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Seventh candidate steps forward in Dufferin-Caledon for provincial vote

Written By MIKE PICKFORD

There will be an unprecedented seventh name added to the ballot when local voters turnout for next month's provincial election.

Stephen McKendrick will run in Dufferin-Caledon as a candidate for the Consensus Ontario party.

One of the founding members of the newly registered association, Mr. McKendrick is looking to take advantage of what he sees as a big opportunity to make waves in a riding he believes ?are undecided as to their best representative.?

It will be something of a homecoming for Mr. McKendrick, who lived in Albion Hills and Bolton as a child, attending Palgrave Elementary School. His family later moved to Prince Edward Island, where Mr. McKendrick lived for several years before eventually returning to Ontario.

?I fished commercially for eight years in PEI. I moved back to Ontario when the number of federal bureaucrats regulating 2,000 fishermen outnumbered us three to one. I knew then it was time to hang up my rubber boots,? Mr. McKendrick said. ?Since returning to Ontario, I have lived on a farm in East Garafraxa for the last 24 years.?

Professionally, Mr. McKendrick operated a general contracting business in Bolton for 27 years.

?For the majority of my life, I have lived in Dufferin-Caledon,? Mr. McKendrick said. ?I love it here but I see the same economic decline happening as I once did in PEI. This is not right. If a democratic society is hinged on governments, then those same governments need to be accountable and transparent with the people who elect them.?

The Consensus Ontario party was founded in 2016 as an association, previously operating as a public affairs think-tank prior to its registration as a provincial political party this month.

According to party spokesperson Brad Harness, early interest and membership in the party has been positive. The public, he says, are buying into the party's mantra to systematically revolutionize politics as we know it in Ontario, where elected officials act on an independent basis, with no party line to toe.

?Consensus Ontario is the party to end all parties, including itself, and replacing all of them with a system of consensus government focused around only independent MPPs,? Mr. Harness said. ?This is not a new system in Canada - our northern territories have operated on this party-less system for over 100 years.?

Mr. McKendrick will face stiff competition in the riding, with six other candidates confirmed. Incumbent Sylvia Jones will once again by running for the Progressive Conservatives, beef farmer Bob Gordanier will represent the Liberals and Bolton resident Andrea Mullarkey for the NDPs. Elsewhere, Orangeville business owner Laura Campbell is running for the Green Party, with Jeff Harris representing the Libertarian Party and Andrew Nowell the Trillium Party.

For more information on the Consensus Ontario party, visit consensusontario.ca.