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Building Ontario

**Digging Into Redevelopment**

Ontario Premier Doug Ford arrived in Alliston on Monday, March 9, to participate in the ceremonial groundbreaking of the Stevenson Memorial Hospital redevelopment project. Along with Premier Ford, breaking ground are Sylvia Biffis, Chair of the SMHF Campaign Cabinet; New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross; Brian Saunderson, MPP for Simcoe-Grey; Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health; and Carmine Stumpo, Supervisor at Stevenson Memorial Hospital. See a full page story on Page 7.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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# County launches 2026 Age-Friendly Housing Grant programs

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The County of Simcoe has opened applications for its 2026 Age-Friendly Seniors' Housing Grant.

Applications could be submitted as of March 1, 2026.

The program is in its ninth year and provides \$500,000 in annual funding to support seniors remaining independent, safe, and connected within their communities.

The grant is a cornerstone of the County's Positive Aging Strategy. The strategy supports homeowners and landlords across the region in making accessible, adaptable, and inclusive upgrades for residents aged 60 and older.

Projects range from mobility-friendly renovations to adaptable living spaces and inclusive design features. These help older adults remain independent and safely at home for as long as possible.

In 2025, the County approved 93 applica-

tions.

"Supporting our aging population is one of the County's most important responsibilities," said Simcoe County Warden Basil Clarke. "We are grateful that the Age-Friendly Seniors housing Grant continues to make a meaningful difference by helping older adults remain safe, independent, and connected in the homes and communities they love."

To be eligible for the grant, projects must be located within the 16 municipalities of the

County of Simcoe (excluding the cities of Barrie and Orillia). Applicants must be homeowners of principal residences or landlords renting to individuals age 60 and over.

Applicants cannot have received an Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Grant in the past three years or any other county capital funding for the same project.

Applications opened March 1, 2026, and will close on May 31, 2026.

For full program details and application forms, visit online at [simcoe.ca/age-friendly](http://simcoe.ca/age-friendly).

# Tools in the Trade Boot Camp educates participants on career opportunities across Ontario

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of New Tecumseth and Support Ontario Youth hosted a Tools in the Trade Skilled Trades Boot Camp at the town administration centre on Thursday, March 5, introducing attendees to opportunities in the trades.

Ontario is currently experiencing a shortage of skilled workers in the trades, and boot camps offer people a chance to see the job opportunities available to those trained in a

particular vocation.

These boot camps are held at locations around the province. The camp in Alliston featured an introduction to HVAC, electrical, and Industrial Millwright trades with hands-on training, skills assessments, and direct engagement with employers and licensed journeymen.

The event was supported by Honda of Canada Manufacturing and reflects the Town of New Tecumseth's commitment to workforce development and skilled trades training.

Several local companies helped by showing

participants how to wire electrical systems, work on HVAC systems, and use journey-person tools.

The military sent representatives from both CFB Borden and HMCS York, Royal Canadian Navy Reserve, in Toronto.

"We do boot camps in six different trades. Today we have three trades – HVAC, electrical, and millwright," explained Melanie Winter, executive director of Support Ontario Youth. "We give participants a starter tool kit so they are going to go home with the tools that if they went out on a job tomorrow, they would have a good start for tools they might use every day as well as a start to some skill sets. We have other programs we do with high schools."

The boot camp was capped at 55 people, allowing all attendees to receive proper training, and a full complement of applicants showed up to learn about the trades.

Anyone entering an apprenticeship program will receive on-the-job training from experienced professionals in that trade and learn the job through experience over several years

before becoming fully certified or licensed.

"We have around 20 partners here today," Winter explained during the Tools in the Trade Skilled Trades Boot Camp. "We have employers and other community partners. That includes community partners that can help with up-skilling for people who need to improve their math, literacy skills, or digital literacy."

She added, "We run additional programming, so after today, everyone who is a participant here will have access to additional programming. We offer self-directed learning through an online learning management system as well as online coaching, resumé writing, and interview preparation, so that when they show up to a job interview, they are prepared and have a resumé."

Participants at the event responded enthusiastically when given the opportunity to experience hands-on work with electrical components, HVAC units, and millwright tools.

The boot camps are designed to spark people's interest in the trades and, hopefully, steer them toward a rewarding career.



**TRYING OUT THE TRADES** – New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross meets with Stephanie Cabai and Meggan Winsley during the Tools in the Trade Boot Camp held at the New Tecumseth Administration Centre on Thursday, Mar. 5. Hosted by the Town and Support Ontario Youth, the boot camp introduced people to opportunities in the skilled trades in Ontario. Stephanie and Meggan were busy working on and learning about electrical work.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



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# Editorial, Letters & Opinion

*"The window to the world can be covered by a newspaper."*

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

## The Olympics

I used to love watching the Olympics.

Other than Wide World of Sports, which used to air sometime around 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoons, it was the only time you could watch events like ski jumping, bobsledding, the luge, and downhill skiing.

As a kid, I was fascinated by the ski jumpers who rode down a perilous track to the end of the jump before flying through the air, and finishing like they were taking a walk in the park.

I'm sure the reality of it was that the jumpers are probably pretty nervous before every jump, because after all, there is an inherent risk of injury in that sport.

However, for a spectator, it was a great sport to watch – even if I've never seen it live.

The winter sports are different. It's not like there are minor bobsled leagues or a local luge track, and there aren't many places you can visit the local ski jump hill and sign up for lessons.

For the Summer Olympics, I pretty much liked watching all the sports.

I have always thought that the running events are the purest form of sport. You don't have a puck or ball to handle, you're not throwing anything, and you don't have teammates.

During a running race, it's all on the competitor. All that training, all that coaching, and all those diets they follow to keep them healthy comes down to one person, on their own.

Either you run faster than the other person, or you don't.

The Olympics are all about finishing first. No one ever remembers who won the bronze medal.

Guys like Mark Spitz, the American swimmer who won an incredible seven gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Munich in 1972, returned home as a national hero.

Canada has hosted the Olympic Games three times - the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal, the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary, and the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver.

Hosting the Olympic Games is a huge challenge for the host city. You either have the venues, or you have to build them.

You need appropriate stadiums for track and field and team sports. You need Olympic-style pools, an equestrian park, and other outdoor venues for various sports.

For the winter games, obviously, you have to be in a region that has both mountains and snow. If you don't have a bob-

sled run, you will have to build one.

You have to have a place for the Olympians to stay, so now you have to build a small city to accommodate several thousand people from a lot of different countries, and that's just for the competitors.

On top of that, you will have to accommodate thousands of officials and everyone involved in running the Olympic Games. And of course, visitors to the games will also need a place to stay.

It's a logistical nightmare, but they manage to pull it off.

It seems to be a prestigious thing to host the Olympic Games, but what does it all really mean?

A check of many former Olympic sites shows that many of them have simply been left to fall into ruin.

The Montreal Olympic Games were a notorious financial disaster. No cities ever seem to come out ahead after hosting the Olympic Games.

Maybe it's time to build permanent venues rather than allow the notoriously corrupt International Olympic Committee to play its political games and select a new city every four years.

Just build an Olympic venue with all the needed athletic stadiums, pools, and

equestrian parks, and an Olympic village to host the athletes. If every country participating in the Olympic Games contributes to the venue's maintenance, it wouldn't cost very much to keep it alive.

The athletes go to the Olympics to compete. Why would they care which city the games are held in?

For the Winter Olympics, find a suitable mountainous area with abundant snow. Having a permanent Olympic site would greatly benefit the town or city where it is built through jobs and tourism.

Between Olympic Games, the venues could host other world-class sporting events.

A permanent venue would also eliminate all the political crap that goes into selecting a city and the cost of putting a bid together in the first place.

Every other sport on the planet has a permanent home. You don't see the Toronto Maple Leafs announcing they will be playing home games in Kingston this year.

If you build a permanent Olympic Games venue, they will come.

**BRIAN LOCKHART**  
FROM THE SECOND ROW



## Commonwealth, common goals

Much has been said in recent weeks about Canada's place in the world.

Actually, Canada's place in the world, and just what exactly that entails, has been a point of discussion, debate, and, yes, contention, since the very establishment of this country by Confederation in 1867.

While we Canadians, I believe, generally have a strong sense of self at the individual level, that's not always the case in the broader picture, and we're reminded of this from time to time.

Prior to the outbreak of the present war in Iran, one of the most potent immediate reasons for considering Canadian identity and this country's place in the world was the ongoing economic and philosophical conflict with the United States, once one of our most trusted allies.

The question of what it means to be Canadian in a global context was posed well beyond Canada earlier this year when Prime Minister Mark Carney delivered his now-famous speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he called on middle powers like Canada to find strength in common ground.

"We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition," said Carney on the international rules-based order. "Over the past two decades, a series of crises in finance, health, energy and geopolitics have laid bare the risks of extreme global integration. But more recently, great powers have begun using economic integration as a weapon, tariffs as leverage, financial infrastructure as a form of coercion, and supply chains as vulnerabilities to be exploited.

"The multilateral institutions on which middle powers have relied — the WTO, the UN, the COP — the very architecture of collective problem solving, are under threat. And as a result, many countries are drawing the same conclusions: that they must develop greater strategic autonomy: in energy, food, critical minerals, in finance and supply chains. And this impulse is understandable. A country that cannot feed itself, fuel itself, or defend itself has few options. When the rules no longer protect you, you must protect yourself. But let's be clear-eyed about where this leads: a world of fortress states will be poorer, more fragile and less sustainable....

"Middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu. But I'd also say that great powers can afford, for now, to go it alone. They have the market size, the military capacity and the leverage to dictate terms. Middle powers do not. But when we only negotiate bilaterally with a hegemon, we negotiate from weakness. We accept what's offered. We compete with each other to be the most accommodating. This is not sovereignty. It's the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination. In a world of great power rivalry, the countries in between have a choice: compete with each other for favour or to combine to create a third path with impact. We shouldn't allow the rise of hard power to blind us to the fact that the power of legitimacy, integrity and rules will remain strong — if we choose to wield them together."

Underscoring this point, the Prime Minister said, "We know the old order is not coming back. We shouldn't mourn it. Nostalgia is not a strategy."

Nostalgia for our previous relationship with the United States is certainly not a strategy, I think we can all agree, but are

there also opportunities in what so many consider to be nostalgia?

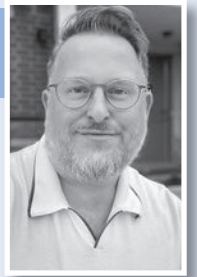
Monday was Commonwealth Day, an annual celebration held in the United Kingdom and in many parts of the world on the second Monday in March to celebrate the heritage, close bonds, and shared visions for the future of the more than 50 member states, most of which, but not all, have roots within the former British Empire.

It's a day that hardly causes a ripple in Canada, yet one that should be given much more significance.

Some might see this collection of member states that is the Commonwealth — several of which are considered "middle powers" — as, at best, an exercise in nostalgia for what once was (and, in many respects, what was once... well, was far from great), but it doesn't need to be. It's a global platform to share ideas and look to the future in conversations that aren't dominated by geopolitical behemoths.

Continued on Page 15

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# Changing partners

**GWYNNE DYER**  
OUR WORLD TODAY



The Trump/Netanyahu war in the Middle East will not spread any further, and nothing going on there threatens our collective existence. The only countries that have nukes in the Middle East are Israel and the United States. Iran has none now and has never even been close to having them.

Mountains of lies have been told about this by interested parties over the years, but every intelligence agency on the planet (including the American ones) knows that the Iranian regime never even took a decision to try for nukes.

After Trump tore up a perfectly functional treaty controlling Iran's nuclear activities in 2018, Tehran did gradually increase uranium enrichment to try to force the United States back into the treaty, which was very stupid because it gave the US and Israel a stick to beat it with. However, Iran announced full details of every step up and never went higher than 60 per cent.

Enough about that. All the pretexts that have been advanced by Trump and Netanyahu to justify the sec-

ond illegal attack on Iran in less than a year are patently false. They should be rejected not because the Iranian regime deserves to survive (it doesn't), but because they do such harm to the international law that we all depend on to prevent great wars.

The more important question is whether the Long Peace of the past eighty years is over.

Perhaps the impression that illegal wars are surging is just an optical illusion created by a single powerful individual who is having a run of flashy but inconsequential military victories. However, the historical pattern does show long periods of relative peace punctuated by shorter periods of very high military activity.

The first Long Peace of the modern period came after 25 years of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815). The constant wars had involved all the great powers of the time and killed around 4 million people in a world with only one-eighth of today's population, so everybody was ready for a rest.

During the next hundred years (1815-1914) there were a number of shorter wars that involved two or even three of the six great powers, especially around the midpoint when Italy and Germany fought unification wars. However, there were no long wars in which all the great powers fought each other in two huge rival alliances.

That phase of the cycle returned in the two 'world wars' of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, better seen as a protracted thirty-year war in which almost identical alliances embracing all the great powers fought each other twice.

The death toll was at least fifty million that time, and by 1945 most of the big cities of Europe and Asia were smashed flat. Two of those cities were destroyed by nuclear weapons. But then we were granted another Long Peace:

eighty years from 1945 to now during which no two great powers have fought each other directly.

Historians can find specific economic or ideological causes for all these wars, but there is clearly also something bigger driving this cycle. I don't know what it is, but I do know that one sign that a Long Peace is ending is a rapid switching of alliances. That is happening now.

Consider the NATO countries in Europe, which have realised that the United States is no longer their ally. As they consider the options for a downsized Europeans-only NATO, their greatest need is a credible independent nuclear deterrent to replace the old US guarantee.

The only nuclear weapons in the European Union belong to France, so could French nukes protect all the members of NATO 2.0? France's President Emmanuel Macron thinks so, and eight other European countries – the UK, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Sweden and Denmark – have agreed to a new "advanced deterrence" strategy.

France will build more nuclear warheads (current total 300), and its 'Strategic Air Forces' will be "spread out across the depth of the European continent... and thus complicate the calculations of our adversaries." Entirely rational, but it is a kind of nuclear proliferation.

If we are heading into a world of changed alliances and more wars, then the natural partner for a post-NATO Europe is China, an authoritarian state but one that still defends the international rule of law.

Such an alliance (or just an alignment) would also be attractive to many developing countries, because it could provide some protection from predatory regional powers like Russia and the United States (if they continue on their present courses). But a far preferable alternative would be to climb into the time machine, go back to 2020, and reset (without Covid, of course).



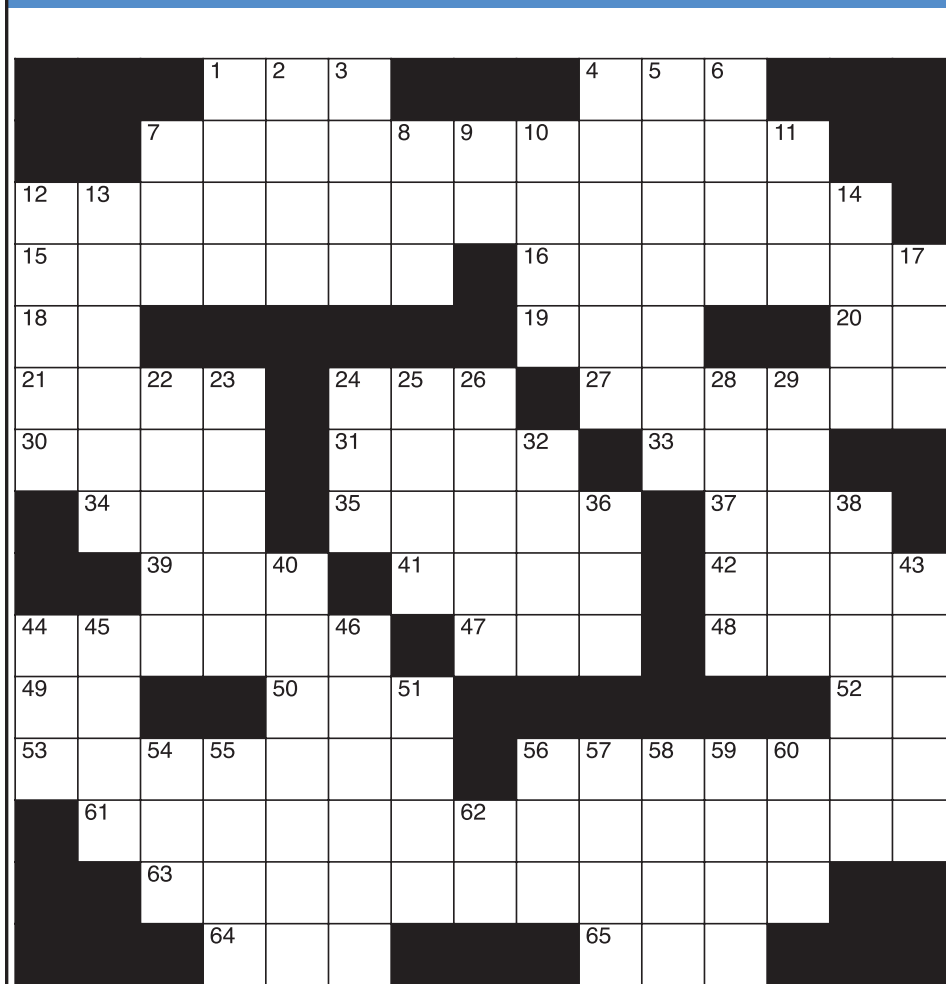
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- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Blockchain-based entity
  - 4. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
  - 7. Painted with glue
  - 12. Legendary crooner
  - 15. Structure made with strips of wood
  - 16. Tropical fruits
  - 18. Commercial
  - 19. Comedienne
  - Gasteyer
  - 20. The Ocean State
  - 21. Ancient Scot
  - 24. Basics
  - 27. Stated propositions
  - 30. Scottish island group
  - 31. Expression of annoyance
  - 33. Large tree
  - 34. Engine additive
  - 35. Conspiracy
  - 37. Drunkard
  - 39. Someone who is morally reprehensible
  - 41. Ancient Syrian city
  - 42. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
  - 44. Carry (slang)
  - 47. Sweet potato
  - 48. European river
  - 49. The Golden State
  - 50. Windy City ballplayer
  - 52. New Testament
  - 53. Possess spiritually
  - 56. A treeless grassy plain
  - 61. Popular historical novel
  - 63. In a law-abiding way
  - 64. A place to sleep
  - 65. Criticize
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Impression in a surface
  - 2. Computer language
  - 3. Relating to the ear
  - 4. Occupant
  - 5. Member of Great Plains people
  - 6. Social media firm
  - 7. Digital audiotape
  - 8. Midway between east and southeast
  - 9. Chronic, progressive disease
  - 10. Chinese lute
  - 11. Not wet
  - 12. Moves wings up and down
  - 13. Communication devices
  - 14. Swiss river
  - 17. Female sibling
  - 22. Receive
  - 23. Relating to a type (abbr.)
  - 25. Steep bank
  - 26. Taxi driver
  - 28. Moves into without difficulty
  - 29. Bicycle manufacturer
  - 32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
  - 36. Fugitives are on it
  - 38. Bitter-tasting organic substance
  - 40. Die
  - 43. Matched
  - 44. Literary genre \_\_\_-fi
  - 45. Cannot
  - 46. Pounded
  - 51. British rock group
  - 54. Debt relief order
  - 55. 2006 NL Cy Young winner
  - 56. Green vegetable
  - 57. Tough outer skin of fruit
  - 58. \_\_\_ Spumante (Italian wine)
  - 59. Ailments
  - 60. Famed singer Charles
  - 62. Camper

*No one has more self-confidence than the person who does a crossword puzzle with a pen.*

# COMMUNITY VOICE

## Monthly Message: CONTACT Community Services shares Amanda's story

Often, when a community member comes to CONTACT for support, the request is multi-layered. A request for more affordable housing options may lead to the need for a better-paying job and the appropriate attire for a job interview. In moments like these, the unwavering support of a cohesive team working in collaboration can alleviate a highly stressful situation.

CONTACT recognizes that challenges such as housing insecurity, unemployment, and social isolation are deeply interconnected. By offering coordinated services under one roof, CONTACT reduces barriers and creates clear pathways toward independence, dignity, and community connection.

For close to 50 years, CONTACT has been providing these wraparound services in our community. CONTACT's Clothes Line stores, Housing supports and Employment services, as well as our free Seniors programming, work closely together to provide creative solutions to assist people with critical needs. In 2024, CONTACT opened our first 24/7 supportive rapid rehousing program, taking a holistic approach to providing a full suite of supports to unhoused seniors, creating opportunities for them to rebuild and thrive.

Working together as a team is CONTACT's



greatest strength. Our 'one-stop shopping' model helps families and individuals access many of the services they need to improve their lives and those of their families.

An individual who comes to CONTACT to find affordable housing may also need to find a better-paying job and may need appropriate clothing for job interviews through our Clothes Line stores. These services are provided through a dignity-driven model that supports our clients with compassion. We cover all the bases toward success.

Our employee-driven Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee is a driving force in our organization, ensuring everyone in our community receives compassionate care so they can work toward a brighter, more stable future. 'A place where everyone matters' is written above the entrance doors at our Clothes Line store in Alliston. That alone symbolizes our inclusive and supportive mission.

An example of CONTACT's wrap-around, supportive services is illustrated in Amanda's story. Amanda is a single mother

of three children who was facing significant barriers to securing stable, affordable housing. Despite being qualified and eager to work, she had struggled to find suitable daycare support, which, combined with the challenge of managing her family on a limited income, had made it difficult for her to secure employment.

Amanda received crucial wraparound support from CONTACT, including financial assistance for childcare, which enabled her to dedicate time and attention to her job search and find employment to stabilize her income. Our employment team then worked closely with our housing department to help Amanda find stable, affordable housing, providing a foundation for her family's future.

Amanda frequently says that without CONTACT's support, she wouldn't have made it through those challenging times. Thanks to the help she has received, Amanda and her family are now safely housed, independent and on the path to stability and renewal.

There are more mothers, fathers and families in our community that need our assistance. Now more than ever, the need for these supports is critical. Affordable housing is scarce, grocery prices are skyrocketing, and families are making tough decisions to

keep their families safe and secure. Requests for basic needs are on the rise. These may include transportation for a local senior to get to a doctor's appointment, assistance finding a job to support their family, more affordable housing options and clothing and housewares to set up a new space. The requests are endless, and the need for support is vital. Everyone has their own story.

Through our Hope Chest fund, driven by community donations, CONTACT has been better able to provide urgent, unique supports in these stressful times that otherwise wouldn't be available through other funding models. CONTACT needs support from our community to effectively continue providing comprehensive wraparound services to our neighbours. This support will help individuals and families achieve long term stability through integrated housing, employment, access to essentials, and seniors' inclusive programming.

Please consider making a donation to our Hope Chest fund through our website, [www.contactcommunityservices.ca/donate-now/](http://www.contactcommunityservices.ca/donate-now/) or by e-transfer to [donations@contactcommunityservices.ca](mailto:donations@contactcommunityservices.ca).

Together, we can build a strong, stable and thriving community where everyone matters.



### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Passionate about an issue you've read about within the pages of the New Tecumseth Times? Want to share your opinion? Email us a letter to the editor to: [newtectimeseditorial@gmail.com](mailto:newtectimeseditorial@gmail.com). Be sure to include your name and town.



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# Premier Ford visits local hospital to launch redevelopment project

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, along with local dignitaries and mayors of towns in the region, arrived at Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston on Monday, March 9, to officially break ground for the hospital's redevelopment project.

The project is part of the government's plan to invest nearly \$60 billion in more than 50 major hospital projects across the province over the next ten years.

The government support of \$175 million marks a major milestone in the project.

"With more inpatient beds, expanded diagnostic and surgical services and an emergency department triple the size of the current one, the new Stevenson Memorial Hospital will connect more patients and families across Simcoe to convenient, world-class

health care," said Premier Doug Ford. "Our government will continue to deliver on our historic hospital and primary care expansions, so families have reliable access to quality health-care services, no matter where they live."

The redevelopment of Stevenson Memorial Hospital will be completed by 2028 and include new and expanded acute care areas, the construction of a new, three-storey building that will more than double the size of the hospital, to approximately 147,100 square feet, as well as an increase in inpatient bed capacity by 20 per cent, providing more access to care to the community.

"With this investment, our government is protecting Ontario's health-care system and ensuring that more people

in New Tecumseth and across Simcoe County can connect to convenient care, where and when they need it," said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "This investment is another example of how we are investing in the health-care needs of communities, to deliver the highest standard of care for generations to come."

Work has already started on the hospital grounds, including a new helipad at

the southeast corner. The new emergency department will be triple the size of the current department and will include expanded diagnostic and surgical services, as well as a brand-new birthing suite.

"This announcement represents far more than the start of construction. It reflects years of dedication from hospital leadership, foundation supporters, municipal and provincial partners and the many donors and community members who believed in the future of Stevenson Memorial Hospital. Together, their commitment has brought us to this moment," said Brian Saunderson, MPP for Simcoe-Grey. "This new hospital will strengthen health care for New Tecumseth and the surrounding region, ensuring that patients and families receive care in a modern facility designed to meet the needs of a growing community for generations to come."

The Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foun-

ation has worked very hard over several years to raise funds for the hospital redevelopment through its 'Because of You' campaign.

"We all know that a hospital is much more than a building, it is the life saving technology inside it," said Sylvia Biffis, Chair of the SMHF Campaign Cabinet. "It is the compassion and the expertise of the entire team of world-class professionals who operate it – from the physicians and the nurses to the technicians, and the administrative and supportive staff, and our incredible volunteers. The shovels going into the ground today, are moving earth, but let us be clear, it is the people of New Tecumseth and South Simcoe who are moving mountains. Through your generosity, you are ensuring that families will not have to travel out of the region during their most vulnerable moments."

The hospital redevelopment project is expected to be completed by 2028.



**SHOVELS IN GROUND** – A large group of representatives from Stevenson Memorial Hospital and the provincial government gathered outside of the hospital on Monday, March 9, to break ground on its redevelopment. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**



**FORD VISITS** – New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross (left) shakes hands with Ontario Premier Doug Ford at Stevenson Memorial Hospital on March 9. The premier visited the local hospital to participate in a groundbreaking ceremony, launching its redevelopment project. The provincial government has dedicated \$175 million toward the redevelopment. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

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# Arts & Local Events

## Simcoe County Museum plans fun activities for March Break week

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you are looking for something to keep the kids busy during March Break, the Simcoe County Museum has some fun activities planned for the week.

The Youseum temporary exhibit places you in the curator's seat. This hands-on experience lets visitors of all ages discover what it's like to design and build their very own museum exhibit. There are other opportunities to create, experiment, and innovate with hands-on challenges. You can build the longest marble

run you can imagine, launch a paper airplane to sky-high heights, and put your egg to the test in the ultimate splat-proof challenge.

In the B.I.G. Zone, you can jump into a variety of Big Interactive Games set up throughout the Gallery for some oversized fun.

These fun events will be at the Museum

from Saturday, Mar. 14 to Sunday, Mar. 22, 2026.

Regular admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$6 for youth, \$4 for children, and free for pre-schoolers and Museum Members.

The Simcoe County Museum is located at 1151 ON-26, in Minesing.

## Blackhorse Village Players prepare for 'Old Wives Tales,' marriage focused production

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Marriage – what is it good for?

Pre-wedding jitters, settling into married life, and the end of an era are all explored in the Blackhorse Village Players' production of *Old Wives Tales*, now on stage at the Mount Wolfe Rd., and Highway 9 location.

Written by Kevin Riordan, produced by Amanda Tessier and Jacquie Moore, and directed by Jo-Anne Pulfer, this play examines married life over the years for two women.

It is the 1980s in the back room of a church, when a young woman, played by Lauren Tiersma, wearing her wedding dress and only minutes away from being married, suddenly announces she wants to cancel the wedding.

Through tears and uncertainty, the young woman states she is not sure the man she is about to marry is really the right man for her.

In the role of her mother, Melanie Burgess tries to convince her daughter that nothing is perfect and that she is just experiencing the same pre-wedding concerns everyone has.

Jacob Furmanov takes on three roles in the production: priest, waiter, and lawyer. As

the priest, he visits the back room to find out why the bride has not yet arrived, as several hundred guests are waiting for the wedding to start.

The young woman finally agrees to go through with the wedding.

Fourteen years later, the two women meet in a restaurant and discuss married life. The young woman has now settled into the routine of marriage and seems happy, though there are bumps and surprises along the way.

Fast-forward to the 2010s, and the women meet at a lawyer's office where the mother, now much older, wants to make her final arrangements.

The daughter learns many things about her mother as they discuss her mother's wishes when it comes to distributing her estate after her death.

*Old Wives Tales* is a journey through several decades of two lives that are different but connected.

Many people are involved in putting this production together. The team consists of Stage Manager, Julie Kovach; Production Assistant and Sound Tech, Norah Ruffalo; Assistant Stage Manager, Braidan Green; Set

Design, Cheryl Phillips and Jo-Anne Pulfer; Set Builders, Cheryl Phillips, Conor Phillips and Tim McEchern; Set Painters, Jo-Anne Pulfer and Laurie Laing; Props, Norah Ruffalo and Jo-Anne Pulfer with the company; Costumes, Jo-Anne Pulfer and Amanda Tessier; Hair and Makeup, the company; Lighting Designers, John Sellens and Rob Mather; Light Tech, Julie Kovach; Sound Design, Myles Stromm and Jo-Anne Pulfer.

Director Jo-Anne Pulfer would like to make a special mention of teenage volunteer Norah Ruffalo, who joined the theatre in Grade 9 and has been doing a terrific job since. She plans to continue with the theatre until she graduates.

*Old Wives Tale* is on the Blackhorse Village Players stage through to March 22, 2026.

For ticket information, visit the theatre website at [www.blackhorsetheatre.ca](http://www.blackhorsetheatre.ca)



**LATEST PLAY** – It is an exploration of marriage through the years in the Blackhorse Village Players' production of *Old Wives Tales*, now on stage at the Mount Wolf Rd., and Highway 9 location. Lauren Tiersma, Melanie Burgess, and Jacob Furmanov star in this play that takes a look at the ups and downs of marriage over several decades. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**



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**BRIAN SAUNDERSON**  
MPP, Simcoe-Grey

# Province invests in establishing Regional Technology Development Sites

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Government of Ontario, through the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN), has announced an investment of \$17.5 million to establish nine Regional Technology Development Sites (RTDS) across the province.

The RTDS of Simcoe County, Barrie, and Orillia has been launched as one of Ontario's newest advanced automotive and smart mobility innovation hubs.

The RTDS is supported by a \$1 million investment from OVIN, matched by almost \$1.1 million in industry investments, \$1 million from local government partners, and more than \$600,000 from post-secondary and other non-profit partners, representing a total of \$3.7 million.

The RTDS, which is led by the County of Simcoe in partnership with Invest Barrie and the City of Orillia, delivers a comprehensive suite of services through a strong network of regional partners and assets.

These partners include Georgian College, Lakehead University, Oro Station Innovation Park, Sandbox Centre, and Honda of Canada Mfg.

The County of Simcoe and the Cities of Barrie and Orillia are committed to exploring access to municipally owned assets to support SME testing and validation.

This includes roadways, transit buses, autonomous snow removal equipment, roundabouts, heavy machinery, and rail systems, offering highly controlled, real-world environments for product validation.

Simcoe County has a strong automotive legacy, with roughly 9,000 motor vehicle and parts manufacturing jobs and a growing automotive cluster.

The RTDS builds on this foundation by strengthening the region's role in advanced manufacturing, automotive innovation, and smart mobility. It will drive job creation, attract investment, and train the next generation of skilled talent while supporting Ontario's goals for electrification and clean mobility. By connecting SMEs with worldclass testing facilities, research expertise, and commercialization support, the RTDS will help keep Ontario a leading global hub for automotive

and mobility technology.

"Simcoe County has a strong and proud history in the automotive sector. The establishment of the RTDS of Simcoe County, Barrie, and Orillia represents a significant opportunity to further strengthen our automotive supply chain, advance made-in-Simcoe County technologies, and secure future automotive investments," said Simcoe County Warden, Basil Clarke. "OVIN's support is essential as our region helps accelerate innovation and fuel growth across Ontario's automotive and mobility ecosystem."

The Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network is an initiative of the Government of Ontario, led by the Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI), designed to reinforce Ontario's position as a North American leader in advanced automotive technology and smart mobility solutions, including connected, autonomous, and electric and low-carbon vehicle technologies.

Through resources such as research and development support, talent and skills development, technology acceleration, business and technical supports, and demonstration grounds, OVIN provides a competitive advantage to Ontario-made automotive and mobility technology companies.



**INNOVATION FUNDING** – The Government of Ontario, through the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN), has announced an investment of \$17.5 million to establish nine Regional Technology Development Sites (RTDS) across the province. From left to right: Kevin Weaver, President and CEO of Georgian College; Alex Nuttall, Barrie Mayor; Geoffrey Campbell, Managing Partner of Oro Station; Mona Eghanian, Deputy Head of OVIN; Basil Clarke, Warden of Simcoe County; Raed Kadri, Head of OVIN; Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario and MPP for Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte; Dr. Langis Roy, Vice President of Research & Innovation at Lakehead University; and Don McIsaac, Orillia Mayor, gather during the announcement.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation looking for volunteers

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Are you interested in making a difference in your community while having a positive impact on health care?

The Stevenson Memorial Hospital is seeking volunteers to join its Board of Directors and Standing Committees.

This recruitment effort supports the

Foundation's ongoing 'Because of YOU' campaign and planning for Stevenson Memorial Hospital's redevelopment project.

If you are interested in applying for a volunteer position on the Board, email a cover letter expressing your interest and a resume to [sjones@smhosp.on.ca](mailto:sjones@smhosp.on.ca).

The application deadline is Tuesday, March 31, 2026.

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# SPORTS

NEW TECUMSETH TIMES



**SEMI FINAL SUCCESS** – The Alliston Hornets take on the Orillia Terriers in Game 1 of their best-of-seven semi-final playoff series at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, March 6. The Hornets won this game 7-1, then followed up with a 5-1 win in Game 2 of the series in Orillia on Sunday, March 8. The Hornets now lead the series 2-0. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

## Alliston Hornets lead Orillia 2-0 in semi-final series

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston Hornets have taken a 2-0 lead in their North Carruthers Division best-of-seven semi-final series against the Orillia Terriers.

This is a real grudge match for the Hornets. Last season, the Terriers had an underdog win over the Hornets in the Division championship.

Game 1 of the series got underway on the Hornets' home ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Center on Friday, March 6.

It was a 3-0 Alliston game at the end of the

first period.

Hornets' goals came from Nick Lamont, Ben Smith, and Tristen Pitt.

Orillia got on the scoreboard at 7:20 into the second period.

Lamont got his second of the game at 17:46 into the second period to give the Alliston squad a 4-1 lead with one period remaining.

The Hornets returned for the final period, firing on all cylinders and scoring three unanswered goals to win the game 7-1.

Third period Alliston goals came from Gunner Kirk, Pitt, and Noah Prokopec.

Game 2 of the series was held in Orillia at

the West Orillia Sports Complex on Sunday, March 8.

The Hornets again dominated the scoring while stopping the Terriers from putting much up on the scoreboard.

Alliston's Lucas Bell scored the opener at 6:24 into the first period.

It was a 3-0 game midway in the second frame on goals from Duncan Grube and Gunner Kirk with an unassisted effort.

The Terriers scored their only goal of the game with 1:29 left in the second period.

The Hornets capped off the night with two goals from Nick Lamont and Cameron Lamont for the 5-1 win.

Alliston forwards, Duncan Grube and Gunner Kirk are at the top of the playoff stats this season.

After six games, Grube has six goals and eight assists for 14 points. Kirk is right behind with eight goals, five assists, and 13 points after six games.

Game 3 of the best-of-seven series is scheduled to take place at the New Tecumseth Recreation Complex on Friday, March 13, with a 7:30 p.m. start.

Game 4 will take place in Orillia on Saturday, March 13.

That game is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

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# 911

NEW TECUMSETH TIMES



## Traffic complaint and officer patrol lead to impaired charges

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police officers have charged two individuals with impaired driving offences in two separate incidents.

The arrests occurred following a traffic complaint for a suspected impaired driver and an officer's observations while on routine patrol.

Shortly before 7 p.m., on Thursday, March 5, Nottawasaga OPP officers responded to a call for service reporting a possible impaired driver about to drive.

Officers located the vehicle, conducted a traffic stop, and began an impaired-driving investigation.

As a result of the investigation, David Tedesco, 49, of Adjala-Tosorontio, has been charged with:

- Operation While Impaired – blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)

In a separate incident on Friday, March 6, shortly before 12:30 a.m., an officer, while on patrol in a residential neighbourhood, observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. A traffic stop was conducted, and the officer detected a strong odour of alcohol coming from the driver.

The officer began an impaired driving investigation.

As a result of the investigation, Shelby Watts, 26, of New Tecumseth, has been charged with:

- Operation While Impaired – blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Operation While Impaired – alcohol and drugs
- Fail To Have Insurance Card
- Owner Operate a Motor Vehicle Without Insurance
- Fail to Surrender Permit for Motor Vehicle
- Driving Motor Vehicle with Open Con-

- tainer of Liquor
  - No Mudguards
  - Obstruct Plate
  - Driver – Fail to Properly Wear Seat Belt
  - Drive With Windshield Coated – view obstructed
  - Use Altered Plate
  - Novice Drive – B.A.C above zero
  - Operate Unsafe Vehicle
- The accused parties were released on Form 10 Undertakings and are scheduled to attend the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford to answer to the charges.
- None of the charges have been proven in court.

## Three drivers charged with stunt driving over three days, topping at 143 km/h

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers, while conducting speed enforcement, have charged three individuals with stunt driving over the past three days.

On Saturday, March 7, shortly after 11:30 p.m., an officer conducting speed enforcement on Highway 89 east of Alliston stopped a vehicle travelling at 143km/h in an 80 km/h zone.

- The driver was charged with:
- Drive Motor Vehicle - Perform stunt - Excessive speed
  - Speeding 143km/h in a posted 80km/h zone

- Driver fail to surrender licence
- Fail to surrender insurance card

On Monday, March 9, shortly after 8 a.m., while conducting speed enforcement on Mill Street in Angus, a Nottawasaga OPP officer stopped two vehicles within an hour for stunt driving, both travelling at excessive speeds.

The first driver was stopped after travelling at 116km/h in a posted 50km/h zone.

- The driver was charged with:
- Drive Motor Vehicle - Perform stunt - Excessive speed
  - Speeding 116km/h in a posted 50km/h zone

The second driver was stopped shortly before 09:00 a.m., travelling 112km/h in a 50km/h zone.

The driver was charged with:

- Drive Motor Vehicle - Perform stunt - Excessive speed
- Speeding 112km/h in a posted 50km/h zone

All drivers received a 30-day licence suspension, had their vehicles impounded for 14 days and have future court dates to answer to the charges.

The OPP is reminding drivers that speeding isn't just breaking the law; it's a leading cause of preventable deaths on Ontario roads.



Even small increases above the limit dramatically raise the risk of a driver losing control or being involved in a serious collision.

## Alliston man charged with uttering threats against Ontario Premier Doug Ford

BY MARK PAVILONS

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) has charged an individual in relation to a threat made against the Premier of Ontario.

On Friday, Feb. 13, the OPP Protective Services Section (PSS) began an investigation into a threat made against Premier Doug Ford. As a result of the investigation, Ramy Jamil Hanna, 20, of Alliston, was arrested and charged with one count of uttering threats to cause harm, under section 264.1 of the Criminal Code.

The accused was released from custody and is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on Thursday, April 9.

Anyone with any information in relation to this investigation is asked to contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122. If you wish to remain anonymous, you may contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or ontariocrimestoppers.ca.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Everyone has a right to feel safe. The OPP takes matters involving threats seriously, regardless of who experiences them, and will fully investigate," said Inspector Anton Jelich, PSS.

As part of the Provincial Operations Intelligence Bureau, PSS provides intelligence-led, risk-informed protection for government dignitaries in the province of Ontario. PSS is responsible for the protection of the Lieutenant Governor, Premier and members of the Executive Council.

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Continued from Page 4

# Brock's Banter: Commonwealth, common goals

It's an organization that, in addition to Canada and the United Kingdom, includes Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and more, along with scores of emerging nations and economies in the Caribbean and Central America, many parts of Africa, Asia, and the Oceanic states.

We might not all see the world in the same way, but given our common roots, each member of the Commonwealth has a bit of a head start in understanding where each other has come from, where each other is headed – and in forging or renewing links, that is often half the battle.

These links were not only demonstrated at the start of the week at Westminster Abbey as representatives from member

states joined the King and Queen, High Commissioners from each member nation, cultural representatives and more in a cavalcade in what brings this disparate group of countries together, but also in Canberra, Australia, when the Prime Minister of Canada made a rare speech before the Australian Parliament – fresh off his visit to another member state, India.

“For us, as two democracies in an age of polarisation, as two dynamic trading nations in a time of disrupted supply chains, and as two middle powers in an era of strategic competition, Australia and Canada must seek and create new ways to stand with and for each other,” said Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, welcoming Carney

into Parliament. “For all the comfortable ties of old affection, what makes the friendship between Australia and Canada noteworthy is what we do not share. We do not share a border, a region, a hemisphere, or any market smaller than the global one. Yet this makes the connection between our countries more meaningful, not less, because our cooperation, our partnership, is a positive choice, not a necessity....

“When we act together, we demonstrate to our citizens that government is not a passive institution. It is an instrument for positive change. And what's more, when we send a message to all those nations that look to us as equals, as peers, as neighbours, and as leaders, that they too have a

choice, agency, and a part to play, because peace, security, and prosperity are not the preserve of the great powers alone. They are our common cause and our collective responsibility.”

Hopefully, this is the start of a new era of understanding and cooperation between a unique group of nations that have an understanding of each other, face common challenges, and can forge unique solutions together.

Some might find the Commonwealth as simply a nostalgic vestige of our history, but, to my mind, it offers a significant opportunity that has been all too often overlooked.

Here's to our shared futures, if we take advantage of them!

# Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit reminds residents to be prepared for flooding

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With the warmer temperatures and still a lot of snow on the ground, rain combined with rapid thaws increases the chance of localized flooding.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is reminding residents to be vigilant, aware of the risk of flooding, and to take steps to protect their health in the event of a flood.

You should be prepared before an emergency happens.

Know the risks in your community and

region by staying on top of information on the municipality's website. Make a plan so you and your family know what to do, and include a meeting place, emergency contacts, and evacuation routes.

Stay tuned to TV, radio, and reliable sources to determine if there is a flood risk.

Prepare your home for a possible evacuation and gather essential items, including cash, medications, important documents, identification, and clothing.

If you have time, move valuable items out of basements and lower levels. Keep your vehicle fuelled and ready to go.

Evacuate immediately if instructed to do so.

Prepare a 72-hour emergency kit with food, water, a flashlight, a radio, extra batteries, emergency numbers, non-perishable food, and prescription medications.

Flooding can make food, water, and living spaces unsafe. Follow updates and recommendations from local authorities.

Flood water often contains bacteria, chemicals and other contaminants. Drinking water advisories are issued when water may be unsafe to prevent water-borne illness.

Following basic water safety precautions is essential for protecting you and your family's

health.

Private wells are at an increased risk of contamination during floods. Any well can become unsafe.

If flood water has reached or covered your well head, you should assume the water is not safe to drink.

During these situations, it is important to follow all drinking water advisories and rely on safe water sources until your well has been properly tested and confirmed to be safe.

By being prepared, you have a much better chance of getting through a flood emergency situation without risk to you or your family.

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