

Politicians make heritage announcement in Beamsville

by Kate Stark
staff writer

Heritage homeowners throughout the province will be saving a few extra dollars this tax season, thanks to the assistance of the provincial government.

On Thursday, February 7, the provincial government issued a statement that all heritage home owners will be eligible for a new heritage property tax rebate.

Making the announcement at Beamsville's first ever

brick home built in 1834, Woodburn Cottage, MPP Tim Hudak and Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier Jim Flaherty met with local residents and heritage home owners to bring them the good news.

"We know the owners of heritage homes incur higher expenses for maintenance and upkeep," explained Mr. Flaherty. "So we are allowing municipalities to provide tax breaks to the hard working owners of these heritage properties."

Included in all property taxes there is a normal percentage for education, which the Town normally collects on behalf of the school board. From now on however, the Province will be pay the educational portion of all heritage home taxes, equaling 10 to 40 per cent. The provincial hope is that this reduction will allow home owners to properly restore their homes to their original glory and maintain that glory over the years to come.

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Local MPP Tim Hudak, left and finance minister and leadership hopeful Jim Flaherty announce a tax break for owners of Heritage properties.

Tax relief tool for protection of heritage

Finance minister explains initiative

By DON FRASER
Standard Staff

A tax-relief measure for heritage property owners was officially launched in Beamsville Thursday by Ontario Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and Culture Minister Tim Hudak.

Woodburn Cottage bed and breakfast on King Street was the site for launching the initiative — announced in the 2001 Ontario budget — that will allow municipalities to offer tax relief and, in turn, be partially reimbursed by the province.

It is designed to encourage the restoration and preservation of heritage buildings, Flaherty explained later at a meeting with The Standard's editorial board.

"It's effective now," he said. "It means savings of 10 to 40 per cent on property taxes for owners of heritage homes."

Municipalities have the discretion to pass a resolution choosing the amount of relief and can apply different percentages to different types of properties.

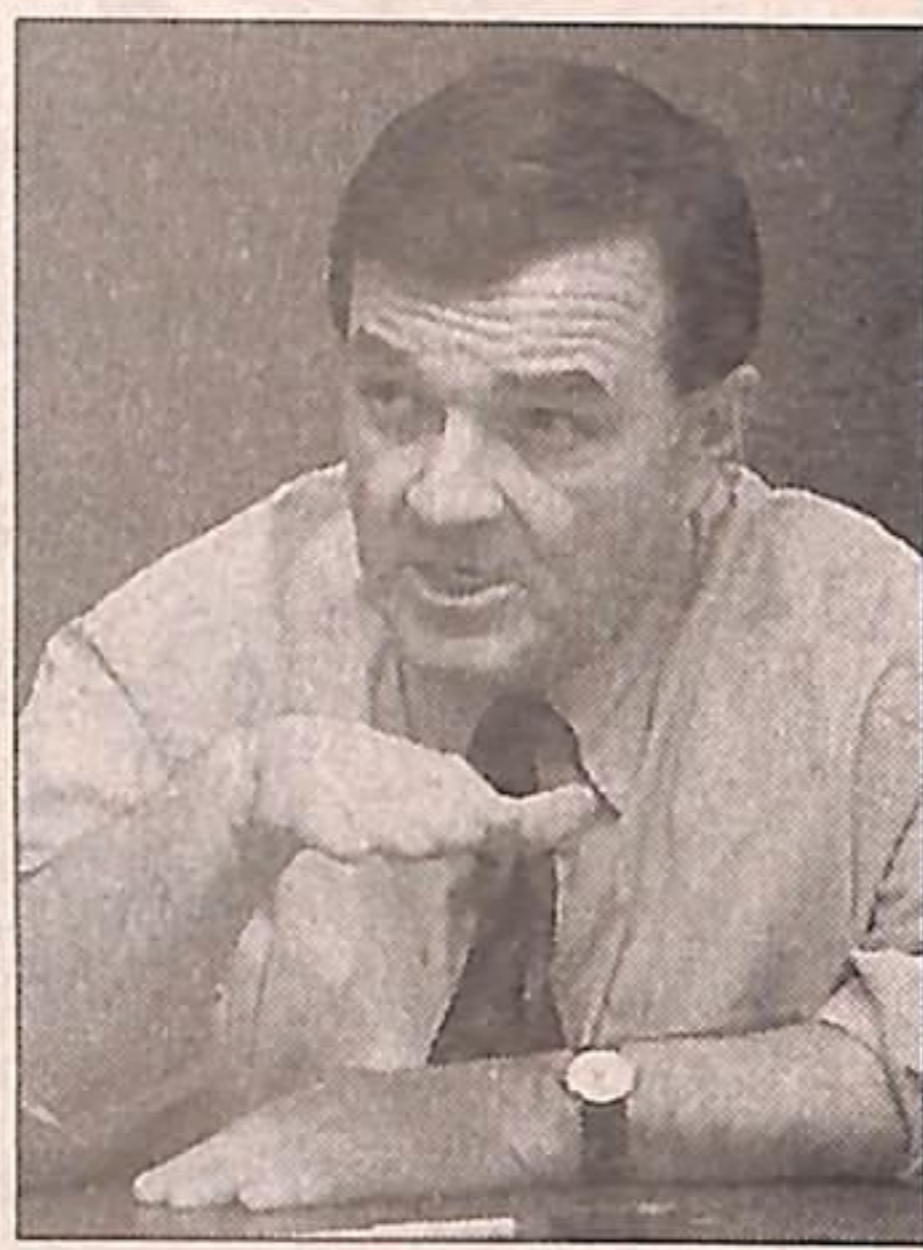
The province will pick up the education portion of the tax relief, while municipalities will fund their portion of the tax reduction.

Flaherty said the new tax change was "capable of being handled within our (provincial) budget."

"The measure aims to preserve our historical legacy," he said. "Particularly in areas like Niagara."

"It really goes from generation to generation — not this year or next year," he said. "This is looking out over the next hundred years."

"It's good for tourism," Flaherty added. "These heritage properties are one of the main reasons people come to Niagara and other parts of Ontario as tourists."



Finance Minister Jim Flaherty.
staff photo by Bob Tymczyszyn

Tax break will help preserve heritage

From Front

"We have to preserve the heritage because at the end of the day that is what attracts people here, to witness the heritage...and to preserve it for the generations in Ontario," said Mr.

Flaherty.

"Heritage helps tell us where we came from and who we are," agreed Mr. Hudak. "And homes like this Woodburn Cottage, just aren't made like this anymore."

Although the technicalities of how this new tax reduction will be imple-

mented in the various municipalities, Lincoln Mayor Ray Konkle is encouraged about its prospects, certain that many home owners will find this to be extremely beneficial especially the almost 20 officially declared heritage homes in Lincoln.

Resident proposing covered bridge

Jan. 24/2002
(Staff) — Al Teather is certain that building a covered bridge in Lincoln would attract tourists, but he ran into troubled waters trying to convince Lincoln Council a few years ago that the single-lane Bailey bridge, which crosses Twenty Mile Creek at 21st Street in Jordan, be replaced with a two-lane bridge that could be covered.

Undaunted, Mr. Teather has approached the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with a new idea: a small covered bridge over Twenty Mile Creek above Balls Falls. He is hoping that his idea will be looked at seriously by consultants who have been hired by NPCA and the Tourism Development Project Committee to examine tourism possibilities at Balls Falls and in the Vineland/Jordan area.

"The original settlers came from Pennsylvania, where many covered

bridges are tourist attractions," Mr. Teather stated in a report to Lincoln Council, the NPCA, the Tourism Committee and consultants Hough, Woodland, Naylor, Dance, Leinster. "Think about the viewing attraction of the reproduction of a covered bridge, similar to ones used in Pennsylvania. The setting is also perfect for amateur photographers, artists and covered bridge enthusiasts like myself."

He also suggested that there could be additional income created by selling post cards, t-shirts, coffee mugs and other items depicting the covered bridge.

"I understand SuperBuild funds can be used to increase tourism, and the whole Niagara Region would benefit from this project," he added. "A one-time cost with minimal upkeep is another advantage."

He suggested that such

an attraction would increase the use of Balls Falls Conservation Area.

Mr. Teather himself paid for the plans and the Town of Lincoln's expenses for the original proposal at the Bailey Bridge. He offered to pay \$500 and obtain a matching donation elsewhere for a total of \$1,000 for a design and plan for a covered bridge at Balls Falls if the NPCA approves the project.

People wanting more information about covered bridges in other towns and about societies of covered bridge enthusiasts can log on to www.atawalk.com for more details.