

City of Toronto notifies Union of Potential Competitive bid Process for Garbage Collection

The City of Toronto provided notice today to the Toronto Civic Employees' Union (TCEU), Local 416, of its intention to recommend a competitive bid process for three areas of work currently carried out by TCEU members. The services under consideration are provided by the Solid Waste Management Services Division and include all daytime, residential curb-side collection west of Yonge Street to the Etobicoke border, an increase in privatized City-wide litter vacuum operations, and parks litter/recycling collection within City parks throughout the city. In addition, the City notified the TCEU of its intention to

issue a Request for Quotations (RFQ) for contingency collection services to be provided anywhere across the city, as required.

The written notice delivered to the union meets the City's obligation under the collective agreement to provide three months' notice of its intention to put the recommendation before Council for its consideration. In the three service areas, it is anticipated that approximately 300 positions would be affected.

The area of residential curb-side collection that would be tendered out for competitive bids is bounded by Yonge Street to the east, the Humber River to the west,

Steeles Avenue to the north and Lake Ontario to the south. There are approximately 165,000 homes in the area.

This recommendation is subject to City Council's approval. The Division will prepare a detailed report on the potential contracting out of these service operations that will go to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee meeting of April 26, 2011. It is expected that the report would go to Council on May 17-18. Should Council decide to initiate a competitive bid process, there would be no change of service provider for the solid waste operations until mid-2012. ■

Sundays have changed: TD Canada Trust Announces over 180 Branches in Ontario now open on Sundays

Toronto. Responding to its customers' evolving needs, TD Canada Trust is changing the landscape of retail banking by opening 183 of its branches across Ontario on Sundays, starting February 13, 2011. Sunday banking is the latest initiative in the bank's long history of being at the forefront of customer service, with the first full-service ATM, Saturday banking and now Sunday banking.

"We're proud to be the only bank in Canada open on Sunday in hundreds of locations. It's important to us to offer the most convenience and the best service to customers,"

said Kerry Peacock, Executive Vice President, Branch Banking, TD Canada Trust. "For years we've been open 50% longer than our competitors. It's been great for our customers, who love the option of banking when it's convenient for them, which is why we're moving to Sunday hours as well. Being open Sundays is about working around people's lives."

TD Canada Trust research shows that 66% of Ontarians find it hard to get errands done Monday to Friday. Four-in-ten (44%) run errands on weekends, so providing banking services to customers when

it suits them is essential. Additionally, 45% of Ontarians say they are busier than they were five years ago; 26% are juggling more work and 37% are juggling more family responsibilities.

The top five banking-related activities that Ontarians would prefer to do in a branch instead of online or by phone are:

1. Signing a mortgage.
2. Getting financial advice.
3. Setting up a loan.
4. Buying investment products.
5. Renewing a mortgage.

All these services will be available to TD Canada Trust customers on Sundays. ■

New report a wake-up for Canada's Agri-Food Sector

OTTAWA, Canada is not realizing the full potential of a major strategic asset - the country's agri-food sector. The consequences of falling profitability, lost opportunity and declining relevance are impairing Canada's ability to capitalize on the tremendous opportunities that lie ahead. That's the main message in a new report from the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI), Canada's Agri-Food Destination released Monday.

Canada's agri-food industry is the country's largest employer and a major exporter. Yet chronic unprofitability, rising food imports and the risk of being surpassed by other exporting nations flag serious underlying deficiencies in the system. Add to this a dramatic rise in diet-related diseases and obesity, environmental threats, falling

research and development investments and the persistent call for a modern regulatory process. The status quo is unacceptable. Canada's agri-food industry has the natural and human resources to do much better - yet Canada risks sleeping right through its greatest potential.

CAPI is hoping to wake the country up by sparking discussions designed to pioneer a new agri-food plan. Industry and government need to embrace new approaches, including transforming the traditional value chain mindset, adopting a new innovation model and reforming government support programs. The plan also advances ideas for healthier food choices, environmental sustainability and regulatory change.

Achieving our potential requires that Canada must have the most successful good food systems on the

planet. The agri-food industry, its suppliers, researchers, adjacent sectors and governments need to work in closely integrated food systems to achieve this "destination" in order to reach the following targets - which are catalysts for change - by 2025:

The ideas for this report were developed since late 2009 with the establishment of three Leadership Panels (on food and wellness connection, sustainability and viability) to explore key agri-food issues and propose solutions. Participants represented the breadth of the agri-food sector, including primary agriculture, processors, agri-food businesses and organizations, input providers and retail, and from health and environment organizations and research institutes, academia, and federal and provincial governments. ■

Know your Employment Rights and Responsibilities Helping Newcomers Understand Ontario's Employment Law

Ontario is providing more resources - including a multilingual toll-free number - to send a critical message to employees and employers: Know your employment rights and responsibilities.

Ontario's workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, as many employees and employers speak non-official languages at work. Nearly 315,000 workers in Ontario used a language other than English and French on the job in 2006, according to Statistics Canada.

On January 17, 2011, Ontario expanded its Employment Standards Information Centre (1-800-531-5551) to provide service in 23 languages, from Arabic to Vietnamese. The call centre allows

Ontarians to ask experienced staff about employment standards, filing a claim and where to find more information.

The ministry has reached out to employers and workers by creating posters in 23 languages and placed information in more than 50 ethnic news publications in Ontario. These materials help all Ontarians to understand their employment rights and responsibilities, directing them to the ministry's multilingual resource portal at ontario.ca/employmentrights. The portal provides information in 23 languages on such issues as employment rights, filing a claim and how employees are protected.

The ministry has also produced

two videos on complying with the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and how to file a claim. Both videos are available in multiple languages on the ministry website and on YouTube.

The new resources continue the ministry's efforts to modernize Ontario's employment standards, including improvements that lead to faster resolution of claims that were implemented on January 19, 2011. The modernization efforts also include new online, interactive tools for employers and workers to calculate entitlement and obligations. The ministry is also eliminating the backlog of employment standards claims to ensure a faster response to all current and future claims. ■



Prime Minister Stephen Harper meets with Barack Obama, President of the United States, in the Oval Office last week.

(Photo by Jason Ransom).

Parliament to hold hearings on cuts to stop new Canadians' Success

OTTAWA - The House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration has decided to hold urgent hearings this week on the government's cynical \$53 million in cuts to essential services that help hard-working new Canadians become self-supporting.

"The people that are being hurt by this decision are people who want to work hard and build a better life for their families," said Liberal Immigration Critic Justin Trudeau. "It is appalling that the Conservatives would throw away the tools that help so many new Canadians prosper."

Rising in the House of Commons during Question Period, Liberal Multiculturalism Critic Rob Oliphant noted that, while immigration levels remain high,

overall settlement funding is being drastically cut.

"This is not a re-allocation - it is an abdication of the Minister's responsibility to give every new Canadian a fair chance to contribute to Canada and its economy," Mr. Oliphant said.

The hearings will take place on Thursday February 10th after Tuesday's hearing. Some 100,000 Ontario residents alone stand to lose language training, job search and family counselling services by March 31st unless the decision is reversed. Agencies with 25-year track records of success are being forced to close and others have been cut by 25% to 50%. Interested members of the public are encouraged to make submissions to the Clerk of the committee. ■

Conservatives Make Significant Cuts to Programs in Peel Region

OTTAWA - Liberal Members of Parliament and candidates gathered to draw attention to the impacts of the Harper Government's cuts to local settlement services. In December, the Harper Government cut \$53 million dollars from programs that offer support and integration services for new Canadians.

Funding for settlement services are provided through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, these services offer new Canadians information about how to access essential services and adjust to life in Canada.

"Conservative cuts to services for new Canadians to become self-reliant are an attack on Canada's future labour force that will support our economy for many years to come," said Liberal MP Gurbax Malhi. "Therefore, Fair Start - Let New Canadians Succeed is a nec-

essary campaign to secure Canada's future and help immigrants to integrate."

"The decision by the Government to cut funding for essential services for newcomers will hurt many families in my riding of Brampton Springdale," said Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla. "The Conservative Government should support new Canadians instead of cutting funding and services and leaving people out in the cold."

"These mean spirited cuts reveal much about Mr. Harper's values especially when he is choosing to give \$6 billion in tax cuts to large profitable corporations," said Liberal candidate Omar Alghabra. "These settlement organizations provide essential services to facilitate successful economic and social integration of new Canadians" ■

