

Local candidates explain why they're the right fit for Dufferin-Caledon

Written By **Rob Paul Local Journalism Initiative Reporter**

For more than two weeks, Dufferin-Caledon MP candidates have been campaigning as they work through the community with the September 20 federal election approaching rapidly.

Candidates have been door knocking to listen to residents' concerns while letting them know what their key priorities are if elected.

The Citizen spoke with Dufferin-Caledon MP candidates Kyle Seeback (Conservative), Lisa Post (Liberal), and Jenni Le Forestier (Green) about how the campaigning process has been going and why they each think they're the right fit to represent Dufferin-Caledon in Ottawa.

As the incumbent in Dufferin-Caledon and previously the MP for Brampton West, Seeback is a veteran of the campaign trail and leans on his proven track record as to why he's the right person to for the community to elect.

"It's going really well, we have a pretty big team here," he said. "I think we've hit close to 15,000 or 16,000 doors already and we're working very hard at hearing the concerns of the residents of Dufferin-Caledon and that's part of what I've done as a member of parliament here. I made several promises in the campaign of 2019, and I've kept every single one of them. I said I would hold four town halls a year, I did that—even in COVID I did that as we moved to virtual town halls. I set up mobile offices before COVID hit, where we would drive to different parts of the community and set up a mobile office for the day so people could receive services. I also said I would ask my constituents how I should vote on certain issues, and I sent out dozens of mailings asking constituents how I should vote on certain bills. I really truly believe in representative democracy; it's really hard to be that representative and that's exactly the same thing I'm going to do if I'm re-elected."

Seeback points to his familiarity with the concerns of Dufferin-Caledon residents and his years of experience in Ottawa as another reason he is ready to continue to represent the people of the area.

"It's very important because it's a job that takes a lot of on-the-job learning," he said. "Once you know how to perform the job, you're able to perform the job much better, whether that's being able to get a minister to look into a certain matter, pressuring the government on certain things like rural internet or support for small businesses. I have the experience; I've been doing it now for a long time and have been quite effective at it."

Though this is her first time running in a federal election, Post has spent the last three years on the Orangeville Town Council and thinks her time in municipal government gives her a different way of looking at the needs for Dufferin-Caledon.

"Things have been really good," she said. "Running at a federal level is unique. This is my third campaign, but two of them were at a municipal level. At a federal level, it's interesting because partisan politics can be so polarizing for some people and that makes the conversations at the door a little more difficult. Within every 30 minutes I'm having a complete rollercoaster of emotions, but then I just go knock on another door and talk to someone who can tell me that CERB made the difference for them having a home or putting food on the table for their children, and I remember why I'm there. This whole campaign is not about me, it's not about Justin Trudeau, it's not about political parties, it's not about any of that. It's about our community and making sure that our community has what it needs to thrive and that every person in this community has what they need to thrive. Keeping having those conversations and continuing to talk to the community, I know I'm here for the right reasons and I know that I'm the right candidate for this job."

Post takes pride in the fact that she was born and raised in the Dufferin-Caledon community and shares the same point of view as the residents she hopes to represent in the House of Commons.

"Being in the municipal world has given me a very unique perspective on how this riding works, how the growth works, and how all

the different provincial and federal policies impact what happens in our community at a grassroots level," she said. "Beyond that, I was born in Orangeville, and this is my home and my community. I'm four or five generations deep here in this area; my dad and grandfather were from Caledon Village and integrated to Orangeville. This is my home and I've seen it go from farm fields everywhere to what it is today.

"I really want to be a part in making sure that next phase of growth happens because we're in a really integral part and pivotal point for Dufferin-Caledon as we look at the provincial growth. Caledon is forecasted to grow from 70,000 to almost 300,000, and that's crazy. I want to make sure that someone has their [finger] on the pulse and really understands what this community needs in all different sectors. We're such a unique riding from urban centres all the way to small hamlets right into rural farming country. Every person needs a voice in what's going to happen with our growth and having been from this area for so long gives me a unique community perspective on it."

In her first campaign, Le Forestier is embracing every second she can to get to know community members and hear their concerns.

"I'm loving this," she said. "I love meeting all the members of the community and it's been great. We have a huge riding so going to all the different communities has been great. We've been doing sign waves in the morning, and I think that's really being appreciated."

Le Forestier is focused on sharing with the community that there's a different option when they head to the polls, an option she says is prioritizing the impact the climate crisis will have on the Dufferin-Caledon community.

"It's about getting the word out that there's an alternative," she said. "It's about letting people know there's someone here that's been fighting for the climate emergency this entire pandemic while our concerns have not been reflected. I want to really bring those issues to the doorstep. I'm here to talk to people about it and hear where they're at as well. We've all been locked down for 18 months and it's really important to communicate with the public about what they're concerned about and what we're concerned about, as well as what the way forward should be. The focus of our campaign is that it's a better path, and that's what I'm offering. It's been really great to have conversations and talk to people about our path."