



# Halton Report - Spring 2002

## Ted Chudleigh, MPP Halton

### Efforts for Premier Eves to set Ontario's course

## significant protection of land pay dividends

The environment concerns us. It's where we live.

With the Niagara Escarpment winding through Halton and a significant tradition of agriculture, land stewardship and environmental issues are important to Halton residents.

The province administers the Niagara Escarpment Commission, which monitors development on the escarpment.

Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh has taken an active interest in environmental issues in Halton and across Ontario. With his background in agriculture perhaps it comes as no surprise.

Ted voted against his own party in an effort to establish a moratorium on development on the Oak Ridges Moraine, an environmentally sensitive area, north and east of Toronto. Several months later the government followed his lead and protected sensitive areas.

Ted stood up to developers who wanted to build on the Niagara Escarpment, and whose projects would set a bad precedent for future development on the escarpment, a U.N. designated World Heritage Site.

He has accessed a provincial program that purchases land for protection, to secure hundreds of acres of sensitive lands for conservation and preservation in Halton. He has worked with stone and gravel quarries in Halton to set rehabilitation plans and helped make their operations less intrusive to their neighbours.

Ted has met with Halton farmers to help understand their concerns as Halton begins to develop at a rapid pace.

He has stood up against a proposed CN intermodal train terminal because its location side-steps years of planning efforts by local authorities.

The first step is done.

Ontario has a new Premier. Ernie Eves swept into the top job last weekend over rivals Jim Flaherty, Elizabeth Witmer, Tony Clement and Chris Stockwell.

While we may have a new Premier we still have the same decisive leadership required for Ontario to remain the bedrock of the Canadian economy and set the benchmarks of Canadian values.

Now Premier Eves can turn his attention

to governing Ontario.

Renewal provides the opportunity to reassess the government's current position on a number of issues. The campaign to succeed Mike Harris produced a number of ideas that also must be given due consideration. In addition, Premier Eves must consider how best to enter the Legislature since he does not currently have a seat.

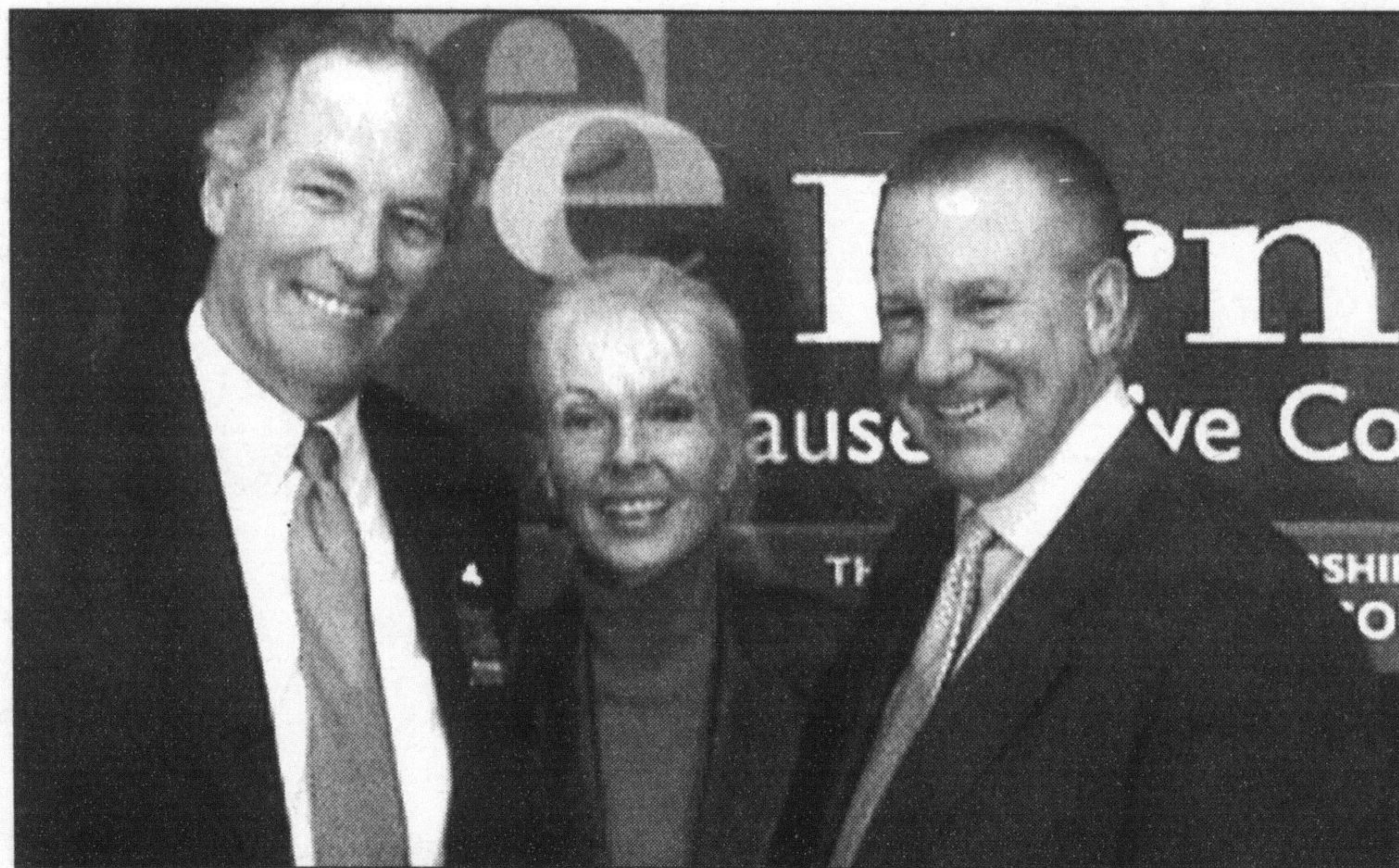
Our province is facing a very challenging time. Ontario's economy must keep

growing to provide the financial resources needed to keep improving its schools, protecting the environment and investing in our health care system.

"I will be working hard to ensure a common sense approach to the implementation of all new programs. I advocated on behalf of working families for a tax credit for children in independent schools. Now, under Premier Eves that program could include the requirement that students be tested on their achievements in all core subject areas," said MPP Ted Chudleigh.

"Renewal does not mean a change in the fundamental things the government has been fighting for. I will continue my battle for effective land stewardship policies, including those on the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment. I have battled with the Halton District School Board on school closures and special needs funding. I have lobbied for necessary infrastructure improvements in Halton for educational institutions, recreational opportunities to highways," Ted added.

Our goals of universal health care, high quality education, a clean environment, reasonable taxes, safe streets and a renewed emphasis on personal and social responsibility are achievable. Renewal hasn't changed what we want but it might help us reassess how we can get it.



Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh (left) supported new Ontario Premier Ernie Eves in his bid to win the top job. Premier Eves and his partner Isabel Bassett were in north Oakville in January to meet local residents at Ted's invitation.

## Hydro re-regulation is the responsible course

The proposed public stock offering of Hydro One, formerly Ontario Hydro, and associated re-regulation of the electricity sector has some people concerned.

Ted Chudleigh, MPP Halton says he understands these concerns, and in fact, shares them. However, he says he believes strongly that the proposals are the responsible thing to do.

Of course, the fear of change rattles everyone, he explained, especially a change of something so fundamental to our way of life as our electrical services.

There are several important points to remember when considering the future of electricity in Ontario. The former Ontario Hydro operated as a monopoly but kept electricity rates reasonable by generating a \$38 billion debt. This debt was built up over several decades; the people of Ontario owe that money to various lenders and investors. About 40 per cent of current electrical rates are being used to pay the interest on this enormous debt.

It is anticipated that money generated through the public stock offering will allow the government to pay down the \$38 billion debt. With the debt retired, electricity customers will no longer have to pay interest on it, and rates should go down.

In addition to the public stock offering, new suppliers are being allowed to sell electricity that they purchase directly from generating companies on an open market. This change provides the public with choice. People can buy based on price, service or type of electrical generation, allowing people, for example, to search out companies that generate electricity in the cleanest manner possible. You can sign contracts with electricity resellers to get a guaranteed price for the length of the contract or you can do nothing and pay the cur-

rent rate.

This change is really a re-regulation of the market rather than a deregulation. The Ontario Energy Board will be required to review any applications to increase electricity rates, similar to the manner that telephone rates were scrutinized prior to telecommunications deregulation.

In addition, Ted says, the Ontario Energy Board will enforce an Ontario first policy, meaning that all of Ontario's electrical needs must be met before any power can be sold outside the province.

Too many people are pointing to the recent run up in natural gas prices as a foreshadowing of the future of electrical prices. The comparison is like comparing apples to oranges in that natural gas is a finite resource and an international commodity that can be saved, transported and used as required. Electricity is generated from other energy sources, some of them renewable, and must be used immediately because it cannot be saved or transported over long distances.

OPEC (The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) essentially controls the price of oil and natural gas, through their enormous influence on the market. OPEC's infighting through much of the 1990s is what kept prices at very low historical values. Those same pressures have conspired to increase prices in the last several years.

While naysayers are playing politics on this issue even they have said that the former Ontario Hydro needs to be re-organized due to the immense debt. As always they are just being coy as to the details because they prefer to follow the polls rather than show leadership on critical issues facing Ontario.