

MPP says provincial budget shortchanges long-term care

In my column last month I wrote about our nursing homes, and the need for a substantial new investment to ensure our seniors receive the quality of care they deserve. I urged readers to e-mail Finance Minister Dwight Duncan in support of my stated position that long-term care must be a higher priority in this year's Provincial Budget.

To all who took the time to e-mail the Minister, I want to say thank you.

While Mr. Duncan's March 25th Budget Speech acknowledged the need for some increased expenditure in our nursing homes, he only responded with about one-fifth of what is actually needed for staffing and supplies. We will have to continue pushing this issue in the coming months.

The Budget Speech appeared to indicate that the Government knows the Ontario economy is slowing down and that we are entering a period of tough times. What was missing was a demonstration of leadership and resolve to do something about it.

Buried in the Budget Papers (the thick, detailed Government document that accompanies the Budget Speech) were some interesting numbers. For example, the Budget assumes the Provincial Economy will grow by 1.1 percent this year. However, bank economists have downgraded their growth projections for 2008, and some are even suggesting Ontario faces a recession.

If the Ontario economy does recede, the Provincial Government most likely will go into deficit. This will test the McGuinty Liberals' claim that they are good financial managers, which is already a tenuous statement at best.

I was very disappointed that the Budget

Ted Arnott



included no new funding announcements for agriculture, no new ideas to address the shortage of health professionals, and no commitment to fix the problems in school bus funding.

There was no effective plan to address the competitiveness challenges our manufacturing industries are facing-something Ted Chudleigh and I have been calling for since 2005.

On a more positive note, our municipalities stand to benefit from at least some new financial assistance to help fix our roads and bridges. This is also an issue I've been raising at Queen's Park for years.

For more information on the Budget, please go to my website at www.tedarnottmpp.com.

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Keeping in touch

On March 28, I brought my Constituency Office to the Georgetown Market Place mall, where we met and helped many of our Halton Hills constituents.

On April 25th, my Office will again be in Acton at the Dufferin Rural Heritage Community Centre. Please call 1-800-265-2366 to make an appointment.

Ted Arnott is the MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills



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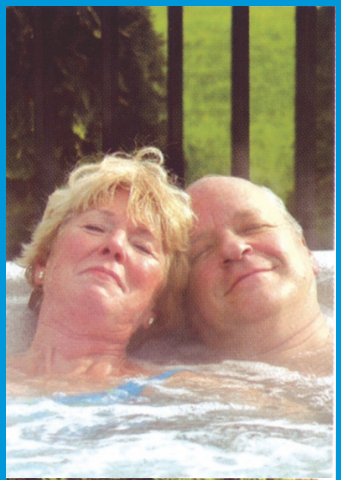
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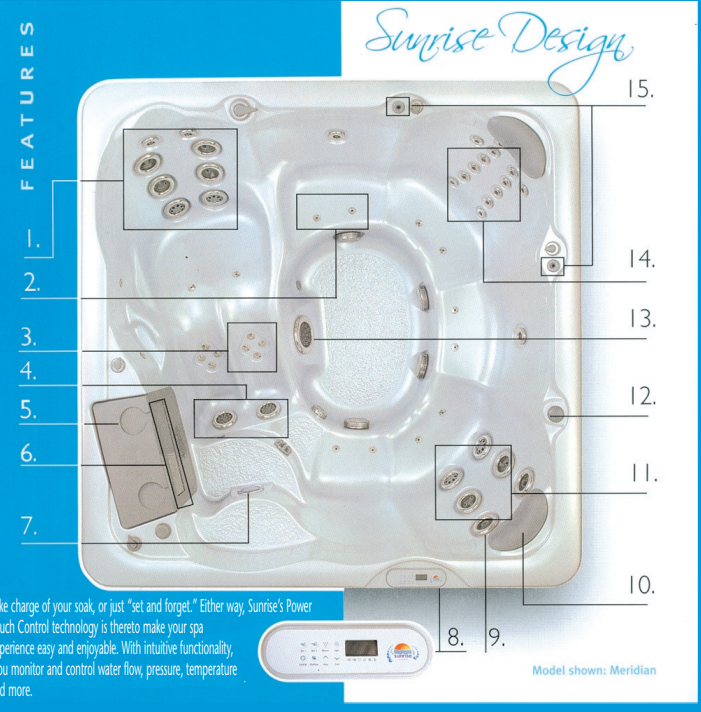
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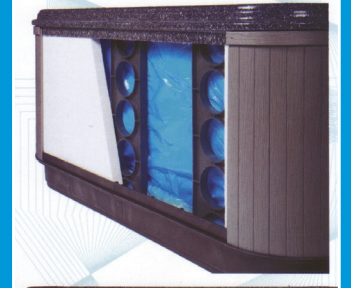
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