

HEADS OF AREA CHAMBERS REACT TO ECONOMIC UPDATE

#FINANCIALWELLBEING OF PROVINCE IN UNPRECEDENTED HARD TIMES

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Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce GM Kathleen Dills said that while the programs put in place by various levels of government to help businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic are appreciated, these businesses need relief now.

"They cannot afford to wait any longer because expenses are accumulating while revenue is reduced in some cases to nothing," she said.

"The (federal government's) wage subsidy program will not be available for another six weeks. Governments are frantically reinventing how they offer these programs so they are effective and accessible. A one-size fits all solution for such a diverse economy is complicated and many questions still need to be answered."

Dills noted rent was due April 1 and for many there was no assistance or relief for that with tenants instead having to negotiate with landlords.

"Everyone is doing their very best in a situation of complete uncertainty," she said.

"There are heroes ev-



Graeme Frisque/Metroland Media
Kathleen Dills, general manager of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce.

erywhere. Businesses flipping operations to provide essential medical products, truckers and the supply chain keeping goods moving, technicians keeping our infrastructure strong, retail and grocery staff serving people and of course health-care professionals who we cannot begin to thank."

Chambers across Halton weighed in on the economic update that was recently shared by the province.

In that update the province noted it would spend around \$17 billion on a COVID-19 plan.

That plan will see \$7 billion used to help the health-care system fight the coronavirus and \$10 billion in tax deferrals to help struggling businesses and families, but it will also re-

sult in a \$20.5-billion deficit for the calendar year and essentially torpedo the Ford government's dream of returning Ontario to a balanced budget in 2023.

Milton Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Scott McCammon says that while the assistance programs the provincial and federal governments are bringing forward in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis are helpful, what's needed now is clarity

Namely, regarding who can apply, how they can apply and how quickly they can get the funds they require.

"We need to know how businesses can access the funds that have been made available for them," said McCammon.

He said that like everywhere else, some businesses in Milton have been hit harder than others.

Industries that rely on the public like restaurants and retail establishments are having a particularly tough time.

"For the most part everyone is struggling but coping," said McCammon.

"No one knows when the end is coming, but everyone is really looking forward to this being over and getting back to some sort of normality."

When asked about the province's economic update and the measures, such as tax deferrals, being implemented to help businesses during the pandemic Drew Redden, President and CEO of the Oakville

Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber is encouraged to see all levels of government working together to support business

communities.

"We appreciate the leadership and measures already implemented; however, this is a challenge we

have never experienced before, and we need to continue to stay focused on managing the economy and saving jobs," said Redden.



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Q

Can I deny my former spouse court ordered access to my children as a result of the COVID19 pandemic?

A


A – The courts are now closed except for urgent or emergency matters. Denying access can be considered an urgent matter based on the premise that continued access would be considered in the best interests of the children. Does the COVID19 pandemic change this? The Hamilton Superior Court of Justice has very, very recently in a case given some guidelines with regard to stopping access based on the COVID19 pandemic.

In order to suspended ordered access, you would need to provide the court with specific evidence or plans by the other parent that are not consistent with COVID19 protocols.

The access parent would need to provide absolute re-assurance to the court that COVID19 public safety directives would be followed to continue the ordered access.

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