

And they're off

Own local politicians, both incumbent and wannabees, had until last Friday to register for Ontario's municipal elections that take place across the province on October 28.

If the slate of candidates in your home ward have new faces running for election, you're one lucky ratepayer.

It's usually the same-old, same-old candidates with the familiar names and an increasingly lackadaisical work ethic.

What should be a part-time job in most municipalities has become full-time roles by politicians in many communities, folks who book extra committee meetings for extra money and mileage and who will show up for the opening of an envelope.

It would almost be comical if it wasn't true.

Next to their political masters at Queen's Park?which now has a Progressive Conservative majority under recently-elected Premier Doug Ford?our municipal politicians control a lot of services that affect our everyday lives.

They maintain our roads, such as they are in some regions, deal with snow clearance during the winter, have control over the landfill sites and, in some cases, they also control water and sewer.

Then there's elementary and secondary education through trustees, our health system through at-home involvement in the Local Integrated Health Network, which are just another layer of bureaucracy that costs money but does little.

Our municipal politicians, if visionary, will be finding ways to attract more doctors and health professionals to our parts of the county, which is no easy task at the best of times.

With small town striving to survive, let alone succeed, economic development plans are vitally necessary to keep storefronts from emptying and shuttering their doors.

Those who are established tourist towns have a bit of a leg up on others if they keep property taxes reasonable, but it is still a competition to get as many tourist dollars per season as possible?whether they come from cottagers and day-trippers in the summer or the snowmobile crowd in the winter.

You have until October's end before we go to the polls. Check out the candidates in your ward or township, attend the meetings and the debates, and go into the polling station knowing who is the best among bunch.

Knowledge is power.