

From farmers to health care, candidates comment on issues

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She sees Tory's recent promise to fund all faith-based schools in the province as taking \$500 million from public and Roman Catholic schools and constituting an all-out attack on the present school system.

"This makes this campaign about nothing less than saving public education," she said. "But I still have my eye on the issues of transportation, the environment, health care and education. But effective representation is my goal."

Looking forward to the whirlwind of the upcoming weeks is NDP candidate Lynda McDougall. But she'll be leading the campaign trail in a different format.

As vice-president of the

Upper Grand Elementary Teachers' Federation she says she respects her elected position, which keeps her quite busy, and unable to find much time to be knocking on residents' doors. Until the end of August she was also on the provincial teachers' executive, another elected position.

As an elected representative of the federation, she doesn't think people would like her to just sort of do her job, which makes being a candidate slightly more difficult than working in a normal paid career.

Even her mother has criticized her on getting her name out more, which she would love to do but just doesn't have the time at the moment. However, she has been staying current on local

issues through the media as to what residents are saying is important to them.

An interesting point, she noted, is that residents want to come and talk to her and have her listen to their concerns as opposed to her talking at them. This is how residents personally let her know what is important to them in this riding.

As a teacher she cares about the schools in the riding and wants to ensure they feel they are being served. At the same time she understands what it means to be a citizen of Dufferin-Caledon.

McDougall read that the average income of area farmers is \$15,000 and with a change in the riding boundaries, the ratio of farmland to urban land has shifted with the elimination of parts of

Wellington and Grey counties. She sees this as making it more difficult for farmers to be heard from.

As far as health care goes, she would like to ensure everyone has access to high quality health care and to have waiting room times reduced.

Every dollar that goes towards public health care instead of private is in the best interest of working families, she says.

To ensure he has a strong presence during this campaign, Green Party candidate Rob Strang has organized a riding campaign team that is larger than ever. His main focus during the campaign will be on local development and accountability.

Development issues in

the area are the reason he entered the political arena years ago, both as a former Orangeville councillor and a candidate in the last federal election.

He says that after serving on council for three years he realized municipal governments can only make the best of a bad situation and to have a positive impact he needed to be at the provincial level. He says provincial planning legislations favours the developers as opposed to the quality of life of citizens.

As a candidate in any election from municipal to federal, he hasn't accepted campaign donations from businesses so he can be accountable. He says candidates become far too heavily influenced by campaign donations and forget who

they were elected to represent; the citizens.

By eliminating the allowance of campaign donations from businesses, he says candidates would have to run on their merit and policies.

"We could make government work better for the whole province by taking a stand of this issue," he said, as it would cut the ties between politicians and corporations.

The other big issues that are a concern for him include preventable healthcare, developing clean energy and sustainability in general.

To afford high quality health care he says the focus needs to be shifted to preventive health care.

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