



July 24, 2007

For Immediate Release

EASTERN ONTARIO WARDENS ASK—WHERE DO YOU AND YOUR PARTY STAND?

Brockville In a statement made today, Doug Struthers, Warden of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus called on the major political parties and their local candidates across eastern Ontario to outline where they stand on five key EOWC priorities.

“The Wardens are asking each major political party and their local candidates to respond to a series of five questions that cover our main priorities,” said Struthers. “We think it is important to hear from them on our priorities and what specifically we can expect them to do about each one,” he added.

Of the 51 recommendations contained in the Wardens' *“Prosperity Plan for Eastern Ontario”* the group identified the following priorities for immediate attention:

- ✓ Resolving the \$3.3 billion fiscal subsidy that property taxpayers pay towards funding provincial programs like social assistance and health care;
- ✓ Bringing high speed internet access to the region;
- ✓ Obtaining sustainable provincial funding for roads and bridges;
- ✓ Securing provincial funding of \$20 million annually for an Eastern Ontario Development Fund to support economic development activities;
- ✓ Establishing a provincial payment-in-lieu program covering the 2 million acres of crown land in the eastern region.

The Wardens' paper entitled *Eastern Ontario Priorities – Where Do You And Your Party Stand?* asks the following specific questions:

1. Where do you and your Party stand on the issue of resolving the annual \$3.3 Billion subsidy that property taxpayers must pay through their local taxes for provincial health and social programs?
2. What specific actions will you and your Party initiate to bring high speed internet connectivity to the people and businesses of Eastern Ontario and when will you act?
3. Do you and your Party support the implementation of an annual and sustainable provincial program of investment in the Region's roads and bridge systems? What specific actions do you intend to take on this issue?
4. Will you and your Party support the creation of an annual \$20 million dollar Eastern Ontario Development Fund?
5. Will you and your Party support the creation of a Payment-In-Lieu program designed to compensate municipalities in Eastern Ontario for municipal services provided to crown lands?

"As a member of the EOWC I will be very interested in the responses that we get to our questions," said Warden "This is a critical time for our region and we need to continue to talk about our main priorities, priorities that we believe will help us to reduce the burden on our property taxpayers while at the same time improving our local economies," added Warden

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus represents the 11 Counties and the separated municipalities of Kawartha Lakes and Prince Edward County across Eastern Ontario. Visit the Wardens' web site and learn more about the Caucus and its work, www.eowc.org

-30-

For more information contact:

Doug Struthers, Chair EOWC

Contact:

OR

.....Warden