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Debate scheduled for local candidates in provincial election

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

With the provincial election less than one month away, the Dufferin Board of Trade recently announced it will be continuing its tradition of holding an Election Forum for the local riding.

The Dufferin?Caledon Provincial Election Forum will air live May 18 at 7 p.m. on Rogers TV and online.

The debate is anticipated to last two hours and is available to the public virtually instead of in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

?Our province, and indeed the world, has had challenges like nothing we've ever seen before over the past two years. As Dufferin-Caledon residents, it is critically important that we all take the time to learn about each of the candidates, and their parties, to ensure that we vote for the person whose values and views most closely mirror our own, and who we feel will best represent our riding,? noted Diana Morris, executive director of DBOT.

DBOT has invited all candidates currently declared as running in the local riding to participate in a televised/streamed debate, moderated by Doug Harkness, DBOT Board chair.

Questions can be submitted by the public through the DBOT's website in advance of the debate.

The organization's Election Forum Committee will sort through the questions and ensure as many topics as possible are covered during the debate.

DBOT stressed that the candidates will not be informed of any of the questions prior to the debate.

To submit questions and learn a little bit more about the upcoming Election Forum, visit: www.dufferinbot.ca/ProvincialElection2022

?In order to represent our riding, our candidates need to know the pressing issues in Dufferin-Caledon. If there is an issue that's important to you, please send in a question, so you can hear how each candidate responds to your concerns,? said Morris. ?We are accepting questions from the public until Friday, May 13.?

The Election Forum is being supported by the Dufferin Federation of Agriculture, the CFUW Headwaters, the Brampton Real Estate Board, and Rogers TV Orangeville.

DBOT held a virtual debate for the federal election last September, and Morris said it was a great success that her organization is hoping to build off of.

?Our goal with these debates is two-fold: first, we want to ensure local businesses voices are heard and their issues are a priority for the candidates; and secondly, we want to connect the community with those seeking their votes,? she explained.

?The online format does allow the greatest reach and the maximum efficiency for hosting debates. However, we know there is great value in a live, in-person election forum. Unfortunately, due to Covid, we weren't able to use the cafetorium at ODSS as in previous years, and we struggled to find another suitable local venue with the tight timelines required for this debate. In future years we do hope to bring back an in-person component of the election forums.?

A link to the May 18 debate will be posted online for residents of Dufferin?Caledon to watch after it airs.