

D-C voters likely to choose among five candidates

By Bill Rea and James Matthews

Sylvia Jones now has some opposition in her fight to stay on as Dufferin-Caledon's member in the Ontario Legislature.

Three other candidates have surfaced to do battle with the Progressive Conservative incumbent, with a fourth likely to be nominated. In a riding that has been solidly Tory since Mavis Wilson joined a Liberal sweep in 1987, none of the other provincial parties have bothered to hold nomination conventions and it wasn't until this week that the Liberals let it be known that their candidate is Bobbie Daid, a resident of Caledon's Tullamore area who runs a chain of hotels.

Jones, who was nominated at a PC convention last year, opened her campaign headquarters in Orangeville Saturday, has a re-election team firmly in place and has begun seeking volunteers to help on the hustings.

"We are excited to present a positive plan for Ontario's future," she said at the headquarters opening. "When you have too many priorities, you have no priorities. And that's exactly what we've seen with the Liberals."

The June 12 election was triggered after NDP leader Andrea Horwath announced plans to defeat the government over a budget observers saw as NDP-friendly. Premier Kathleen Wynne immediately went to Lt.-Gov. David Onley, who agreed to prorogue the legislature.

Jones told about 20 supporters and staff present at her campaign office that the gulf between the Grits and the Tories is a difference in policy and a philosophy.

"A PC government will be focused on creating jobs in Ontario," she said. "Kathleen Wynne said she wanted to go to the people. Well, I'm happy to oblige."

Jones said the province's economy could be turned over by lower taxes, a balanced budget, and controlling hydro rates for families and businesses.

"Dufferin-Caledon residents have a clear choice in this election," she said. "The Liberal Party is advocating higher taxes, higher debt, and higher energy rates. I disagree with that approach."

As for the Liberals, this will be Daid's second venture into politics. In 2011, she ran in a municipal byelection in Mississauga for a City council seat vacated when Eve Adams was elected to a federal seat earlier that year.

"I think this area has been neglected," she remarked, asserting that it doesn't currently have a real voice at Queen's Park. "I think there are many needs of the constituents that are not being met."

Daid added that those needs include better health care and GO train service. GO is slated to be established in Bolton at some point, and once that happens, she said it will serve people from all over Caledon, as well as Orangeville and area "in connecting everybody regularly to the GTA."

She also commented that young people in the area have little to do. She has identified the need for more local funding for the arts, and said she wants to promote that.

"I always like the underdog's chances," Daid observed, adding her party is going to do well in the coming campaign. "I believe we're going to come out very strongly, with a Liberal majority."

She added the riding has had a Conservative blue stripe for many years. "It's going to come out with a new stripe, and it's going to be red," she said.

Meanwhile, a veteran of the fight against the Melancthon quarry will be carrying the Green Party colours in Dufferin-Caledon.

Karren Wallace has received the party's nomination, bringing some two decades of experience in government



Progressive Conservative incumbent Sylvia Jones greeted about 20 supporters at the opening of her campaign office in Orangeville Saturday.



Karren Wallace



Bobbie Daid

to the campaign.

She said she's on unpaid leave from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as a municipal adviser.

This will be the mother of three's first run for elected office. "I've never felt the need to," she explained.

She added she lives on the precipice of where the massive quarry had been slated to go before the proposal was withdrawn in the face of massive opposition. The experience she gained as part of that fight gave her an understanding of the balance between the needs of industry and the taxpayer.

"It wasn't a NIMBY issue," she said. "This happens all over Ontario."

She also commented on her desire to see local issues brought to the front at Queen's Park, adding that's not happening right now, with a lot of dissatisfaction in the riding over wind turbine issues in Dufferin and the massive Canadian Tire depot being built in Bolton.

Wallace observed that when one is part of a big machine, it's harder for them to speak for everyone. "We need somebody to question that and be in the legislature every day to speak for the people of Dufferin-Caledon," she declared, saying she is confident of her chances in the coming campaign.

"I am in it to win it," she said. "I really think the government and the local MPP need to get into doing things for the good people of Ontario, and not to the good people."

"I'm not adverse to taking on a challenge and winning it," she remarked, adding if people keep voting for either the Progressive Conservatives or Liberals, they will never create change.

The New Democratic Party hasn't yet picked a local candidate, but Daniel Kowalewski's candidacy in the riding has been announced by the Libertarians, meaning there will likely be at least five names on the ballot.

In the October 2011 election, Jones polled 17,820 votes to 10,088 for the Liberals' Lori Holloway, 5,540 to the Green Party's Rob Strang, 4,195 for the NDP's Karen Gventer and 250 for Kowalewski.