

VIEW FROM QUEEN'S PARK: Remembrance Day, Metrolinx and Basic Income

By Chris Ballard, MPP
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Lest we forget?

Remembrance Day is approaching and with it the opportunity to pause and reflect about who we need to thank for this wonderful country and town we live in. I hope you have the opportunity to attend a Remembrance Day Ceremony at our local cenotaph. I had the honour of recently attending the opening of the Interactive Trench, curated by the Newmarket Historical Society and the First World War Centennial Committee. The display is located in the town's newly-opened Old Town Hall, 460 Botsford St. It is an amazing experience. We know World War I was a major event in our history, with 630,000 Canadian serving and more than 60,000 losing their lives.

Small towns like Aurora and Newmarket stepped up for king and country, and the loss was significant. The Interactive Trench Exhibit will give you a glimpse, albeit highly sanitized, of the conditions soldiers lived and fought in at the front. More than 470 Newmarket residents enlisted during the war and about 85 were killed in action.

With a small population of only a few thousand people, almost every Newmarket family had a participant ? and thus a direct link ? to the horrors of the war. The exhibit runs Monday-Saturday, 12 noon to 8 p.m. It's open to the public until November 19.

In Aurora, the Historical Society has curated another moving show focused on WWI and its impact on our community. Called ?World War One: For King and County,? and open to November 11, it is the first of three exhibitions by the Society to mark the centenary of what was supposed to be ?The War to End All Wars.? The first, a self-guided exhibition at the Hillary House National Historic Site, tells the story of Major Wilfred Ferrier Petermann, who served in a variety of regiments before being killed at the Battle of Somme in 1916, and the Lloyd family, who saw three of their four sons off to the war ? two came home.

Dr Robert Michael Hillary and his son Stewart Hillary both fought in this war. Stuart Hillary died, at age 20, of wounds sustained at the Battle of Vimy Ridge. More on that story in the second curated installment commemorating the centenary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, planned for April.

Both exhibits drive home the impact WWI had on our town. It is about real people who called our community home, who walked our streets, attended our churches and schools, played sports on our fields, and had plans to grow old right here.

Want to thank a soldier? Go to a Remembrance Day service; teach your children; visit your local cenotaph; take the time to remember. Lest We Forget.

Metrolinx

I'm pleased to announce Metrolinx will soon be holding Community Open Houses in both Aurora and Newmarket. The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is home to almost seven million people ? and that number is growing fast. It's estimated by 2041 it will be closer to 10 million.

Transportation is now more critical than ever. Metrolinx is looking for feedback from the communities it serves. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about key transit projects that are relevant to our community and be able to provide feedback and to meet with staff. This is a great opportunity for all residents to have their say.

Sessions begin at 6:30 p.m. Newmarket will host its open house on November 22 at Sacred Heart Catholic School and Aurora will host its open house on November 23 at Cardinal Carter Catholic High School.

Aurora GO customers will also be happy to hear that GO Transit recently added 12 new car pool spaces, for a total of 30 car pool spaces.

Basic income

Last week in a joint announcement with Minister Jaczek, I announced that our Government is seeking input from the public on the Basic Income pilot project. Basic income is an innovative new approach to providing income security, and various styles are being tested by governments around the world.

The pilot seeks to determine whether or not it will be an effective way of helping people out of poverty and improving health, housing and employment outcomes. While basic income seems straightforward, it is very complex to implement properly. These public consultations will focus on important questions such as: what model, who is eligible, where the pilot should take place, what the basic income level should be and how best to evaluate it.

The consultations run from November to January 2017. You can find more information on the Basic Income Pilot at ontario.ca/basicincome, or contact my constituency office for information.

Raise the roof

Finally, the Aurora Legion is selling lawn signs "I Will Remember," to raise funds for repairs to its roof. You can buy yours for \$20 at the Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North.

As always, I invite you to contact me on any issue. Please call my community office at 905-750-0019, or visit my website at www.ChrisBallardMPP.ca. My email is: cballard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org. I look forward to hearing from you.