

Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce hosts Candidates Breakfast

By: Dawn Brown

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce hosted an all candidates breakfast on Thursday, October 8 at the Acton Town Hall. Candidates Brent Bouteiller of the Green Party of Canada, MP Michael Chong of the Conservative Party of Canada, Anne Gajerski-Cauley of the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP) and Don Trant of the Liberal Party of Canada answered questions regarding issues relating to Halton Hills and Canada as a whole.

After opening remarks, candidates were asked what their party would do to improve the climate for business in Halton Hills.

Trant was first to answer, stating that the Liberal Party has a number of initiatives, including: apprenticeship training programs, co-op programs and education and training hubs. The Liberal Party also plans to increase payments to the labor market, cut employment insurance

rates and lower the corporate tax from 11 percent to 9 percent.

"The biggest thing probably is our historic infrastructure investment, 60 billion dollars over ten years," Trant explained. "And that will be allocated into three pots that will include: transit and infrastructure, it will include: housing, and third pot for green."

Keeping taxes low, providing a stable environment for business investment, targeted investments into the manufacturing sector and expanding trade with countries around the world as a means to develop business were the three key factors Chong stated made up Conservative Party's plan for the future based on successful results in the past.

"Keeping taxes low is critical," Chong said. "When large corporations want to invest in plant capital equipment, they're looking at billions of dollars of investment into a single plant. The level of

corporate taxation, the efficiency of the corporate tax, of the tax system is critically important to those companies."

Bouteiller stated that the Green Party intends to reduce payroll taxes, as well as removing red tape for companies to make it easier to do business, over all. Also the Green Party believes the small business income tax needs to drop to 9 percent, while larger corporations will be taxed at 19%. These funds would be used for training programs for employees, apprenticeship programs.

NDP will be introducing a national daycare program as part of the economic package. "It's going to put a lot of money into the hands of Canadians," Gajerski-Cauley said. "If you allow women to actually hang on to the money that they actually earn, then they can start buying things for their home, they can start paying down their debts." NDP will also support green technology, and an innovation tax credit to

help kick start manufacturing.

Another question posed to the candidates was in regards to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and whether that is something Canadians should be excited or concerned about.

Chong said that he is very excited about the free trade deal, which includes 12 countries in the Asian Pacific Rim and representing 14 percent of the global economy. He described the deal as an "exciting opportunity" for Canadian manufacturers and exporters to create jobs. The Conservative Party believes there will be huge benefits to the deal for the North American economy. If the deal does not go through, Chong believes there will be negative consequences for Canadian manufacturers.

However, both Bouteiller and Gajerski-Cauley did not share Chong's views.

Because of the possibility of an agreement like

this leaving the country vulnerable to potential litigation from international corporations, Bouteiller explained that Green Party generally did not support these sorts of deals. "I do not see these trade deals as being fair. We believe in fair trade instead of free trade."

"This is a deal that is going to benefit BC salmon fisheries, Manitoba's and Saskatchewan's seed farmers and Alberta beef producers. It's going to deeply hurt Ontario, which has 14 million of our of 34 million people in this country because it's going to hurt our manufacturing sector." Gajerski-Cauley explained. "We are going to see tens of thousands of job losses in Ontario if

this happens." As well as manufacturing, Gajerski-Cauley stated that the deal would have a negative impact to Ontario farmers. "Our dairy farmers are going to have to kiss their cows goodbye."

Trant stated that the Liberal Party generally supported trade agreements, but the party has concerns with the TPP for number of reasons as they do not really know what's in it except for what has been leaked. He believes in being open, and sharing the information.

"We need to know what's in it because there are always winners and losers." Trant said. "Would you ever sign a contract that you hadn't seen?"



CANDIDATES BREAKFAST: Anne Gajerski-Cauley of the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP), Don Trant of the Liberal Party of Canada, MP Michael Chong of the Conservative Party of Canada, and Brent Bouteiller of the Green Party of Canada. - Dawn Brown photo

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