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Local Liberal candidate hoping to represent region at Queen?s Park

Written By Constance Scrafield

Bob Gordanier, Liberal Candidate for Dufferin-Caledon in the June 7 provincial election, has opened a campaign office at 308 Broadway, Orangeville, in the strip plaza ?next to Broadway Fish and Chips.?

It is from this post that Mr. Gordanier, a long-time resident and farmer in the riding, will try to elect a Liberal for the first time since Mavis Wilson won it in 1987.

?There's a lot of people that could use some help,? he said, in a telephone conversation with the Citizen. ?The economics of the province are strong with the lowest unemployment rate of 5.5%. OHIP is helping children with the new free prescriptions now. There are 1.25 million children [being assisted] with three million prescriptions.?

Mr. Gordanier said that he is a beef producer just north of Orangeville. Not simply a farmer and family man, he asserts clearly that he has also been in the community of service as a fire fighter with the Brampton Fire Department for 32 years, as well as having worked for five years in police departments in nearby jurisdictions.

That and his terms as president of the Beef Farmers of Ontario, his involvement on an executive level with other aspects of the cattlemen's associations shows him to be well aware, as he presents himself, that he understands many aspects of this province's economic and political life.

?I like to say that my family ranges in age from four years to 93. And I am not the 93-year-old,? he added humorously. ?I think when you have a family in the area, you do know about child care and senior care.?

It was the evening of the first of the provincial leaders' debates to come on television. Of Kathleen Wynne, Mr. Gordanier commented, ?I know her well, professionally and personally. She's the most intelligent person I know. She has a vision that's not next week but for the long term.?

He went on to say, ?The issues that are out there ? one is helping the people of this province. Some people need to get the blinders off and care about the opportunities here in the province.

?For example, education for single mothers. Right now, that opportunity is available. Over 10,000 single mothers have gone back to school. They can get free tuition to go to university and college so that they can find decent jobs and live better while contributing back to the economy.?

Another educational push about which Mr Gordanier is enthusiastic is trade schools.

Said he, ?I know people that just started in trade school who are so optimistic about their futures. There's a real need for trades people in this province.?

Being a farmer, Mr. Gordanier is naturally very concerned that as premier Doug Ford would pave over large swaths of the Greenbelt.

In an open letter to Mr. Ford, which he has published on his website, Mr. Gordanier has stated that, as a farmer in this area for the last 38 years, he is proud that part of his farm is protected under the Greenbelt.

He notes that, ?Some of Ontario's most productive agricultural lands are found within the bounds of the Greenbelt ? right under the green fields you [Doug Ford] plan to pave over.?

The background, in brief, of this matter is that the Greenbelt was created by the Liberals, the Greenbelt Protection Act having become law in June 2004. Its purpose is to protect now some two million acres of farmland, forests and wetlands and is one of the largest greenbelts in the world.

Mr. Gordanier's letter goes on to point out that ?in 2014, David Crombie led a review of land use protection policies in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. While key recommendations were made to support economic sustainability in the area, there was resounding support to maintain strong land use protection policies.?

The letter further notes that large parts of this area are within the Greenbelt Protection Act and that Sylvia Jones, the Conservative candidate for Dufferin-Caledon, has always said she supports the Greenbelt.

?Now the head of the Ontario Progressive Conservatives is painting a very different picture for Ontario.?

While this is Mr. Gordanier's first foray into provincial politics, he appears to be confident of his life's work to give him the experience he needs to represent the riding of Dufferin-Caledon.