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Dufferin?Caledon candidates share platform on economy

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With the federal election set for September 20, MP candidates in Dufferin-Caledon have been heading door to door in their campaigning effort in preparation.

The Citizen spoke with Dufferin-Caledon MP candidates Kyle Seeback (Conservative), Lisa Post (Liberal), and Jenni Le Forestier (Green) about their thoughts on how best Canada can go about ensuring economic recovery as it comes out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seeback highlighted three major pieces of the Conservative Party's economic recovery plan that he thinks will help businesses in Dufferin-Caledon get back on their feet.

?I think one of the big topics in this election is economic recovery and how do we get our businesses back to where they need to be, we've got a great plan on this,? he said. ?Part of it is a job surge that's going to allow 50 per cent of the salary of new hires for six months to be paid for by the government. That's going to encourage businesses to hire people, and, of course, we know getting people back to work is very important. We're also looking at what we call the ?main street business loan', that's going to be a loan of up to $25,000 with up to 25 per cent of it being forgivable for small or medium sized businesses because the CEBA loan of $60,000, a lot of businesses went through that very quickly, so we want to find ways for them to be able to stay in business.

?Finally, we're looking at what we call the rebuild ?main street tax credit,' which is a 25 per cent tax credit on amounts of up to $100,000 that Canadians invest in their small business. We know a lot of small business owners have been having to put money into their business, and this gives them a great tax incentive to do that to keep their businesses going. The most important thing for us is to figure out how we can get people back to work. We've got to use all the tools we have to get ourselves back to normal.?

Throughout the pandemic, the federal government has provided programs to help support small businesses and owners as they dealt with the fallout of the lockdown. Post says she thinks those programs are they key to getting businesses to bounce back and jumpstart the economic recovery process.

?There's a few things that go into economic recovery,? she said. ?I think what we learned through COVID ? that we maybe wouldn't have learned before ? is that when we invest in people, we're investing in the economy. We saw that really clearly through COVID-19 with the implementation of programs like CERB, making sure Canadians had money in their pockets to keep moving and the economy moving. We could have been in really dire straits with the way COVID hit us so rapidly; as a municipal town Councillor I got to see firsthand how impacted people were. I was getting phone calls all day long from people who really needed assistance?they needed to understand how to navigate the federal programs, understand what services we had locally while they dealt without jobs for probably the first time. With where we're at in the pandemic, I think we need to continue those programs and we need to continue to make sure everyone is okay.

?We need to get people back to work. We need to make sure we're investing in the economy and ensuring people are going back to work, and to do that we need to keep people safe. We've already seen our economy is starting to bounce back. The federal government has already extended some of those programs ? like the recovery hiring program, that will help employers by providing incentives that will offset the cost of hiring workers ? those are going right through until 2022. But it has to be a comprehensive policy, we need to see elements of helping Canada in economic recovery in every policy we put out in every sector of the economy?whether it's housing plans, environmental plans, they all need that piece in it.?

To help Canada in economic recovery, Le Forestier says she believes that starts with addressing issues that negatively impacted the

economy prior to the pandemic and have only been spotlighted throughout it.

?I think it's clear that we need a universal basic income; I think that's been demonstrated throughout this pandemic,? she said. ?I think it needs to happen and it's clear people need support. We need to address the housing crisis and bring the cost of homes [down] so that young people can afford to get into the housing market. You do that by changing the planning on what kind of housing gets built. We keep doing the same thing and expecting a different result with sprawling housing across prime farmland. That's not addressing the housing emergency and not helping the people who want a better future and have a living wage. These are things I'm very concerned about in terms of economic recovery in Dufferin-Caledon.?