

Green Party hopeful out to hunt 'sitting duck'

BY ADAM MC LEAN
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Trifon Haitas is asking Oak Ridges-Markham riding voters to make history May 2.

The Green Party candidate said he's asking his neighbours and would-be constituents to make him Canada's first Green Party MP in a riding which spans the Oak Ridges Moraine.

"It's time to shine the spotlight on this riding. We have been in the dark for too long and electing me is the first step to emerge from that shadow," said the Richmond Hill resident, sitting in his living room, filled with the toys of his three-year-old son and one-year-old daughter.

Mr. Haitas has lived in the riding for more than a year and the upcoming federal election will be the second time he's run as a candidate under the Green banner.

In 2007 he ran in the provincial election in the Toronto riding of Don Valley East. While he finished fourth in a field of seven candidates, the Greek-born Canadian increased the Green vote of that ward by six times the total of the previous election.

'I came here (Canada) when I was six years old and I want to give back to the country that adopted me.'

Trifon Haitas, the federal Green candidate for Oak Ridges-Markham

With only one month left before residents take to the polls, Mr. Haitas has his sights set on a higher goal than simply improving Green Party support; he plans to emerge as member of parliament for his new home riding.

In the 2008 federal election, Oak Ridges-Markham Green candidate Richard Taylor received 6.8 per cent support.

RUNS OWN MEDIA COMPANY

Running his own media company, Mr. Haitas is confident in his communication skills and said simply going door to door in this

campaign has shown him that improved communication with constituents is an issue for many.

"Offering a free public skate every now and then is great, but it doesn't show residents that you are here for them or that their voices matter," offered Mr. Haitas, in reference to Conservative incumbent Paul Calandra's series of free skates over the March break.

"I understand that many voters are disenchanted with the material they see on TV and the attack material out there. I'm not into that tactic and instead I go out and simply introduce myself and offer an alternative," he added.

"My wife and I wanted to live as close to the Oak Ridges Moraine as possible. Our riding stretches across the moraine," said Mr. Haitas, adding it is a special place to live.

"I came (to Canada) when I was six years old and I want to give back to the country that adopted me," he added.

COMMUNITY FIRST

While stating the opposition candidates deserve respect for stepping up on behalf of their parties, Mr. Haitas claims he is different in that he's a candidate for his community first and his party second.

"They (Green Party) allow me the opportunity to do this. I'm with the party, but I'm for the community," he stated.

Mr. Haitas said, if elected, he will invest more federal money in Canada's youth so they have the opportunity to achieve employment they can take pride in, stating "young people have felt the brunt of this recession and the federal government has let them down".

He also plans to improve financial support for seniors, ensuring they have a pension that is more than what he called "peanuts", so they can live with dignity. Mr. Haitas referred to the recent federal budget as "candy coated" and "lacking real substance".

"Seniors, our farmers, our local growers were left out. Big corporations got most of it and the scraps went to the rest," Mr. Haitas said.

"We have to get the focus back



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Trifon Haitas is the Green candidate for Oak Ridges-Markham riding, which includes Whitchurch-Stouffville.

on local suppliers for better health, better environment and economy," he added.

While green ideals are paramount, Mr. Haitas said his campaign is run with security, health

and well being for his community in mind, which is the message he plans to take to Ottawa on behalf of residents.

"We need action. We need someone to stand up for this rid-

ing, not a sitting duck to represent us," he added.

For more information on Trifon Haitas visit www.trifonhaitas.com or e-mail info@trifonhaitas.com

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