
Fw: Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus June 2025 Newsletter

From: Western Ontario Wardens Caucus <info@wowc.ca>

Sent: June 25, 2025 2:42 PM

To: Katherine Thompson <kthompson@elgin.ca>

Subject: Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus June 2025 Newsletter

June 2025



**Monthly
Update**

Your monthly news & updates

**Powering Ontario's Economic Engine:
WOWC Launches 2025-27 Strategic Priorities at Queen's Park**



The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) brought regional leadership to Queen's Park on Monday, June 2, for a series of strategic meetings with Ontario Cabinet Ministers, culminating in an evening reception attended by Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), staff, and key partners.

The Caucus officially launched its 2025–2027 Strategic Priorities: Powering Ontario's Economic Engine, a forward-looking roadmap to support the long-term prosperity, connectivity, and resilience of Western Ontario. Representing 15 upper and single-tier municipalities and 1.6 million residents, the WOWC is a strong voice for rural and mid-sized communities across the region, which collectively drive more than \$226 billion in exports through more than 250,000 businesses.

"This week marks a pivotal moment for our region," said Amy Martin, Chair of the WOWC and Mayor of Norfolk County, during remarks at the reception. "We are proud to launch our new Strategic Plan at Queen's Park, in partnership with the Provincial government, to help advance solutions for the people and businesses powering Ontario's economy."

As part of the day's advocacy, WOWC held targeted meetings with key Provincial Ministers to discuss the Strategic Priorities and identify opportunities for collaboration across multiple sectors, and hosted an evening reception.

The WOWC's 2025–2027 Strategic Priorities focus on four key areas critical to the long-term health and prosperity of Western Ontario:

1. Infrastructure Development and Funding
2. Housing Affordability and Availability
3. Workforce Development and Preservation
4. Mental Health Services and Support

View the [full press release](#)

Rural Ontario Development Program Launched

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus is pleased to see the Ontario government launch the \$20 million Rural Ontario Development program. This initiative will help our rural communities grow stronger and more resilient by supporting workers, creating opportunities, and improving infrastructure.

We were proud to be a part of yesterday's announcement, represented by Huron County Warden Jamie Heffer and past Chair Jim Ginn.



Quick Facts

[Applications for the first intake of the Rural Ontario Development program are now open](#) and will close on September 24, 2025 at 5 p.m.

In January 2025, the government [announced an increase of \\$20 million over two years](#) for the Rural Ontario Development program, previously known as the Rural Economic Development program.

Since 2019, the government has invested \$27.5 million towards supporting 473 projects through the Rural Economic Development Program.

Ontario Releases Energy Plan



Ontario has released its first-ever integrated energy plan, [Energy for Generations](#), a bold step to meet rising energy demand with affordable, secure, and reliable power.

As one of the fastest growing regions in the province, Western Ontario is home to Canada's first EV battery plants and a hub of industrial and population growth. To sustain this momentum, we need a modern energy system that meets both today's needs and tomorrow's opportunities.

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus was pleased to attend the announcement and applauds the province's commitment. This direction supports the infrastructure and investment needed to drive continued growth and economic opportunity in both our rural and small urban communities.

Read the [full press release](#).

Western Ontario Municipal Conference 2025 Keynote Speaker: Steve Paikin

WESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

October 17, 2025 | London, ON

Powering Ontario's Economic Engine



The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus is pleased to welcome Steve Paikin, host of TVO's The Agenda as our Keynote Speaker.

For more than 40 years, Steve Paikin has been a trusted voice for Canadians seeking perspective and intelligent analysis of current events. He is an award-winning journalist, author, and documentary producer, best known as the anchor of TVO's former flagship current affairs program, The Agenda with Steve Paikin. In his signature straight-forward and humorous way, Paikin's illuminating keynotes prepare organizations for what's next. He translates politicians' words into simple facts and how this may affect business day-to-day.

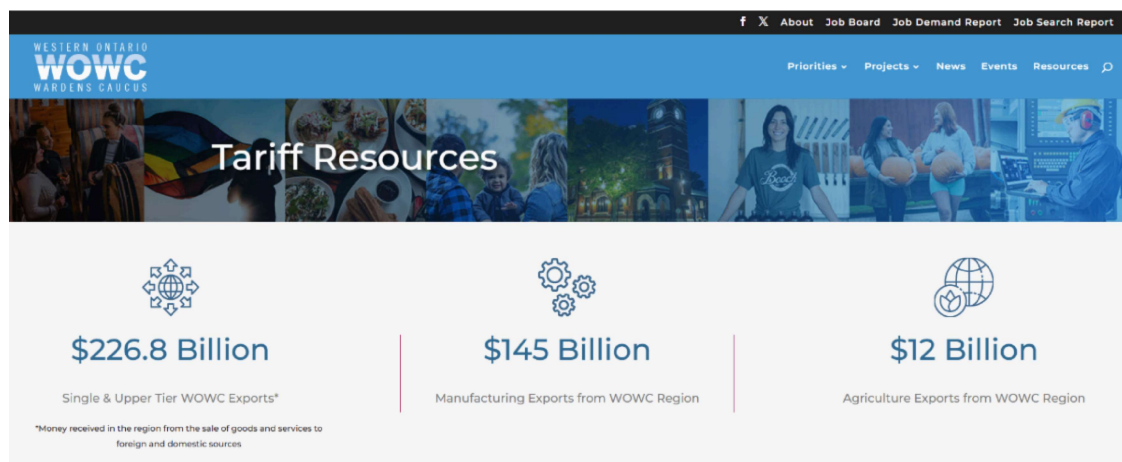
Friday, October 17th, 2025
8:30 am - 4:00 pm
Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre, London, ON

Early bird pricing available until August 31, 2025.

Are you interested in sponsoring the WOMC or participating as an exhibitor? Please see the [2025 Sponsorship Package](#) for more information or contact: info@wowc.ca

[Register Here](#)

Western Ontario: Tariff Impact Survey Results Now Available



Between February 1 and April 30, 2025, the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) conducted a Tariff Impact Survey to better understand how U.S. tariffs are affecting local businesses.

A total of 226 businesses from a range of sectors—including agriculture, manufacturing, and retail—responded to the survey.

Key findings from the survey include:

- The majority of respondents (154) were small businesses with fewer than 10 employees.
- Approximately 40% of respondents reported that over 25% of their revenue is dependent on U.S. trade.
- The most common impacts from tariffs were increased input costs and reduced export demand. Businesses are responding by seeking alternative markets, adjusting prices, and requesting government support.
- Supply chain disruptions are expected to grow, with 118 businesses anticipating future challenges.
- Businesses indicated a strong preference for tax relief and direct financial assistance as key forms of government support.
- Counties can assist by offering grants, marketing support, and enhanced communication of available resources.

The insights gathered in this survey will inform WOWC's ongoing policy advocacy and regional economic development initiatives

[Learn more](#)

Community Futures - Helping Businesses Grow



Discover how Community Futures can supercharge your business goals! Our team of experts is eager to tailor support and resources to match your unique aspirations.

Let's sit down together, explore possibilities, and create a roadmap to success!

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