

Highway 427 extension plan being reviewed

February 7th, 2010 [::Focus](#)

The northern extension of Hwy 427 is one step closer to completion. The Ministry of Transportation has recently submitted the Environmental Assessment Report (EA Report) for the 427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment Study to the Ministry of the Environment for formal review. The EA Report identifies the study's preferred alternative and documents the study process, findings and consultation completed. The preferred alternative includes the 6.6 km extension of Highway 427 north from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive, as well as property ... [Read More >](#)

Latest developments on the Detroit River International Crossing

February 7th, 2010 [::Focus](#)

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Transport Canada have issued a request for proposals from firms with experience in infrastructure projects related to the new international border crossing between Detroit and Windsor. MDOT and Transport Canada recently released a Request for Proposal of Interest (RFPI) to individual firms or teams with experience in developing and/or financing large transportation infrastructure projects either in North America or internationally, and that are interested in the development of the Detroit River International Crossing project under ... [Read More >](#)

What's new on Ventures

February 7th, 2010 [::Spotlight International](#)

Hong Kong and China are working together for dual development and cooperation to provide more coordinated financial services between Hong Kong and Shanghai. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) acknowledges Hong Kong as a long standing international financial center but also, as quoted in the Ventures post, as experienced in facilitating financial institutions in Mainland China to become more international. Shanghai brings to this relationship its ability to mobilize capital as well as talent. More information can be found on the ... [Read More >](#)

Ontario first to launch web-based investment attraction database

February 7th, 2010 [::Focus](#)

Ontario is now the first province in Canada to implement a state-of-the-art geographic information system (GIS) tool for the purposes of investment attraction. SelectOntario is a flexible and dynamic online search tool that showcases investment properties, infrastructure and location advantages and workforce skills for site selectors to help make investment decision-making faster and easier. Using a Geographic Information System (GIS), the online site has data for over 500 Ontario communities on its database and provides information on items including: available commercial real estate region-specific ... [Read More >](#)

Government strikes panel to review workplace safety

February 7th, 2010 **::Focus**

Changes to Ontario's Workplace Safety System could lead to more regulations for business following a review currently being conducted by the Ontario government. The Ontario government recently appointed an Expert Panel that will review and make recommendations on ways to strengthen Ontario's Workplace Safety System. The Expert Panel is to report back to the Minister of Labour with its recommendations Fall 2010. The Panel will begin its review by researching workplace safety practices in national and international jurisdictions. They will also review a range of issues ... [Read More >](#)

New Ontario air quality control standards take effect

February 7th, 2010 **::Focus**

Ontario has introduced new air quality standards that effect a wide range of industries. As of February 1, industrial facilities are mandated to meet stronger standards for 33 contaminants. Industries in the pulp and paper, petroleum and chemical industries are among the sectors covered by the new regulation. Ontario currently has air standards for 124 substances and guidelines for over 200 contaminants. In addition, proposed standards for eight additional substances are currently undergoing consultation and will be announced later this year by the ... [Read More >](#)

New toll-free Business Information Line

February 7th, 2010 **::Focus**

Businesses may find it easier to get information and facts on business issues through a government-sponsored toll-free Business Information Line. The new toll-free line is 1-888-745-8888, or TTY 1-800-268-7095. Business can access information on several topics, such as: financing options starting or growing a business regulations taxes permits and licenses managing employees importing and exporting requirements, etc. This new toll-free telephone service is part of an ongoing partnership between Industry Canada and ServiceOntario to provide integrated services to businesses, through the Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre, and other services. For further information ... [Read More >](#)

Details on Restricted Input Tax Credits for Large Business Now Available

February 3rd, 2010 **::Focus**

The Ontario government will harmonized the provincial sales tax with the federal goods and services tax (GST) on July 1st, 2010. As a result, Ontario businesses will receive input tax credits (ITCs) of 13 per cent of the new harmonized sales tax (HST), rather than just 5 per cent under the current GST system. In short, business will essentially be able to claim all 13% of their sales taxes back. However, not all businesses in Ontario will benefit immediately from the ... [Read More >](#)

Invoicing Rules for HST the same as existing GST

February 3rd, 2010 :: [Legislative Impact](#)

As part of the comprehensive tax reforms underway in Ontario, the provincial sales tax is being harmonized with the federal goods and services tax (GST), which means businesses need to be aware of how the transition to this new "Harmonized Sales Tax" will affect them. Although businesses will benefit from harmonization, most businesses will have to adjust their practices before and after the sales tax changes take effect on July 1, 2010. Such steps include updated customer invoices to reflect the ... [Read More >](#)

Employment Insurance Special Benefits Extended to Self-Employed

February 3rd, 2010 :: [Focus](#)

Under the recently passed federal Fairness for the Self-Employed Act, Employment Insurance (EI) special benefits have been extended to the self employed on a voluntary basis. These special benefits include maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits. Self-employed individuals who choose to take advantage of these special EI benefits are required to opt into the program at least one year in advance prior to claiming benefits, and will be responsible for making premium payments for the tax year in which they ... [Read More >](#)

Prebudget Submission: Economic Renewal through a Competitive Business Climate and Affordable Government

February 2nd, 2010 :: [Competitive Tax & Regulatory Regime](#), [Featured](#), [Focus](#), [Ontario's Annual Budget](#)

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) presented its 2010 pre-budget submission to the provincial Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance on Feb 2. This year, the OCC recommends that the Ontario Government renew the economy and its fiscal position through a more competitive business climate and an efficient, affordable government. A competitive business climate starts by staying the course with regards to planned tax cuts for businesses and households, which were announced in last year's provincial budget. These tax cuts, ... [Read More >](#)

Federal money helps companies expand to developing countries

January 25th, 2010 :: [Spotlight International](#)

Companies seeking to develop or expand trade and investment in developing countries can now turn to a \$20 million program for support. Just launched, the Canadian International Development Agency's Industrial Cooperation (CIDA-INC) program will provide funding to: Assess investment opportunities, Demonstrate and adapt technologies, Undertake activities targeted to enhance the economic, environmental and social benefits a project; and Support the increased sustainability of a project. This CIDA-INC pledges that applicants will be notified regarding project approval within 40 business-days from a submission of a completed ... [Read More >](#)

Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway update

January 25th, 2010 ::[Featured](#), [Legislative Impact](#)

The OCC continues to advocate on behalf of business so that the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway will keep Ontario and the country competitive, as a leader in investment and international trade. The OCC is pleased to learn that the Ontario, Quebec and Canadian Governments will soon be outlining their vision and major directions for their Continental Gateway initiative, as well as some immediate actions. The OCC has learned that the strategy will represent a concrete commitment to co-ordinated long term actions by the ... [Read More >](#)

Employers now required to develop workplace violence and harrassment policies

December 15th, 2009 ::[Legislative Impact](#)

Employers with more than five employees will soon be required to prepare workplace violence and harassment policies. Bill 168, which amends Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act in respect to workplace violence and harassment, received third and final reading in the Ontario legislature on December 9. This legislation will require all employers with more than five employees to develop: Violence and harassment policies and programs Employee reporting procedure (incidents, threats and complaints) Incident investigation procedure Emergency response procedure (violence only) Process to deal with complaints, incidents and ... [Read More >](#)

Helping Ontario business attract top talent

December 15th, 2009 ::[Legislative Impact](#)

Ontario businesses now have the opportunity to choose from a larger pool of qualified candidates when hiring skilled professionals and trades people. Workers who are certified in any Canadian province or territory can now be employed in Ontario without completing any additional training, experience, examinations or assessments. There are only a few exceptions in place to protect the public by allowing Ontario regulators to set standards in certain occupations. In January 2009, all Canadian premiers supported the amendments to the Agreement on ... [Read More >](#)

Transitioning to the New Economy: A Broader Perspective by the OCC

December 10th, 2009 ::[Chamber Influence](#)

For years, policy makers and economic pundits have spoken about an unavoidable transition towards the "new economy". Much research exists with regards to what the future holds. Public policy makers have long created programs to support so-called "industries of the future" as well as the respective skills and talent needed for such industries to thrive in Ontario. Despite these great, forward thinking advances, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce believes that much can be learned from the experience of businesses today. Specifically, ... [Read More >](#)