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Ontario's Beer Store delivers the lowest beer prices in Canada

Ontario consumers benefit from highly competitive beer market

ONTARIO: \$54.00

QUEBEC: \$62.73

THE SAME PRODUCTS PURCHASED IN A LARGE QUEBEC SUPERMARKET CHAIN COST \$8.73 MORE THAN AT THE BEER STORE.

By Jeff Newton

How we sell beer, wine and liquor has been a hot topic this summer across Ontario.

Not just how we sell beer, but for how much.

For example, consider the claims of those calling for liquor sales at convenience stores and gas stations, including the multinational chains that own them. They have falsely claimed beer prices are lower in Quebec than Ontario.

It's just not true. Data gathered by A.C. Neilsen and analyzed by Navigant Economics shows that even though Ontario beer taxes are double those in Quebec, average selling prices at the Beer Store are still lower.

When prices before government taxes were examined the study found the average Ontario beer price was more than 18% lower. It also found that the pre-tax price for best selling package sizes – 6, 12 and 24-packs – were all lower here at the Beer Store.

In fact, prices at the Beer Store are the lowest in Canada.

That's because there is intense competition among brewers who set their own prices at the Beer Store's 450 retail locations – with frequent, multiple price changes as brewers jockey for position and market share.

The Beer Store is a completely open system. Any brewer can sell as many brands in as many Beer Store locations as they choose. It's a highly competitive selling environment. With more than 100 brewers and more than 400 brands competing, consumers reap the benefits of competition through lower prices.

Complete open access is not a common feature of private alcohol retailing. We believe many small brewers would be denied the ability to sell in small convenience stores and gas stations, thus reducing choice for

Ontario consumers.

Selling beer, wine and hard liquor at more than 10,000 convenience store and gas station locations, many close to our schools and right next to our homes, would increase distribution costs significantly. Add those higher costs to Ontario's higher beer tax and prices will rise.

It's just common sense. Even the CEO of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association told the media their members "never advocated that we were going to offer cheap beer to anybody."

He referred to higher prices as an "up charge" related to "the convenience factor."

We know milk and bread costs more at the convenience store. But the convenience 'up charge' of selling alcohol is a much higher cost than just dollars and cents.

What price do we place on preventing sales to minors? What price do we place on the gains we have made in reducing drinking and driving? What price do we place on keeping crime out of our neighbourhood convenience stores, close to our homes?

The real debate is not about price. Ontario consumers already win on price.

The real debate is about whether Ontario really needs 10,000 new liquor stores. If the result is an erosion of responsible sales and higher beer prices, we're certain that most Ontarians will say the cost is just too high.

Jeff Newton is President and CEO of Canada's National Brewers (CNB), a national trade association representing Labatt Brewing Company Ltd., Molson Coors Canada and Sleeman Breweries Ltd., who jointly operate the Beer Store. For more information visit www.ontariobeerfacts.ca

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COMMUNITY



Marking a milestone

Employees of the OLG Slots at Mohawk Racetrack recently celebrated their 15th anniversary. The Campbellville facility has had more than 18.7 million visits since opening in 1999. *Photo courtesy of OLG*

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Habitat seeks volunteers for Milton build this fall

Habitat for Humanity Halton aims to build 75 homes across the region over the next five years — including two in town.

With construction set to begin on two semi-detached houses on Bronte Street this fall, Habitat Halton is in need of more volunteer builders.

Both individuals and groups are welcome, and no previous building experience is required.

To sign up or learn more about how to help Habitat Halton, email vassistant@habitatHalton.ca or call (905) 637-4446, ext. 236.

Open Houses

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2-4 PM

225 Ellis Crescent, \$540,000, Colleen Sorensen, Royal LePage Meadowtowne 905-878-8101

615 Beaver Court, \$444,900, Clayton Hackenbrook, Remax Real Estate Centre, 905-878-7777

270 Fay Court, \$569,000, Arek Malinowski, iPro Realty, 905-693-9575

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2-4 PM

1121 Field Drive, \$644,900, Adina Nonis

3005 Conservation Rd, \$534,900, Linda Schouten

4240 Derry Rd, \$759,900, Sam Levin

9894 Regional Rd. 25, Glenn English

225 Ellis Crescent, \$540,000, Thomas Mcphail, Royal LePage Meadowtowne 905-878-8101

13203 Guelph Line, \$649,900, Michael Tait

270 Fay Court, \$569,000, Arek Malinowski, iPro Realty, 905-693-9575

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This is only a partial list, refer to today's HOT LISTINGS And BEST HOMES show/casing more Open Houses and New listings!