. "I want a leader who can work with people and then communicate our policies."

Elliott commented that things are going well in her campaign so far, as she works to get all over the province.

"I'm having a great experience," she said. "It is important to connect with people and talk about my vision for the province."

That vision includes the need to be fiscally responsible. Elliott said she's concerned that the government is running a \$12.5 billion deficit, as well as the fact the Provincial debt is likely to be in the order of \$325 billion by 2018.

She said carrying that debt limits the government's ability to invest in things like health care and education.

Elliott also stressed the importance of creating conditions that will attract businesses to invest in Ontario, while backing up small and medium-sized businesses. It's businesses that are needed to provide jobs for the students when they finish post-secondary school.

She added once that is done, attention can be paid to being "socially compassionate."

Elliott added that's an important part of her vision.

She said the Liberals like to talk about compassion, but added there's nothing compassionate about shouldering the next generation with crushing debt.



Caledon Councillor Nick deBoer and Trustee Stan Cameron, Caledon's representative on the Peel District School Board, were on hand Saturday to meet Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones and Progressive Conservative Leadership contender Christine Elliott. Photo by Bill Rea