



Ontario Cautiously Easing Capacity Limits in Select Settings Where Proof of Vaccination is Required

With public health and health care indicators stable and proof of vaccination now in effect, the government, based on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, is cautiously easing capacity limits for select indoor and outdoor settings where proof of vaccination is required.

"With more and more Ontarians joining millions of others in rolling up their sleeves, our government is taking a safe and cautious approach to ease capacity limits in certain settings where proof of vaccination is required," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "With the added layer of protection offered by proof of vaccination, we are ensuring our businesses can remain safe and open as we continue to reach even more Ontarians who have yet to receive a first or second dose."

Effective September 25, 2021, at 12:01 a.m., capacity limits will be increased in many of the indoor settings where proof of vaccination is required. Meeting and event spaces, such as banquet halls and conference/convention centres; sporting events; concerts, theatres and cinemas; racing venues (e.g., horse racing); and commercial and film television productions with studio audiences will be increased to up to 50 per cent capacity or 10,000 people (whichever is less) for indoor events.

For certain outdoor event venues where patrons stand, capacity limits will increase to up to 75 per cent capacity or 15,000 people (whichever is less). For certain outdoor event venues where patrons are seated, capacity limits will be increased to up to 75 per cent capacity or 30,000 people (whichever is less). This is in recognition of the fact that the risk of transmission is lower because of reduced mobility around the venue. In addition, proof of vaccination will now be required in outdoor settings where the normal maximum capacity is 20,000 people or more to help keep these venues safe for patrons.

The success of Ontario's vaccine rollout, which has resulted in one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, continues to protect Ontarians against COVID-19, including the Delta variant, which remains dominant in the province.

"Thanks to the tremendous efforts of Ontarians adhering to public health measures and going out to get vaccinated, some of our key public health and health care indicators are currently stable," said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "Work remains however, and we must all remain vigilant and continue following the measures and advice in place, and continue to work to vaccinate as many Ontarians as possible to achieve the highest immunization rates we can, and to increase our level of community immunity and protect those who cannot receive the vaccine."

How Has COVID-19 Impacted You?

A county-wide survey is asking Grey County residents how COVID-19 has impacted their daily lives. Surveys will be mailed to more than 50,000 homes beginning the week of September 27 and will also be available online. Residents are being asked to provide feedback on a range of social, economic, and health-related questions. Individual responses will remain confidential, and results will help the County and local municipalities make important decisions regarding pandemic recovery efforts.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on everyone in Grey County from every walk of life. This study will highlight the impacts in rural communities and will help municipal leaders in Grey County make important decisions as our region continues to recover from the pandemic," said Randy Scherzer, Grey County's deputy chief administrative officer.

The survey quizzes residents about life before the pandemic was declared and how it has changed. It touches on personal finance, social activity, mental and physical wellbeing, food security and more. The electronic version of the survey can be found online at www.grey.ca/COVID-Impact-Survey. Physical copies of the survey can be completed and returned by mail. Postage is prepaid. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The lead researcher in the survey is Leith Deacon, PHD, Associate Professor, School of Environment Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph. Financial support for this project is provided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and by Grey County.



Fall Craft Sale
October 2nd, 2021 9-11am
Events for Life Under the tents at EFL Centre
067547 33rd Side Rd. Thornbury
Please wear a mask and social distance
We accept debit, credit and cash
www.eventsfor.life

WEBSITE USER TESTING
Call for Volunteers!
TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Residents of all ages are invited to participate in user testing sessions to help develop the new Town website! Sessions will be held in person at Town Hall and will take approximately 30 minutes. To take part in this exciting initiative, please contact us to register for a time slot. Please note, registration is limited.

OCT. 2 & OCT. 3, 2021 | TOWN HALL, 9AM - 3PM
TO REGISTER: (519) 599-3131 EXT. 295 | communications@thebluemountains.ca

COVID VACCINATIONS

supported through Dr. Remillard and the staff at
The Blue Mountains Community Health Centre
78 King St.E., (Hwy 26) Thornbury

BOOKINGS AVAILABLE AT
www.tbmvaccines.ca

For updates call the office 519-599-2732
helpline 519-599-3345

Current Situation: Day 560

The province is in Step Three

Follow the 3 W's – Wash hands frequently, Watch distance (ideally 6ft), and Wear face covering correctly, and the 2 A's - Avoid Crowds and Arrange for outdoor activities instead of indoors whenever possible.

Testing and case counts reported as of 23:59 hrs, September 28th

All data is preliminary and subject to change. Future situation reports will be updated accordingly.

- 0 new cases reported in past 24 hours in Grey Bruce;
- 2313 confirmed cases
2276 resolved cases
- 11 active cases
- 41 active high-risk contacts
- 4 confirmed local active case(s) hospitalized in Grey Bruce
14 deaths in Grey Bruce
+1 death related to a Grey Bruce resident that acquired the infection and was treated outside of Grey Bruce
+7 deaths related to Grey Bruce residents that acquired the infection in Grey Bruce however passed away outside of Grey Bruce
- 119 cases reported in health care workers; reports health care workers living in Grey Bruce and working both in and outside Grey Bruce

Vaccines -

2455 COVID-19 vaccines given in the past 7 days
233934 total doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered in Grey/Bruce

Dr. Ian Arra, MD MSc FRCPC ACPM ABPM
Grey Bruce Health Unit, 101 17th Street East, Owen Sound
Phone: (519)376-9420, Ext. 1241 Fax: (519)376-0605
www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

DIABETIC DISCUSSION GROUP

Type I Diabetic would like to connect with other Medtronic Pump users. To dialogue about the process, innovations and Issues in daily life with high low Blood Sugars. To connect email the Review at info@visitblue.ca or call 519-599-3345



Publisher Linda Wykes, printed by Riverside Press, 22 Louisa St. E., Thornbury. Your events, stories and photos of interest to our community can be emailed to info@visitblue.ca for inclusion in the newsletter by each Friday. Advertising rates are available by calling 519-599-3345 or www.visitblue.ca

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: We ask that letters be no longer than 250 words, and adhere to standards of fairness, accuracy, legality and civility. Beyond that, we select letters on the basis of timeliness, relevance and diversity and reserve the right to not publish.

ARTICLES are from media releases or those that are submitted acknowledge the author.

THE BLUE MOUNTAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

SEPTEMBER PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Exhibit Launch: Events for Life; A Look Around

September 1 | L.E. Shore Gallery & Online

Events for Life, a local day program for adults with special needs, looks forward to showcasing their art work and photography that celebrates nature and the world around us. Exhibit runs August 31 to October 3, 2021.



Adventures in Digital Arts: Youth

September 11 | 10:00am | L.E. Shore Gallery | Registration Required
The Blue Mountains Creator Space and BMPL present a digital arts workshop for youth ages 8-13 years old. Learn photography, editing, and how to cartoon. Limited numbers, so sign up while you can!

Shale Oil Talk and Walk

September 18 | 1:00pm | Craigeleith Heritage Depot | Registration Required
Imagine a Shale Oil Industry right here in The Blue Mountains! Join Curator Andrea Wilson on a guided walk as she shares with you the story of the fossil fuel industry in Craigeleith from 1858-1860. Bring your all weather gear, this tour runs rain or shine.



Town Hall

September 22 | 4:30pm | L.E. Shore, Front Lawn | Registration Required
The BMPL Board will be holding our 3rd Town Hall. At this meeting the Strategic Planning working group will present the Strategic Planning Process and discuss recommendations for where and how to gather community feedback during the pandemic. Registration is required to arrange seating for physical distancing and contact tracing.



Virtual Tour and DIY with The Meaford Refillery

September 25 | 10:00am | BMPL YouTube
Live a more sustainable lifestyle. Join the Library for a virtual tour of The Meaford Refillery, meet the staff, and learn about plastic-free living. Pick up a 'Take & Make' kit at BMPL and learn to create your own refill container using recycled goods.

Birds of Ontario

September 30 | 7:00pm | BMPL YouTube
A new presentation from David T. Chapman will premiere on the BMPL YouTube Channel. Learn about local birds with an expert bird watcher.



Seniors Exercise

Mondays | 10:00am
Facebook



Digital Book Club

Thursdays | 1:00pm
Facebook

Teen Group

Sept 9 | 5:00pm
L.E. Shore

Museum From Home

Mondays | 12:30pm
CHD Facebook & Twitter

Outdoor Story Time

Fridays | 11:00am
L.E. Shore Lawn



Dorothy Crysler Bird Club

Sept 18 | 9:30am
Zoom



Kids Clubhouse

Tuesdays | 4:00pm
Zoom

Favourite Fossils

Fridays | 5:00pm
CHD Facebook & Twitter

TWAG

Sept 23 | 4:00pm
L.E. Shore

Wired Wednesday

Wednesdays | 1:00pm
Facebook & YouTube



Trivia Game Night

Fridays | 7:00pm
Facebook



Debt Solutions

Sept 29 | 6:00pm
Zoom

Bedtime Story Time

Wednesdays | 7:00pm
Facebook & YouTube

For more information or to register for events visit the **Event Calendar** on our website. www.TheBlueMountainsLibrary.ca



"Roving Librarian" Join the Conversation

BMPL started hitting the road with our newest mini-series "Roving Librarian". Throughout the course of the next few months, our Manager of Community Engagement, Mary, will be out in the community with the goal of having as many community conversations as possible. We want to hear from you as we prepare for the future of your GLAM. If you see Mary in the blue BMPL shirt make sure to say "hi" and stop for a chat. Also, watch our Community Consultation webpage for more opportunities to participate in our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan Study.



Follow us on social media!



Ontario Announces Eight New Ontario Health Teams

Ontario Health Teams Will Provide Better Coordinated Care for Ontarians and Support the Province's COVID-19 Response.

As part of its plan to end hallway health care and build an integrated health care system centred on the needs of patients, the Ontario government in partnership with Ontario Health is announcing eight new Ontario Health Teams located across the province. The province will provide up to \$9 million in funding over the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 fiscal years to support these teams in their efforts to seamlessly coordinate health care services for patients and ensure the province's health care system can respond to any scenario as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve..

"Throughout the pandemic, Ontario Health Teams have been an essential part of the province's COVID-19 response, working quickly across all partners to support each other and protect the health and safety of Ontarians," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "These new eight teams will build on the progress made to date by improving outcomes for even more patients and making it easier for Ontarians to navigate their health care journey during COVID-19 and in the future."

The eight new Ontario Health Teams are:

- Hastings Prince Edward OHT in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties;
- Upper Canada, Cornwall and Area OHT in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, City of Cornwall, Akwesasne, parts of Russell Township and rural Southeast Ottawa;
- Four Rivers OHT in North Grenville, West Ottawa, Northern Lanark County, and Arnprior, McNab and Braeside;
- Network 24 OHT in the majority of Renfrew County and the Township of South Algonquin in Nipissing District;
- Grey-Bruce OHT in Grey and Bruce Counties;
- Barrie and Area OHT in Barrie and surrounding areas;
- Elgin OHT in Elgin County;
- North Simcoe OHT in Midland, Penetanguishene, Tiny and Tay Townships, and Christian Island.

Ontario Health Teams are part of a new approach to health care that brings together health care providers as one collaborative team. Working together, they ensure that patients experience easier transitions with one patient story, one patient record and one care plan that is shared between the health care providers. With the addition of these new teams, the province now has a total of 50 Ontario Health Teams which will cover 92 per cent of the province's population at maturity.

To support the eight new teams, the government is providing each team with up to \$1.1 million in one-time funding over the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 fiscal years. This funding can be used by each Ontario Health Team to support the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and coordinate programs that strengthen health system capacity by linking hospitals, primary care, home care and community services, and other services.

"Ontario Health Teams have been critical in the province's fight against COVID-19 and in building an integrated, connected health care system centred around the needs of patients," said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "By expanding the number of teams, we will continue to ensure patients have access to the supports they need throughout their health.

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Recipes for Life

This is the perfect time and place to share 'recipes for life' and we invite you, the reader to do the same.

I grew up in apartment buildings and that may be exactly why I have become a lifelong forager, urban farmer, avid gardener. I love the sense of discovery you get when you find traces of our heritage amid modern development and urban sprawl and make something with them.

All you have to do is look and you will find what the average eye does not.

You will find bushes and berries, herbs and fruit on the vine along roadsides and in parks, by the shore and railroad tracks. I have come upon abundance in the unlikeliest of places.

I found Saskatoon berry bushes at Bloor & Spadina in Matt Cohen parkette in downtown Toronto. I found crabapples in the parkette on Walmer Rd. dedicated to poetess Gwendolyn MacEwan.

Berry picking is so much fun for children. They can take the harvest home then make jam. Old apple orchards may not yield anything but applesauce but how sweet it is!!!

Years ago everybody had fruit trees in their yard- peach, cherry, apricot and apple. Now people don't want to bother. Fruit trees make a mess. They need pruning. Do yourself and the birds a favor. Plant red currant or blackcurrant business. No mess. Oh yes, and gooseberry. Whatever happened to the gooseberry? Bring it back.

Lovely treat with cheese.

Send recipes to jkeeler2323@gmail.com . Judy Keeler Writing Services 416-598- 2724. No time to write? Hire a wordsmith.



Inspector Loris Licharson - new Ontario Provincial Police Detachment Commander

"On behalf of Council, staff and the community, I would like to welcome Inspector Licharson as the new Detachment Commander for the Town of The Blue Mountains," explained Mayor Alar Soever. "The Town looks forward to continued collaboration and strong coordination with the Ontario Provincial Police."

Inspector Licharson brings many years of experience and service with him to his new role.

Since starting his career with the OPP in 1999, Licharson has fulfilled many leadership roles, including as a shift Sergeant and Operations Manager the Sioux Lookout Detachment and the Huronia West Detachment. He then went on to work as the Executive Officer to the Deputy Commissioner, Director of Community Initiatives, and Acting Bureau Commander at the Indigenous Policing Bureau.

"I am very pleased to have Inspector Licharson chosen by the selection committee to lead our OPP detachment into the future," expressed Jim Oliver, Chair of The Blue Mountains Police Services Board. "He has shown his leadership skills and enthusiasm for policing and community safety in his short time as our Interim Detachment Commander, as well as his willingness to work with our Board. We welcome him to the Town of The Blue Mountains."

Ontario Forage Council is pleased to bring back the Forage Focus conference!

This year we will be hosting one webinar per day for three days during the first week of December. We would greatly appreciate it if you could share the following information via your communications channels.

Forage Focus: Field to Feed; November 1 - December 2, 2021
Free webinars - Registration:

www.events.eventzilla.net/e/forage-focus-2021-2138832593

Tuesday, November 30:

Dr. Renato Schmidt (Lallemand) – Minimize losses to get the most out of your silage

Wednesday, December 1:

Anita Heeg (OMAFRA) – How to use your forage analysis on-farm

Thursday December 2:

Dr. Kim Cassida (Michigan State University) – Alfalfa quality and lessons from forage trials

www.onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/forage-focus

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EFL is recruiting new volunteers. Please consider joining those who make such a huge difference in the lives of our amazing participants.
www.eventsfor.life



Town News & Notices

📍 32 Mill St., Box 310, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

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🐦 @townofbluemtns

🌐 www.thebluemountains.ca

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Stay up-to-date by signing up for Town email newsletters.
www.thebluemountains.ca/subscribe-for-updates.cfm

Town of The Blue Mountains Public Appointments to Town Committees 2018 – 2022

The Town of The Blue Mountains are seeking applications, in the form of letters of interest, from members of the public for appointment to the Community Communications Advisory Committee. The committee appointment runs concurrent with the term of Council, being 2018 - 2022:

Community Communications Advisory Committee:

- 7 member Committee, 6 Committee members have been appointed.
- 1 public member being sought

Applicants are encouraged to include background information and any special qualifications or interest related to the Committee. Additional information regarding the Community Communications Advisory Committee can be found in the Terms of Reference documents available on the Town's website: Community Communications Advisory Committee Terms of Reference. **All Applications should be submitted no later than Friday, October 1, 2021 1:00 pm to:**

Town of The Blue Mountains,
Attention: Town Clerk, 32 Mill St., Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
townclerk@thebluemountains.ca

Personal information provided by the applicant is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001 and will be used for the purpose of candidate selection. The Town of The Blue Mountains is an equal opportunity organization. Accommodation will be provided in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS UP TO \$5000

Environmental Sustainability Fund

SUBMISSIONS DUE: NOVEMBER 5, 2021

APPLICATION AT:

<https://www.thebluemountains.ca/environmental-sustainability-fund.cfm>




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We each have our own perspective and creative process that we enjoy exploring!

A Look Around

Exhibit Runs
August 31, 2021 - October 3, 2021
Available In-Person at The Gallery at L.E. Shore
&
virtually on BMPL's website

The Gallery
at L.E. Shore

TheGallery@TheBlueMountains.ca
TheBlueMountainsLibrary.ca/exhibits-6.cfm | 519-599-3681

Notice of Virtual Public Information Centre

September 16th – October 18th, 2021

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment

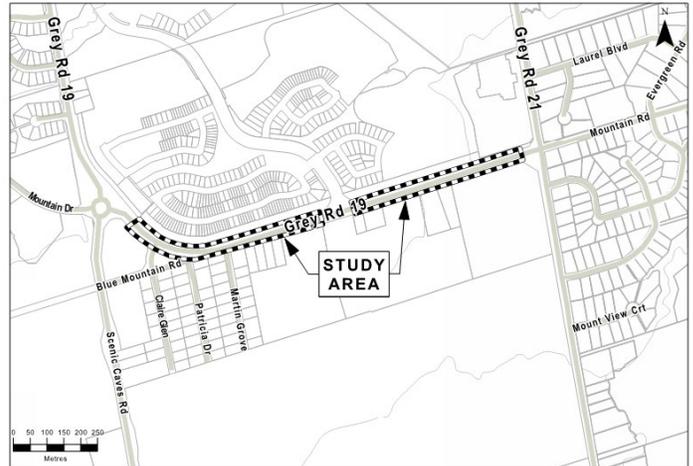
Grey Road 19 Widening between Grey Road 21/ Mountain Road/Simcoe Road 34 and Grey Road 119/Gord Canning Drive

The Study

Following a recent Traffic Study, Grey County (County) has identified the need to widen Grey Road 19 between Grey Road 21/ Mountain Road/Simcoe Road 34 and Grey Road 119/ Gord Canning Drive to meet the needs of increased traffic demand. The County is undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study to consider options for improvements, with consideration for active transportation. The site location and approximate extent of the Study Area are shown on the map.

Alternative solutions for improvements include:

- 1) Do Nothing
- 2) Widen to 4 lanes
- 3) Widen to 4 lanes with active transportation



The Process

The Study will follow Schedule C of the *Municipal Class Environmental Assessment* (Municipal Engineers Association, October 2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, & 2015), which is an approved process under the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act*. The Study will evaluate alternative solutions and design alternatives with consideration of the natural, cultural, technical and financial environments and recommend a preferred solution in consultation with the public, Indigenous communities and agencies. At the conclusion of the Study, the process will be documented in an Environmental Study Report (ESR), prepared for public review.

Comments Invited

The County would like to ensure that anyone interested in this Study has the opportunity to provide input into the planning and design of the project. A **virtual Public Information Centre (PIC)** will be available on the County website to describe the Study, the proposed alternative solutions, the design alternatives, identify next steps in the process and gather public comments. PIC materials pertaining to the Study are available online at <https://www.grey.ca/news/notice-municipal-class-environmental-assessment-grey-road-19-widening-between-grey-road-21> starting **September 16th, 2021**. Your comments on the project and information materials are encouraged by **October 18th, 2021**. Following the PIC, and in consideration of comments received, the final preferred solution will be identified.

Please contact either of the following Project Team members if you are unable to access the online information concerning this Study or if you would like to be added to the Project Contact List to receive future project notices:

Trevor Ireton, Project Planning Engineer
Grey County
595 9th Ave East
Owen Sound ON N4K 3E3
519-372-0219 ext. 1246
trevor.ireton@grey.ca

Paul Hausler, Project Manager
R. J. Burnside & Associates Limited
3 Ronell Crescent
Collingwood, ON L9Y 4J6
705-797-4289
paul.hausler@rjburnside.com

Information will be collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record. Project and notice information will be made accessible upon request in accordance with the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. This Notice first advertised on September 16th, 2021.

Ontario Providing Additional Investment into Skills Development Fund

The Ontario government is providing an additional \$83 million towards the Skills Development Fund to help support groundbreaking training projects that upskill workers and prepare job seekers for meaningful work in their communities. Beginning tomorrow, the fund will begin accepting proposals for the second round of funding and is expanding its eligibility to allow an even wider range of organizations to apply, helping give more people the training needed to fill the shortage of skilled workers in Ontario.

"With almost 150 projects so far, the first round of the Skills Development Fund was a tremendous success, helping 260,000 workers and job seekers around the province take the next step in their careers," said Minister McNaughton. "However, we know employers are still having difficulty finding the talented workers they need to stay competitive and grow their businesses. That's why we've opened a second round of funding that will be accessible for an even wider range of programs and organizations."

The investment includes \$334,487 for LIUNA to give 8,000 members of Local 506 as well as construction craft worker apprentices free access to a wide range of online skills and safety courses workers need for their jobs through LinkedIn Learning.

"The Skills Development Fund continues to empower career-building opportunities in the skilled trades by expanding and modernizing apprenticeship training," said Carmen Principato, LiUNA Local 506 Business Manager. "This funding announced by Minister McNaughton will provide cutting-edge training, working together with labour and industry to meet the growing demand of Ontario's workforce."

The province will be accepting applications from a broader range of organizations including Indigenous skills and employment training centres, Indigenous Band offices, social service administration boards, municipal employment providers, hospitals, and other organizations. This funding can also be used to cover a wider range of financial supports for trainees, including expenses for transit and child care.

Organizations applying for the second round of the Skills Development Fund can also receive funding to accommodate trainees and workers with disabilities. This includes travel costs for people who require mobility support, including site-to-site job travel for both participants and support persons. Employers can receive up to \$5,000 per job placement if they support a trainee with a disability. Project proposals will be given special consideration if they can clearly show how they will support postsecondary and high school graduates with disabilities or those experiencing mental health challenges.

Today's announcement brings Ontario's total investment in the Skills Development Fund to over \$200 million. The Fund was designed to support fresh ideas for training and skills development that will help keep our economy open and make our workforce more resilient.

Quick Facts

Funding applications will be accepted starting at 9:00am on September 29, 2021, for as long as funds are available or until the fiscal year ends on March 31, 2022. Interested organizations can apply through Transfer Payment Ontario. Organizations eligible for funding include employment service and training providers, labour, community, business and industry organizations, municipalities, hospitals, Indigenous Band offices, Indigenous skills and employment training agreement holders, service system managers.

Apprentices and workers who want to participate in LiUNA Local 506's projects can contact Merissa Preston, Partnership and Business Development at LiUNA Local 506, at Mpreston@506tc.org.

Ontario's Skills Development Fund is supported through labour market transfer agreements between the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Legacy Tree Seed and Sapling Harvest



Let the harvest begin! The Tree Trust TBM native tree seedling nursery, located at Tomahawk Park, has been sited and tilled and our next big step is to collect viable tree seeds and saplings from local mature trees.

We are looking for seeds or small saplings from older trees that have demonstrated successful adaptation to the area. We are hoping to source trees that are native to our area including sugar, red, silver and black maple, white, burr and northern oak, American basswood, paper and yellow birch and ironwood.

If you are able to collect seeds from older, well established local trees this fall, please store them in a dry container or bag, label the source location and contact Tree Trust TBM. If you have small saplings that are growing within the canopy of an older, established tree, please let us know if you are willing to let us come by and dig up a few for transplant to the nursery.

Contact Tree Trust TBM townofthebluemountains@treetrust.ca or call the Review at 519-599-3345

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Government Makes Largest Year-Over-Year Increase in Spending on Record

On September 24th, Ontario released the 2020-21 Public Accounts, which confirm that the government made record investments in healthcare and other vital frontline services to protect the health, safety and well-being of Ontarians in the fight against COVID-19. For the fourth year in a row, the Auditor General has provided a clean audit opinion on the Province's financial statements, reinforcing the government's commitment to restoring transparency and accountability in the province's finances.

The Public Accounts show that government program spending rose by \$16.7 billion compared to 2019-20, representing the largest year-over-year dollar increase on record. Critical investments include increases of \$5.8 billion in the health sector and \$1.1 billion in the education sector over the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Building on the investments made in the 2019-20 fiscal year, the 2020-21 Public Accounts outlines \$19.1 billion of additional investments Ontario made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These investments created real and measurable results for the people of Ontario, including:

- Over \$3 billion in urgent and unprecedented support to over 110,000 small businesses.
- Over \$3 billion in provincial contributions to support 444 municipalities and 110 transit systems across the province help relieve financial pressures created by the pandemic and ensure that people who need to get around, including our frontline workers, have safe and reliable transit service.
- Over \$1.6 billion in temporary resources available for the 2020-21 school year to support the safe reopening and operation of over 4,800 schools.
- \$1.5 billion to support Ontario's 627 long-term care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, including funding for infection prevention and containment measures, staffing supports and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- \$879 million to support the province's COVID-19 testing and contact tracing strategy.
- \$703 million to add over 3,100 hospital beds to create capacity and be ready to respond to any scenario.

As reported in the 2021 Ontario Budget, the government made \$13.3 billion in time-limited pandemic response and extraordinary contingencies available in 2020-21 through one-time COVID-19 Health Sector Expense, the COVID-19 Health Contingency Fund and the Support for People and Jobs Fund. These strategic contingencies allowed the government to prudently respond in real-time to emerging and unforeseen needs. By the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year, the balance of both funds was zero.

The Public Accounts reports a 2020-21 deficit of \$16.4 billion — \$22.1 billion lower than the 2020 Budget projection. This result reflects stronger revenue growth led by higher than anticipated corporate and personal income tax revenues due in part to the overwhelming COVID-19 supports provided by all levels of government. As well, expenses were \$5.6 billion below the 2020 Budget forecast for 2020-21, driven by the uncertainty associated with the course of the pandemic. Broadly, this is because the third wave of COVID-19 in Ontario peaked later than anticipated and there was lower use and resulting expenses for some services and programs during the third wave of the pandemic, including physician visits, non-emergency procedures, social assistance, and college programs. This spending will now occur in 2021-22 and will be reflected in the 2021-22 public accounts.

"The release of the 2020-21 Public Accounts builds on our government's record of transparency and accountability in the Province's finances throughout the pandemic and before," said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. "In Ontario as in other jurisdictions, historic support from all levels of government to support people and businesses during the pandemic has led to higher-than-forecast government revenues, reducing the deficit for 2020-21. We will continue to make available every resource to protect the province's health, jobs and economy."

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