

The Land Economist

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PHOTO COURTESY MUSKOKA TOURISM

It's a different world up here

by Mike Pender AACI, PLE

North of the Metropolitan Toronto boundaries, about an hour and a half's driving time away, lies 'cottage country'. At its centre is the District Municipality of Muskoka, containing the well known small towns of Gravenhurst (south), Bracebridge (central) and Huntsville (north). While the area is affected by ripple effects of the population patterns and economic trends in southern Ontario, it is quite a different market. Up here, you're not in Toronto any more.

Local and District politicians, planners and the media periodically debate whether we are the south part of Northern Ontario, or the north part of the wider Metro region. Muskoka is classified as part of Northern Ontario for purposes of delivery of Provincial Services and some Federal Services. As a result, we get a break on the cost of our license plates and there are some incentive programs. However, I think this classification considers that we are more of a "have not" than a "have" area, with regard to wage rates, average family incomes and the ability to attract skilled professionals such as medical doctors.

Cottages

One could hardly write about "Cottage Country" without discussing cottages. The three major 'signature' lakes (Lake Muskoka, Lake Joseph and Lake Rosseau), have drawn people from southern Ontario and beyond for generations. Lake of Bays to the east is rapidly becoming the fourth "signature" lake – and there are about 400 other smaller ones. With the September 11th crisis, the remoteness of the location has increased its "safe haven" attractiveness to Americans.

Cottages and cottagers have a major influence on the economy. While the permanent population in the District of Muskoka is a very sparse 57,000, the summer population jumps to 190,000

Cottagers on the major lakes are quite affluent. They hold down major jobs to the south. There is also a substantial amount of old money from the United States. The bigger lakes are seeing more and more million dollar homes,

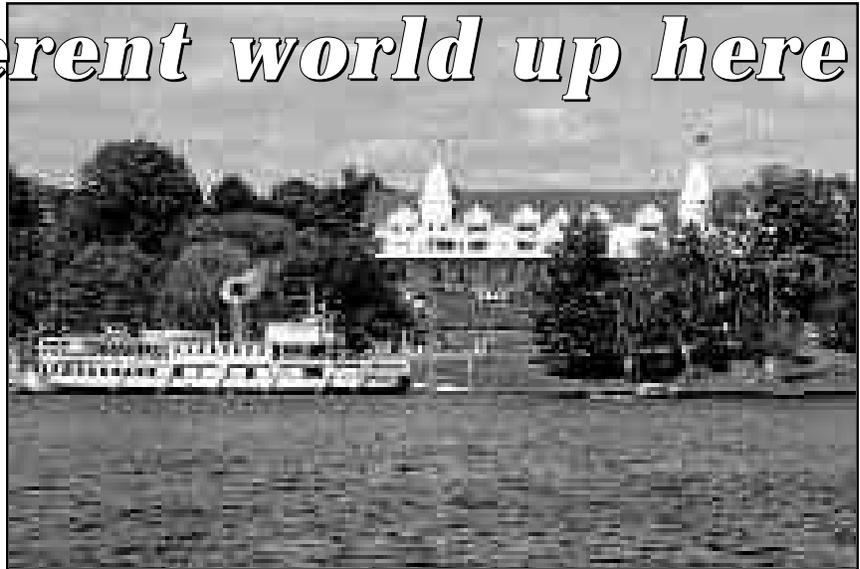


PHOTO COURTESY MUSKOKA TOURISM

Cottages and tourism have been a mainstay of cottage country for generations. Population in Muskoka more than triples to 190,000 in the summer.

most of which are being built for year round/early retirement use.

As a result, there is a greater demand than supply of 'reasonably priced' property. On the major lakes, it is hard to find a property worth less than \$250,000 – smaller/older cottage properties are being purchased in the range of \$300,000 to \$400,000 as building lots.

There is a vast difference between the values on the major lakes (and parts of the major lakes) and the values on the smaller lakes and frog ponds.

Resorts

Since before the turn of last century, the area has been noted for its resorts, such as Windermere House, Cleveland House, The Baldwins, Lakeside Lodge, Tamwood Resort, Bangor Lodge, Patterson Kaye Lodge, Pineland Resort — and many other, smaller facilities with the quaint Muskoka flavour.

Recently, we have seen older resorts upgraded and newer ones developed. Aston Resort was completely renovated and is known as The Holiday Inn on Lake Muskoka. Cranberry Marsh Cove near Bala is a new high quality resort and business retreat.

Many of the major new resort and resort/condominium developments feature world class golf courses. These facilities become destinations in themselves, help attract convention business, and help expand the season for resort operators.

Clublinks has invested heavily in the area: it has developed the course at The Lake Joseph Club (formerly Elgin House) over the past 10 years, opened Grandview/ Clublinks next door to Deerhurst in June 2001, and recently acquired the Rocky Crest Golf Resort. Some of the newer resort condominium projects, such as Muskoka Sands Resort, also have plans to dramatically expand their golf courses.

The general decline in hotel occupancies across North America will undoubtedly have ripple effects in Muskoka. However, with the low Canadian dollar and the "safe haven" perception mentioned above, tourism from the United States is expected to stay relatively stable.

New In-Migration

Permanent population of the area has been slowly expanding, as a result of the ripple effect from Metro and our aging population. With the leading edge of the post-war baby boom approaching 55-60, projections are for substantial growth.

The mathematics is working for more and more people to live and work up here, or sometimes live here and work in the city. People like myself like the slower more relaxed pace of things, and the better quality of life, with places where it is quiet and beautiful.

But there are problems. For doctors and other professionals, the good news is that - "Yes we really need you up

here and we might even be competitive in salary” BUT the bad news is often - “No there is no competitive job for your spouse. Or kids.”

The retirement market is growing rapidly. Muskoka is definitely seen as a good (and some say cheap) place to retire. Although deemed “permanent” residents, these retirees often spend winters in warm locations like Florida. Retirees generally have money but do not spend lavishly. They also require a greater part of the health care dollar and services than the rest of the population.

Employment and Labour Force

According to 1996 census data (23,935 persons total) the labour force by industrial division is as follows: Primary 2.3%; Manufacturing 11.6%; Construction 12.5%; Transportation 7.3%; Trade 16.9%; Finance 4.7%; Government Services 5.3% and Other Services 38.8%.

“Other services” includes the very important hospitality/ recreation sector. To give just three examples, Deerhurst Resort employed approximately 650 people in 2001, while Grandview Inn employed 120, and Muskoka Sands Resort employed 230. Other major employers last year, with approximate number of jobs in brackets, were:

Bracebridge: Alcan Wire & Cable (175), Bruce Evans Ltd (100), Scandura (100), Dura Automotive Systems Canada (543), Fowler Construction (250), Muskoka Transport (165), Muskoka Containerized Service (110), and Hamond Transportation (100).

District of Muskoka Permanent population			
1996	2001	2006	2011
57,836	63,894	74,035	81,365

Huntsville: Algonquin Industries (375) a part of which has been more recently spun off to an American buyer, Canusa (120), Panalam Industries (250), Tembec Forest and Products (250), and Kimberly-Clark (220).

Gravenhurst: Beaver Creek Institution (100 - Light Offenders), Fenbrook Institution (220 - Medium Offenders), and Algonquin Automotive (145).

Commercial/industrial

Most new commercial/industrial developments seem to stem from existing successful businesses simply expanding and needing more space.

Serviced industrial land values range from a low of about \$40,000 to a high of around \$80,000 per acre. Pent up demand caused a major jump within the past couple of years, but supply and demand now appear to be in relative equilibrium. In general, Huntsville prices are in the higher end of the range, Bracebridge is in the middle, and Gravenhurst is lower.

A similar pattern can be seen for commercial leases, where net rental rates range from less than \$7.00 per

sq. ft. to as high as \$12.00 - \$16.00. Commercial plaza developments and chain coffee shop/convenience stores command the upper end. Older stores in the heart of the downtown core with poor parking go at the lower end. The area is noted as being boom/bust in character, with many banks having taken major baths. In some parts of the economic cycle you have to be able to take water from stone. You cannot eat scenery.

On this basis it should not be too surprising that many of the Class A (and other) lenders are not doing much commercial business up here for small-to medium-sized projects, unless they have very good personal covenants or have other collateral and or security.

With the above cautionary note, it can be stated that Home Depot has bought land for itself and other users and looks like it is coming to Bracebridge within the next two years. Huntsville has widened Highway 60 to four lanes to Deerhurst/Hidden Valley and is projecting a major big box development at the corner of Highway 60 and Highway 11.

The area has lots of potential but you still have to take a much more laid back attitude to a lot of things.

Welcome To Muskoka!

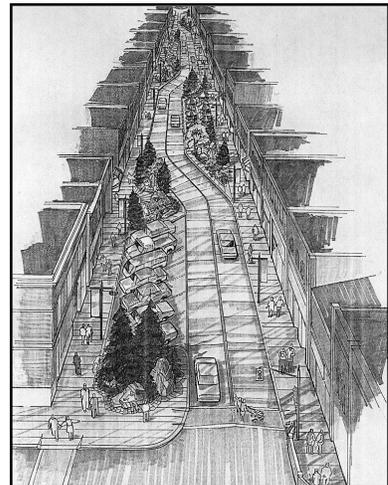
Mike Pender is principal of Pender Appraisals Ltd., Bracebridge, and more often than not works in association with Wayne Kitchen of Kitchen & Company Appraisal Services.

PHOTO & RENDERING COURTESY TOWN OF BRACEBRIDGE



**Bracebridge
wants a
facelift**

Manitoba Street (left) is the focus of the town's proposed \$2-3 million revitalization plan. Preliminary concepts call for a boutique-type pedestrian walkway. Regional approvals and funding are still needed.



Deadline: October 2003

by Rowena Moyes

For most air travellers, the massive redevelopment project at Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport has so far meant little more than a constant change in access routes. But the Greater Toronto Airports Authority has already reached the fifth year of its 10-year, \$4.4 billion redevelopment, and the push is now on to complete all of Phase 1 in the next year and a half.

There are four main parts to the redevelopment:

Utilities and Airport Support — \$360 million

This includes two new fire halls to replace the existing one, relocation of the maintenance facility, administration offices for Transport Canada and Peel Regional Police, new central utilities plant plus 3,800 feet of water distribution pipelines (all completed), electrical distribution network, communication/ securi-

ty systems (voice, data and wireless). There has also been more than \$100 million of work on storm water management, monitoring and 56-million-litre wetland, plus storm sewers.

Relocation and Expansion of Infield Facilities — \$428 million

Essentially complete, this part was necessary to create room for the new terminal, and to accommodate increased volumes. It consists of a 333,000-square-foot Air Canada cargo facilities, a 295,000-square-foot multi-tenant cargo building, a 150,000-square-foot Canada Customs/freight forwarding building, two new aircraft hangars, a flight kitchen facility, and temporary 10-gate Passenger Holding Terminal (available on a temporary basis as construction/ demolition makes existing terminals overcrowded, later switching to cargo space). To keep cargo and maintenance traffic off the scarce surface area, a four-lane, 600-m long tunnel was

constructed underneath three taxiways and one runway, connecting the terminals, maintenance and the infield facilities. This tunnel came into operation in December 2000.

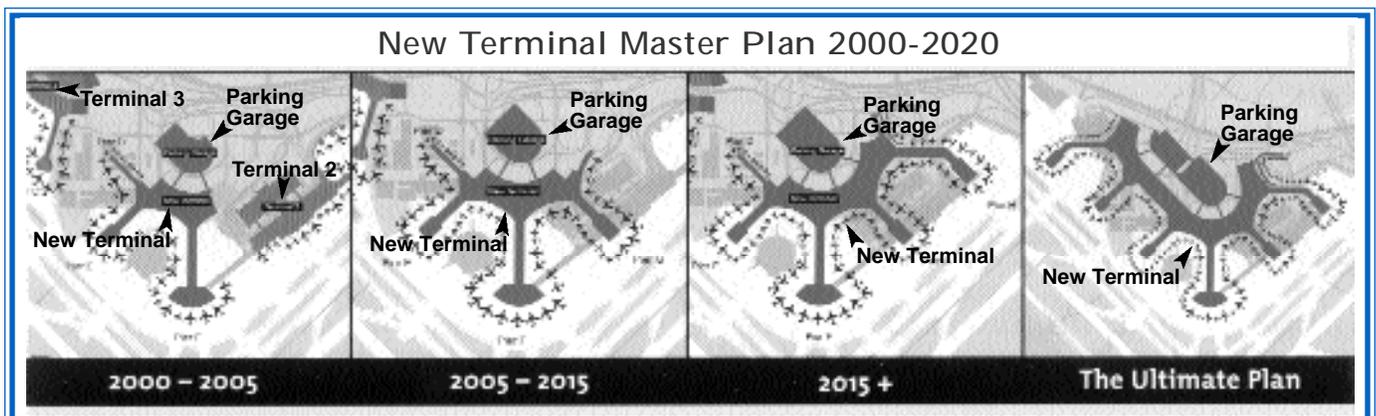
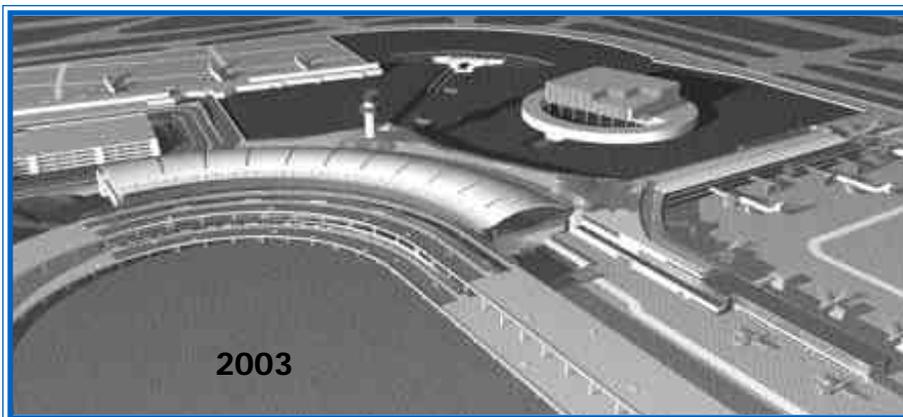
"Airside" Development — \$313 million

This includes a new \$65 million central de-icing plant, extension of one runway, and building of dual taxiways (all already completed), plus two new runways (one is set to open this year). These expansions will increase the airport's aircraft handling capacity by approximately 30 per cent, to more than 600,000 aircraft movements per year.

New Terminal, Parking Garage and Roadways — \$3.3 billion

The centrepiece of the redevelopment is the main Terminal building (called T-new) which will eventually replace Terminals 1 and 2. Its structure is already mostly completed and glazed. Main efforts now are on interior work. Phase 1 also includes construction of two (of the proposed four) spokes or "piers" for aircraft gates.

The New Terminal project also includes realignment/expansion of roadways and access ramps (including Highway 409 south of Highway 427), scheduled for completion in August of 2003. Phase 1 of the eight storey parking garage with associated ramps and passenger bridges, is scheduled for completion in November. It will contain approximately 9,000





Centrepiece of the redevelopment

This monumental horseshoe-shaped “T-NEW” building will eventually replace the current Terminals 1 and 2. Passengers at the departure level/ticketing area will be welcomed into this soaring, light filled space (part of the so-called central processor), before proceeding through security to the airside “liner”, with its restaurants, food courts and extensive retail, and then out to the piers and departure lounges.

arking spaces, in a bright, high-ceilinged space. Official completion of Phase 1 of the new Terminal project is October of 2003. Longer term development will be phased in as demand dictates.

Next steps

After Phase 1 of the Terminal opens, work will continue: Phase 2 includes demolition of the current Terminal One in 2004, allowing for the third (“hammerhead”) pier of the new Terminal to be completed by 2005. Phase 3, including partial demolition of Terminal Two, a further pier at the new Terminal, and extension of the parking garage, is currently scheduled for completion between 2006 and 2007.

Planning protection

Last summer, the Ontario Municipal Board ruled in favour of the GTAA’s request for an “Airport Operating Area” in the Toronto Official Plan (MetroPlan). This AOA, similar to one in Mississauga/Oakville, will limit increases in residential density and height within a large area defined by noise exposure levels. GTAA feared that intensification would result in increased complaints about airport noise.

The OMB reasons for decision recognized that the GTAA “has a paradoxical role with its mandate to increase business activity” (through more flights and longer hours) “... being at odds with the mandate of being a ‘good neighbour’ to the residents under its runway approach” (avoiding major noise impacts on thousands of homes). The AOA will

protect “as of right” zoning, and allow some redevelopment “provided studies and undertakings ensure there will be no negative impacts on the long-term function of the airport”.

Environmental Plans

The GTAA was the first airport in North America to achieve ISO 14001 certification for its environmental management plans and systems.

Its new central de-icing plant includes a special liner to minimize the release of glycol. Storm water retention ponds capable of separating sediments, oil, and fuel from run off, also control outflow volumes to surface waterways.

Schedule

With many parts of the construction schedule dependent on completion of other projects, moving people into new buildings, commissioning new systems, running trials and simulations, etc., the critical path on the GTAA’s airport redevelopment project is astounding. So far, it appears that they can meet the October 2003 deadline. If you’re on the invitation list for the opening celebrations, look forward to an interesting party!

Rowena Moyes is a Toronto writer and communications consultant, and editor of this journal.

Lester B. Pearson International Airport Fast Facts

Impact on regional economy	\$11.5 billion
Number of direct jobs in 2000	27,137
Number of passengers, all airports in Canada, in 2000	80 million
Number of passengers through Pearson in 2000	28 million
Number of passengers through Pearson in 2020 (est)	50 million
Cost of 10-year redevelopment	\$ 4.4 billion
Aircraft movement capacity after redevelopment	600,000/yr
Km (single lane) of simplified Hwy 409/access	67
Parking spots in new garage by 2006	12,600
Tonnes of cargo processed in 2000	392,000
Tonnes of cargo expected in 2020	675,000
Redevelopment charge on each airline ticket in 2001	\$10
Number of rail links to downtown Toronto identified as necessary in the GTAA’s 1997 prospectus	0

Growth issues for GO Transit



With the provincial government taking back GO Transit as of January 1, 2002, there should be enough money for base budgets. But the issue of ongoing capital expenditures for growth is still up in the air.

At the Association of Ontario Land Economists' November, 2001 dinner meeting, Gary W. McNeil, GO's managing director and chief operating officer, gave members a snapshot of the issues.

GO's 10-year capital plan shows the authority "needs a funding level of \$220 million per year just to maintain the current level of congestion," McNeil said. "We basically receive \$120 million, so we need \$100 million more for growth."

In 1998, when the province downloaded GO Transit to the local municipalities, that meant less operating subsidy and only about \$60 million in capital funds. "They weren't even maintaining the assets," McNeil said.

Last September the province announced that they would take back responsibility for the operating and base capital funding – and provide up to one third of new capital growth investments. The other two thirds are supposed to be split between the municipalities – who are on board in principle – and the federal government, which has yet to commit funds.

Squabbling over funding doesn't make sense, McNeil said. "If this was a private company, a bank would look at the fact that if we build (a new route or station), it will fill up tomorrow. They would be happy to lend," he said.

"But it's public sector, and government doesn't look at transit as an investment. They look at it as a cost. A rail coach, for example, will last for 50 years, but government sees it as a one-year hit."

Developers have not been pushing municipalities to fund GO Transit, he said. They have actively fought development charges.

But a lot of the suburban development depends on having transit capacity.

When you look at the transportation of people into the downtown core of Toronto, he said, "all of the growth in the past 25 years has been in GO Transit. In the rush hours, the ridership on TTC into the core has gone down and the number of cars on the road has stayed approximately the same."

GO Transit carries its passengers on almost 44 million trips per year – with an average trip length of 32 km. "It would take four Don Valley parkways and 4 QEW's to replace that."

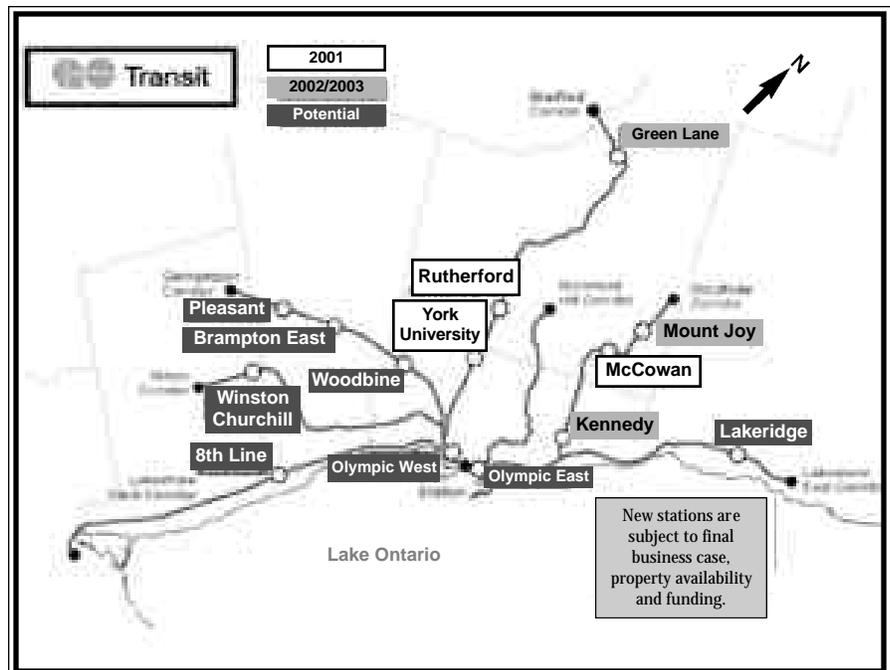
There are 15 new stations in planning, he said, and most of the parking at the new stations will fill faster than expected.

"We're looking at office/condo development above stations. The developers would generate profits. The municipality would generate tax revenues. We'd generate ridership. But I don't know if the development industry would be interested, given the amount of greenfields out there."

In addition, he said, "most municipalities have not supported intensification around stations." But there may be real opportunities. "The whole downtown core of Toronto, and places like New York City and Chicago, were built around rail stations."

It's important not to forget bus travel. While rail lines and LRT are more popular with local politicians, busses are often much more efficient and flexible to be used in lower-density areas and in off-peak hours, he said.

(Note: On December 20, Ontario asked for Expressions of Interest for round one of the Golden Horseshoe Transit Improvement Partnerships program. GTIP will support the expansion/upgrading of inter-regional transit infrastructure, especially projects with a private sector financing component. By spring, shortlisted applicants will be asked to provide more detailed proposals, due this summer.)



Members Online

Thanks to Dave Sanna and Konrad Koenig, the Association's website now includes a full, sortable list of all members (www.aole.org/db).

The list comes up sorted alphabetically by last name. Anyone visiting the web who wants a member's full mailing/e-mail addresses and phone numbers can access them by clicking on the appropriate last name.

To sort by company, city or primary practice area, just go to the headers at the top of the list. Click "City" for example, and the list will

rearrange itself that way (ascending or descending). Enter Ctl+F to search the page for any word or combination of words.

In a really neat feature, each member can update his or her information, changing, adding or deleting as required. Next time you move office, or company, or change other contact numbers, you can enter your password and update your listing yourself.

Contact Erica at the Association office to obtain your password today.

News Briefs

OHBA expects 73,000 starts

Ontario Home Builders' Association President Albert Schepers says the economy has weakened. However, provincial housing starts are expected to remain at a strong 73,000 level in 2002, because of lower interest rates, continued consumer confidence and net in-migration.

Hamilton expwy EA fight dropped

After the Federal Court and the Court of Appeal both ruled the project exempt last year, the federal government has given up its attempt to impose environmental assessment on Hamilton's proposed Red Hill Creek expressway.

Infrastructure bonds strong

Private infrastructure financing is becoming the "bedrock" of bond markets, says BMO Nesbitt Burns' Rick Byers. Four months after Sept. 11, the Greater Toronto Airports Authority was able to raise \$500 million through a new bond issue. Since 1996, more than \$13 billion has been raised on capital markets for Canadian infrastructure, from highways to schools and hospitals.

Data giant

CB Richard Ellis, Royal LePage Commercial Inc., Colliers International and J.J. Barnicke Ltd. announced in January that they are pooling resources to create a new research company. Commercial Real Estate Exchange will compile a national database on the commercial real estate market by year end. Each firm will do its own analysis and interpretation.

Welcome New Members!

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The Legislative Beat *continued from page 8*

WSIB Consultation on Coverage

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has released a discussion paper on "Coverage Under the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Act". Public consultation will produce findings for the Ministry of Labour this spring. Under an expanded coverage scheme, health care costs that have been borne by OHIP could become the responsibility of employers. Certain sectors such as banking are resistant to

being pulled into the compensation system. Other sectors such as high-tech, courier and construction appear to have been shedding costs by turning workers into "independent operators", with a resulting drain on WSIB revenue. Determining when an individual is a legitimate "independent operator" has many grey areas. There have been cases where a so-called independent has made a claim as a worker after an injury has been sustained – thus costing the WSIB

and burdening other construction employers with resulting higher premiums. A named-insured system might avoid the losses that result from a payroll-based system.



Andy Manahan is Development Promotion Representative, Universal Workers Union, Local 183.

Conservative Leadership

The Tory leadership race, which is in full swing at time of writing, will culminate in a party election on March 23, 2002. Media has reported on a range of possible new policy initiatives by those wishing to succeed Mike Harris. It was decided in December 2001 that all bills before the House would be carried forward until the Legislature reconvenes this spring. Despite the fact that the Legislature is not in session, several major initiatives are proceeding, such as the hydro deregulation set for May 1, 2002.

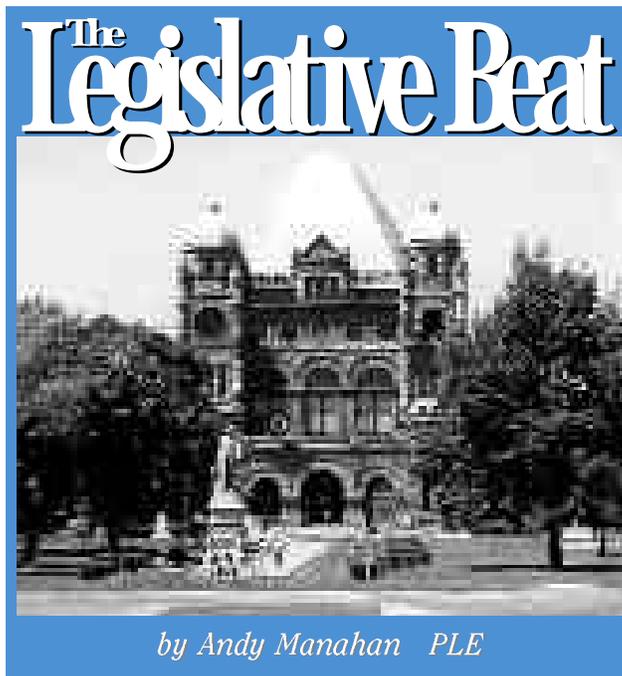
Smart Growth

Five Smart Growth Panels will provide advice on a range of issues in the central, west, northwest, northeast and east regions of the province. The province announced members of the first panel on February 11. Ten of the 19 panelists for the Central Region are municipal leaders, including Chair Hazel McCallion, Mayor of Mississauga. The Central Zone covers 37,676 sq. km around the Golden Horseshoe, encompassing Waterloo/Wellington/Brant in the west; Haliburton/Simcoe in the north and Peterborough/ Northumberland in the east.

The Panels (no longer called "Councils", so as not to infer another level of government) will look at planning for future development in an environmentally sustainable way and will identify priority infrastructure projects. The Central Region panel will also search for solutions to minimize the trucking of garbage. Inter-municipal approaches will be a hallmark, especially with respect to the integration of transportation systems to help alleviate gridlock.

Building Regulations

Following work of the Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group, the Province has introduced Bill 124, An act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement. More stringent timeframes are proposed



for municipalities to respond to building permit applications (up to 10 days for residential applications and 30 days for non-residential). In addition, permit fees must reflect the cost of delivering the service. – not used for revenue generation. The system would allow municipalities to accept plan reviews and inspections by private sector Registered Code Agencies. It would also require additional insurance coverage from designers, contractors and code agencies. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has some concerns about the potential impact of the legislation, and may recommend changes.

Barrier Free Access

The Province has issued a "Consultation on Barrier-Free Access Requirements in the Ontario Building Code". The Residential Construction Council of Central Ontario has called on the government to conduct a cost-benefit study of the new accessibility requirements in the 1997 edition of the OBC prior to adding any more requirements. Another suggestion was to produce a Best Practices Guide on Barrier Free Design.

Construction Advisory Council

"Keeping Ontario Industries Competitive in the Global Marketplace", prepared by Ted Chudleigh,

Parliamentary Assistant for the Economic Development and Trade Minister, supports construction industry calls for: an Industrial-Commercial-Institutional construction advisory council comprised of labour and management representatives; a move to "life cycle costing" as an alternative to the low cost bid approaches when awarding contracts; encouraging public-private partnerships by clarifying how unsolicited bids will be dealt with; and developing ways to deal with skilled trades shortages and ways to enhance labour mobility across Canada. (Chudleigh's report makes reference to the Province's investment in the Life Long Learning Centre now being built in Cobourg. Providing upgrading skills for workers and training for young people, this facility is a cooperative effort between Local 183 and its management partners.) One industry spokesperson has subsequently suggested that the advisory council include representation from both the Residential and ICI sectors.

Oak Ridges Moraine/Seaton Lands

The last column reported that landowners barred from developing their property on the Oak Ridges Moraine would be provided with provincially-owned land in Seaton. The land swap has not been completed yet as a number of details still have to be worked out, especially appraisal of property values.

At a Canadian Urban Institute seminar in January, planner John Van Nostrand indicated that his earlier plan for a community of up to 90,000 could still be implemented: one-third for urban development, one-third for intensive agriculture and one-third for the natural environment. Existing farm houses could be maintained, while new arterial roads could help preserve the character of rural roads. Discussions on the possibility of a second international airport for Toronto in north Pickering have also taken place between the federal and other levels of government.

See The Legislative Beat on page 7