

July:

Sylvia Jones hits the ground running as cabinet takes shape

Written by **Scott Taylor**

"These are early days," cautioned Ontario's new minister of tourism, culture and sport, Sylvia Jones. The Dufferin-Caledon MPP, who won her riding for the fourth consecutive time in the recent provincial election, now finds herself a cabinet minister. She is one of 21 ministers in Premier Doug Ford's cabinet; an honour and a sign of appreciation from the premier for being an active, engaged member of the opposition for more than 10 years. The landslide results, surprising to some who predicted a closer race with the second-place NDP, was a clear indication from voters that change was needed. "I think the people of Ontario and Dufferin-Caledon made it very clear that they were looking for a change in government, a change in direction," she said, "and Premier Ford has been very decisive on that already with some announcements that are already going to make a difference to the people of Ontario and their ability to make a living and be cost-effective in that. Pretty exciting days ahead." Ms. Jones added Ontarians were demanding change after 15 years of Liberal rule and what some would describe as reckless spending of taxpayers' money. "It's an indication of what the people of Ontario were looking for. They were demanding change and we're going to give that to them . . . There is a commitment that if you live and work in the province of Ontario, we're going to try to make your life easier and cheaper." She saw the tide turning this time around as she knocked on doors. Though the riding is clearly Conservative leaning, there was more passion for change and a feeling the Wynne government had forgotten about them. "I was obviously thrilled that people had put their faith in me once again. When I went door to door and when I was talking to people, lots of frustration. There was a pent-up frustration with a government that wasn't listening or wasn't focusing on things that were impacting them and their families. If I remember and take away anything from the last 10 years it's when you stop listening to the people who you serve, it does not end well." As for her plans as a minister, Jones asked for a little time. "As you can imagine, it's very early days. I'm into my second day of briefings and meetings and meeting the ministerial staff and I've been very impressed with their knowledge and desire, frankly, to make sure that the service we're providing here makes Ontario a stronger and better place to be." The call to cabinet might have been unexpected but appreciated all the same. "I'm always pleasantly surprised. You work first and foremost to represent the views of your constituents and my riding and by doing that I think I showed Premier Ford that I was willing to work and be part of his team and I'm just thrilled to be chosen to serve.

Paramedic move creates online furor

Written by **Scott Taylor?**

Peel Regional Paramedic Services Chief and Director Peter Dundas tried soothing the fears of the many Caledon residents who believe a revamp of paramedic services will leave the area vulnerable. Many people in correspondence with city councillors, or just among each other online a dedicated Bolton Facebook page, are questioning the service they'll receive once the move takes place. Currently, paramedics have stations in Caledon Village and Bolton, but that's about to change. As of January 29, these paramedics will begin their shift at a station in Brampton. While Dundas stresses there will be as many paramedics on the road in Caledon as before, many see it differently. Still, Dundas is sticking to his guns. The following is an email he distributed last Monday (June 9): "I am proud to say that Peel Paramedics currently provides excellent emergency medical care to the residents of Caledon. That won't change anytime soon. Even when we change the way we run our business. In January, there will be a change in our service model. Paramedics who currently report to work at small stations in Caledon Village and Bolton will report to a larger station in Brampton. That doesn't mean Caledon will have fewer paramedics on the road. It means paramedics will need to drive further to get to work. Our new service model is designed to get paramedics on the road faster at the beginning of their shifts. Technicians, not paramedics, will clean and restock the ambulances. We need medics on the road in case you need them. Our stations in Bolton, Caledon East, Valleywood and Caledon Village will continue to be part of the system. Like today, these stations are places where paramedics can complete their paperwork or take a much-needed break. And just like today, the residents of Caledon will always be protected. But in the new model, Caledon will be prioritized over other areas. For example, the first two ambulances that start at 5:30 a.m. every day will be assigned to Caledon. They will replace the ambulances in Caledon that will be coming off shift at 7 a.m. This approach

will happen again with the night shift. These ideas are being developed in collaboration with our union partners. ?Regional Council endorsed this new centralized model for Peel in late 2007 to improve response times to emergency calls and optimize costs for taxpayers. As planned, the model has been systematically introduced over the last 10 years. The construction of the new Bolton station and changes to where paramedics report to work is the last step in this plan. This has been a long journey. The 24 paramedics serving Caledon are among the last of our almost 600-paramedic workforce to shift to the new model. I recognize change is hard, especially for those that have built relationships within the community. We will continue to keep these staff members updated as changes are introduced.? However, even with these assurances, many residents ? and at least two working paramedics ? question the plan's validity. Many believe paramedics starting in Brampton will receive calls for Brampton and Mississauga and be too far away when calls come in for Caledon, especially in the rural areas. In fact, a petition has been started in an effort to get the plan scrapped. On the petition's page a woman identified as a dispatcher and two men identified as front-line paramedics argue the plan won't work. Many others agree, and even Mayor Allan Thompson weighs in with this comment: ?The safety and best interests of our Caledon residents is always my top priority. Last week I had a meeting with the Region of Peel Commissioner of Health Services and conversations with the Chief of the Peel Regional Paramedic Services. I shared both my questions and concerns and the questions and concerns I had heard from the engaged and caring residents in Caledon. I asked for a status and update and expect to have something official out later today. Let me be clear. I will never support anything that comprises the safety of the residents of Caledon.? Councillors Barb Shaughnessy and Jennifer Innes posted they've both been in touch with the Region of Peel and they believe paramedic service to Caledon will not be disrupted. The plan's initial estimated cost was about \$83 million for construction and land costs. It has since spiked to \$100 million.

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Amazon to build massive centre in Caledon

Written by **Scott Taylor**

Amazon is coming to Caledon ? in a big way. Amazon announced Wednesday plans for a new fulfillment centre in the Town of Caledon. The 1-million square-foot facility will create more than 800 full-time jobs with comprehensive benefits and join Amazon's network of existing Ontario buildings in Brampton, Mississauga, Milton and the recently announced facility in Ottawa. This will be Amazon's sixth fulfillment centre in Ontario, where it currently employs more than 2,000 full-time associates, and the ninth facility in Canada. The Town says it will be built on Coleraine West. ?We continue to be excited about our growth in Ontario and the opportunity to better serve our customers in the region,? said Glenn Sommerville, Director of Amazon Operations in Canada in a release. ?We're seeing an incredible workforce and community support in Greater Toronto. It makes us proud to add a new fulfillment centre to better meet customer demand while creating more than 800 full-time jobs with great pay and benefits to support the local economy.? Associates at this facility will pick, pack, and ship small items to customers such as books, electronics and toys. The Caledon fulfillment centre together with the new facility in Ottawa will bring more than 1,400 new jobs to Ontario by the end of 2019. ?Caledon is the ideal home for Amazon's latest Canadian expansion. I'm so pleased to welcome this world class, leading edge and customer focused organization to our community,? said Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson. ?The creation of good paying, stable, long term jobs will bolster our local economy and positively impact Caledon's future sustainability.? Full-time employees at Amazon receive competitive hourly wages, medical, vision and dental coverage, a group RRSP plan, stock awards, and performance-based bonuses starting on day one. Amazon also offers employees access to innovative programs like Career Choice, where it will pre-pay up to 95 per cent of tuition for courses related to in-demand fields, regardless of whether the skills are relevant to a career at Amazon. Since the program's launch, more than 16,000 employees across the globe have pursued degrees in game design and visual communications, nursing, IT programming and radiology, to name a few. ?It was great news to hear that Amazon is opening another fulfillment centre in Ontario. This is a wonderful opportunity for Bolton and Ontario,? said Jim Wilson, Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. ?The centre will create 800 full-time jobs for the community and grow our economy. Ontario is open for business, and the PC Government is committed to creating good jobs for Ontario families.