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- Santa Claus Parade in November started 1932
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Georgetown Lions Club
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Meeting address:

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FROM THE BOARDROOM

Peter Sproule

Chair, Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors



After a cold and snowy winter, spring has finally arrived! That said, the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce and our members have been anything but dormant. From advocating for businesses with the Ontario Ministry of Finance and the Town of Halton Hills to hosting our recent She Means Business event and the inaugural She Leads Award Ceremony, we've been busy creating opportunities to connect and strengthen our community.

One of the Chamber's most important – and often overlooked – roles is advocacy. By representing the business community with all levels of government, we help ensure local voices are heard. When elected officials engage with business leaders, it benefits everyone. More local jobs mean less time commuting and more time with family and friends. Thriving businesses sponsor community programs and support local

initiatives. Open dialogue with political leaders helps improve service delivery for residents and customers alike.

This past November, we were grateful to partner with the Town of Halton Hills to host a Budget Town Hall, giving businesses an opportunity to discuss the Town's priorities for the coming year. Then in January, our CEO, Melanie Frazer, represented the Chamber during the

Your Community

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From everyday health needs to life's critical moments, our physicians, staff, and volunteers are committed to providing exceptional care — close to home.

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Ontario Ministry of Finance's pre-budget consultations – an important chance to share the concerns and perspectives of our members during an uncertain time for Canadian businesses. These relationships take time but strengthen our advocacy as we're grateful that our CEO was invited to attend the budget reading to represent the Halton Hills Chamber in the Ontario Legislature – a testament to our Chamber team's work and our provincial partners' interest in the community.



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Thank you to everyone who attended our sold-out She Means Business event and the inaugural She Leads Award presentation. Halton Hills is home to an incredible community of women business leaders, and their achievements continue to inspire. The spirit of collaboration and support on display that morning makes it clear their impact will only continue to grow.

As spring arrives, I'm always grateful for the chance to step away from the office and get outside in the garden. My wife aptly jokes that my habit of binge-buying plants only becomes a problem if I don't get them in the ground. In that spirit, I encourage you to visit one of our local nurseries and speak with their knowledgeable staff – they can help you create your own garden oasis. You can also check our online Member Directory for local businesses, from nurseries to lawn care providers, to help get your yard ready for summer.

Peter Sproule ♦



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FROM THE CEO'S DESK

Melanie Frazer

Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce President and CEO



Spring in Halton Hills brings a welcome shift. Patios begin to fill, gardens come back to life, and there is a renewed energy across our main streets and neighbourhoods. It's a season that naturally encourages us to get out, reconnect, and support the businesses that make our community feel like home.

This time of year, many of our members are helping residents celebrate life's moments in meaningful ways. From landscaping projects and outdoor upgrades, to thoughtful gifts for weddings, showers, and special occasions, to fresh looks for homes and outdoor spaces, there is no shortage of ways to shop close to home while supporting local entrepreneurs. These businesses bring care and creativity to what they do, and they help shape the character of our community.

At the same time, there's another side of local business that often happens quietly but has a lasting impact. Many of our businesses are

behind the scenes supporting minor sports teams, school initiatives, and community programs. Their sponsorships, donations, and volunteer efforts help create opportunities for young people and families across Halton Hills. It's a reminder that when you support a local business, you are also supporting the broader community they give back to every day.

We also continue to celebrate the people and businesses making a difference here at home. Last November, we recognized the best in business at our Annual Business Excellence Awards. I encourage you to take a moment to learn more about this year's recipients featured in this issue. In March, we were proud to present our inaugural She Leads Award to Margaret Wallis-Duffy, recognizing her leadership and impact in our community. These moments matter, and they would not be possible without the support of our generous network of sponsors.

Your Chamber continues to play an active role in advocating for our business community. Over the past several months, we've had the opportunity to meet with provincial ministers, our MPP and MPs, as well as local Council and the Mayor. These conversations are focused on ensuring that the needs and realities of our business community are understood and reflected in decision-making. We are consistently looking for ways to make it easier to do business here, whether that relates to policy, infrastructure, or access to resources.

As we move through the spring season, I encourage you to continue choosing local wherever you can. Every purchase, every referral, and every introduction helps strengthen our local economy and supports the people who invest so much into this community.

Thank you for being part of it.

Melanie Frazer ♦

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FROM THE HONOURABLE *Michael Chong*

Member of Parliament for Wellington-Halton Hills North



Earlier this year, Prime Minister Carney outlined his foreign policy during his speech at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos.

Mr. Carney emphasized the end of the rules-based international order and how Canada planned to adapt. He called for middle powers to work together to counter the rise of hard power to build a more cooperative and resilient world. He also talked about the gap between rhetoric and reality.

My colleagues and I agree there has been too much rhetoric and not enough action for too many years. It's time to close the gap between rhetoric and reality – by cutting waste, unleashing Canadian energy, securing our borders, restoring

law and order, rewarding work, and rebuilding our military.

Canada cannot control what the Trump Administration does, but we can control what we do. Simply put, we must focus on what we can control to become sovereign, secure, and self-reliant.

We have proposed an all-party working group of parliamentarians to help secure the best possible outcome for Canada in the coming Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review. All Canadians share the same interest in ensuring a successful result for negotiations and, by working collaboratively, Parliament can present a united front in getting the best deal for our country.

CUSMA has protected many sectors of the Canadian economy from

tariffs that President Trump has introduced. The industries affected have been hit hard. That's why it's important that we get the best deal possible for Canadians.

Canada will be strongest in negotiations when it removes its own internal barriers to growth and production. We need to secure affordable energy projects that will boost the Canadian dollar and purchasing power.

As a member of His Majesty's Loyal Official Opposition, my responsibility is to support the government when it advances good ideas in the interest of Canadians, and to oppose it when legislation would hurt families, take away jobs, or worsen affordability. The Official Opposition has a constitutional duty to hold the Liberal government accountable, and that means sometimes opposing government legislation.

That requires continuing to propose ideas to improve legislation, so it serves our community better, while holding the government accountable when it falls short.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. ♦



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FROM

Kristina Tesser Derksen

Member of Parliament for
Milton East-Halton Hills South



Over the past few months, my work has been focused on issues that matter deeply to residents across Halton Hills. We need to keep our community safe and support good jobs here at home.

One of the key pieces of legislation currently being advanced in Parliament focuses on strengthening bail and sentencing measures (Bill C-14), particularly in cases involving serious and repeat offences. I regularly hear from residents who want to feel confident that our justice system is both fair and effective. These reforms are part of an ongoing effort to ensure

public safety remains a top priority, while also supporting victims and holding offenders accountable.

At the same time, we are seeing important investments toward strengthening Canada's defence capabilities – investments that also bring real economic benefits to communities across Ontario. Recently, our government announced a major procurement contract with Colt Canada in Kitchener to modernize equipment for the Canadian Armed Forces. This project will ensure that our service members have the tools they require to perform their jobs safely and effectively, while also supporting Canadian

manufacturing, innovation, and supply chains.

What makes this particularly important for communities like ours is the broader economic impact. With a strong emphasis on Canadian content and domestic suppliers, these investments create opportunities for businesses across the region, including those here in Halton Hills. From advanced manufacturing to engineering and logistics, there are real opportunities for local companies to be part of Canada's growing defence and innovation ecosystem.

These efforts reflect a broader focus on building a strong, resilient economy while ensuring the safety and security of Canadians. Whether it is through improving our justice system or supporting industries that create good, well-paying jobs, the goal is to deliver practical outcomes that make a difference in the daily lives of Canadians.

I always appreciate hearing from residents about the issues that matter most to them, and I look forward to continuing to work on initiatives that support our community. You can always contact me and my team at (416) 341-4812 or kristina.tesserderksen@parl.gc.ca. ♦

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FRASER'S

FROM *Joseph Racinsky*

Member of Provincial Parliament for Wellington–Halton Hills



This is a year of challenges like any other, but also a year of opportunity. As we continue to tackle the effects of an unstable administration south of the border, we need to look at what we can do as a community and what we can control.

From historic investments in infrastructure and energy, to strengthening our supply chains, 2026 offers a historic opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient, and self-reliant Ontario. Back in November, I had the privilege of hosting Premier Ford in Georgetown, where we toured a few of our incredible food processing companies. Premier Ford was able to see firsthand how Halton Hills is a leader in the food processing sector with companies like Saputo, Terra Cotta Cookies, and Freshouse Foods to name a few.

On November 22nd, the day before weekend GO train service started in Halton Hills, I was able to host Minister of Transportation Prabmeet Sarkaria at the Georgetown GO station to discuss how important increased GO service is to commuters here in Halton Hills. I will continue to advocate for more frequent service along the Kitchener Line as this is critical to our community's continued growth.

Another important step was the announcement that our government

would fund an additional 123 acute care beds in Halton Healthcare utilizing existing space at the Milton and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospitals. This was Halton Healthcare's top priority, and it allows us to focus on moving the Georgetown Hospital project forward.

Our government has been busy passing over 18 critical pieces of legislation focused on protecting Ontario. One that's currently being debated in the legislature is Bill 75, Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. I have heard loud and clear from residents in Halton Hills that they want government to hold the small number of people committing repeat and sometimes violent crimes to

account. To help ensure that we have space in our correctional facilities the Provincial government will be completing over 600 new prison spaces this year across Ontario including in Milton.

This past year, I've been able to see the strength and resiliency of our community firsthand. I know that we will continue to come together and accomplish big things. It is the honour of my life to represent you in the Ontario Legislature, and I will continue to speak out on the issues that matter to you and ensure that the needs of our community are communicated effectively to the Ontario Government. Please do not hesitate to reach out; I would love to hear from you. ♦

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FROM THE MAYOR *Ann Lawlor*

Mayor of Halton Hills



Even though my day job is local government, my roots in business (and a bit of entrepreneurship) go back a long way. I've seen up close the dedication it takes to run a small business and keep it growing. My parents owned a jewelry store on the main street of Lindsay, and the whole family pitched in.

Later on, I earned my income managing a non-profit social service agency, then did freelance consulting, and finally worked as an account executive in our family

marketing and communications firm in Georgetown. Because of that mix of experiences, I understand a lot of what our local business owners deal with day to day – and it's a big reason I'm genuinely excited about Town of Halton Hills programs that help them succeed.

Early in this term of council, we created a strategic plan – and one of our key priorities is supporting a Thriving Economy. To help make that real, we set a few clear objectives:

- Move employment lands forward faster in Acton, Georgetown, and the Premier Gateway (Steeles and the 401 area). You can already see the Steeles area changing – new buildings are going up and “for lease” signs are out. Major projects like Conestoga Cold Storage are up and running, and Futura Drive in Acton is being occupied.
- Attract and keep businesses that fit our community's priorities – through our business concierge program, support for international investment attraction, ongoing

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- Support redevelopment and growth in our commercial areas, including a project I'm proud to champion: revitalizing Guelph Street in Georgetown. (A vision is taking shape – you'll see new trees planted, and we're also considering investment incentives.) Support for the Acton and Georgetown BIAs continues. And the Toronto Premium Outlets model remains strong, with an expansion being reviewed.
- Help keep agriculture strong by supporting farm and agri-business viability. This term, an Agricultural Round Table was introduced – an advisory network of local farmers and agri-business owners. Council approved a new staff position (in our latest budget) focused on agriculture expertise.
- Keep residential intensification moving forward through development of the Vision Georgetown lands and within the existing urban boundaries of Georgetown and Acton. So far, projects like McGibbon in downtown Georgetown and the condos on Mill Street are occupied or making strides to completion.

Since this council was elected in 2022, I'm proud of the business-focused goals we've set – and even more proud of the progress we're making.

One other big responsibility that council included in the strategic plan is Infrastructure and Asset Management. Put simply: it's the "bones" of our community.

We're focused to:

- Build and maintain resilient

infrastructure so we maintain our assets and facilities in good repair.

- Keep improving road safety across the community.
- Protect, maintain, and renew green infrastructure.

Your property tax dollars help fund this work – improving safety, mobility, and the basic services

businesses, residents, and institutions rely on daily.

At the end of the day, when local businesses do well, the whole community benefits. Council supports Halton Hills as a great place to start, grow, and invest in a business – and we'll keep working to build the kind of environment where businesses can truly thrive. ♦

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Business After Hours

Connect with fellow members, explore local businesses, and strengthen relationships that grow your network and community. Bring your Business Cards!

Good Morning, Halton Hills

Educational seminars held every other month, designed to support small and mid-sized businesses with practical insights, relevant topics, and opportunities to connect with peers and local experts.

Signature Annual Events

She Means Business

Recognizing the women driving innovation and leadership and celebrating their impact across our business community.

New this year: the She Leads Leadership Award, honouring a woman who demonstrates exceptional leadership, inspires others, and is making a meaningful difference through her work and community involvement.

Chamber Classic Golf Tournament

Network on the green in a fun and engaging way to connect. So many great prizes!

Business Excellence Awards

Celebrating the best of local business with our Business Excellence Awards.

Mayor's Lunch & State of the Town Address

Annual event with town leaders discussing key initiatives.

Power Hour Series

Throughout the year, we host "Power Hour" events that include town halls, local leadership panels, and expert discussions. These sessions are designed to engage community members and business owners with local issues and leaders. Join us to discuss, learn, and influence the future of Halton Hills.

Local Business Expo

Two to three times per year, the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce hosts a Local Business Showcase. This expo provides our members with an opportunity to display their services and products to the community and fellow businesses. ♦



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02

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03

Employee Benefits

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04

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CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE
HALTON HILLS

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Celebrating Local Excellence

Congratulations to the 2025 Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award Winners!

Last November, the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce proudly celebrated the achievements of local businesses and community leaders at the 2025 Business Excellence Awards. Held at Albatross Restaurant, the evening brought together the Halton Hills business community to recognize those making a meaningful impact through leadership, service, and innovation.

The evening highlighted the strong sense of pride, dedication, and forward thinking that continues to shape our local business community.

We are pleased to announce this year's award winners:

Business of the Year (10+ Employees)
Bennett Village

Business of the Year (1-9 Employees)
Bedal Accounting Professional Corp.

Association of the Year (Not-for-Profit)
The Ironwood Project

Community Excellence: Business
Mountainview Residence

Emerging Business of the Year
Foliage

Innovation in Business
Staying Alive Fitness

Employee of the Year
**Jacob Sherman,
Brooks Heating and Air**

Mayor's Rising Star Award
Mik Vukusnik

Hometown Hero Award
Doug Penrice

Please join us in congratulating this year's award recipients and celebrating the people and businesses who make Halton Hills a place we are proud to call home.



Business of the Year: 10+ Employees
Bennett Village

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
Atura Power

Business of the Year: 1-9 Employees
Bedal Accounting Professional Corp

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
Halton

Association of the Year: Not-for-Profit
The Ironwood Project

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
CN

Community Excellence: Business
Mountainview Residence

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
COGECO

Emerging Business of the Year
Foliage

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
bdc

Innovation in Business
Staying Alive Fitness

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
Staying Alive Fitness

Employee of the Year
Jacob Sherman
Brooks Heating & Air

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
Doane Grant Thornton

Mayor's Rising Star
Mik Vuksinic
Andrews Farm Market and Winery

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
INVEST

Hometown Hero
Doug Penrice

Business Excellence Awards
Celebrating Local Business

Presented By:
Doane Grant Thornton



*Celebrating
Local
Excellence*



Smart tax strategies to keep on your radar



By Nick Sawrantschuk, Doane Grant Thornton

Tax planning should be a year-round priority – an ongoing way to protect your wealth and your family’s future. For business owners, it’s especially important and can impact your business’s long-term health and sustainability. Some areas to keep top of mind include keeping your will and estate plan up to date, designing a thoughtful succession plan, and managing capital gains and losses. As these strategies can be complex, an experienced advisor can help you navigate important considerations.

Have you reviewed your will and estate plan?

Revisiting your plan often can help preserve wealth for your family, successors, or any philanthropic goals you may have. Your will and estate plan should be continuously evolving, as it has significant tax consequences, especially for business owners. During your review, it’s important to also consider family dynamics, the impact on business (if you have one), and the tax implications.

Are you thinking about retirement?

Succession planning for your business and family is often overlooked. Whether your transition is years away or just around the corner, building a strategic tax plan now gives you more options and helps ensure your wishes are followed.

Tax considerations to consider for your succession plan, include:

- Intergenerational business transfers: If you plan to sell your business to a family member, these rules may provide a tax benefit and support business continuity across generations. These rules allow the transfer of certain shares to certain family members to be treated as if the transfer were to a third-party (i.e., as a capital gain instead of a tax dividend).
- Employee ownership trusts: If you plan to make employees owners of your business, this type of trust could offer certain tax benefits. A sale to an EOT before the 2027 tax year could result in a tax exemption on up to \$10 million of capital gains realized, under certain conditions.

Are you actively managing your gains and losses?

If you hold a mix of investments, such as real estate and business assets, be sure to review your capital gains and losses throughout the year. This could allow you to act when markets move, not simply at year-end, helping to minimize your tax burden and optimize long-term returns.

Tailored tax solutions

These strategies are some of the foundational elements of smart tax planning. By staying proactive, business owners can protect their wealth, prepare for the unexpected, and ensure their company’s legacy remains strong. ♦



Managing menopause

By Dr. Alicia Motuz, Elevated Health and Wellness

Did you know perimenopause can last up to 15 years – and menopause symptoms can continue for up to 10 years before things truly stabilize? That’s right! It could be 25 years of your life.

And yet, most doctors receive very little training in this area – often just a few hours in medical school, with slightly more if they specialize in OB/GYN. That’s why it’s so important to find someone who has pursued additional training and is genuinely passionate about helping you through this transition.

Here’s a general breakdown of what this transition can look like:

Very Early Perimenopause – One of the first signs is simply not feeling like yourself. Something feels “off,” even if you can’t quite explain it. You may notice changes in how you handle stress, shifts in sleep, or increased anxiety. When you bring this up to your doctor, you might be offered an SSRI or SNRI.

Early Perimenopause – Periods may become heavier, and your cycle may shorten (for example, from 28 days to 21–25, or even shorter). Insomnia can worsen, patience wears thin, and insulin resistance may begin – sometimes leading to weight gain. Brain fog and itchy skin can also show up.

Late Perimenopause – You may start skipping cycles. Hot flashes and night sweats can disrupt your sleep. Other symptoms may include joint pain, vaginal dryness, low libido (which can start earlier), headaches, and ongoing insomnia.

Early Menopause – This stage often feels very similar to late perimenopause. Unfortunately, the first year we don’t know we are in early menopause until 12 months after your last period. This will likely be the peak of symptoms.

Late Menopause – Symptoms typically begin to ease and become more manageable.

Post-Menopause – Hormones have stabilized, and the intense fluctuations are behind you. Your body finds a new balance – and you finally feel like yourself again. Life is good.

The good news? It doesn’t have to be this hard. At every stage, there are treatment options – from hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and medications to herbs, vitamins, and other supportive approaches.

You are not alone. Find a healthcare practitioner who can help you manage as life is meant to be enjoyed! ♦



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Getting your home ready for the spring real estate market



By Ray Chesher, Broker of Record/Owner, Your Home Today Realty Inc.

Spring is a time when the market heats up, and with more inventory to choose from, buyers start paying closer attention to the details that make a home feel “move-in ready.” If you’re preparing to sell, the goal isn’t to over-invest, it’s to invest the right way.

Start with first impressions. Curb appeal still does a lot of heavy lifting in making your property look the part. Fresh mulch, trimmed hedges, a clean walkway and a new front door colour can dramatically change how buyers feel before they even step inside. The work doesn’t always have to be expensive, but it should be intentional.

Inside the home, paint is your best upgrade. Neutral, light tones make spaces feel bigger, brighter and they help buyers picture themselves living there. Bold or dated colours tend to distract more than impress.

Kitchens and bathrooms matter – but that doesn’t mean full renovations. Focus on some cosmetic updates: new

hardware, modern light fixtures, and updated faucets will freshen up the look and feel. Also, don’t forget to clean! Deep clean grout lines, kitchen cabinets, and baseboards. These small changes will make the home look modern, and cleanliness will signal that the home has been cared for.

Another often overlooked investment is lighting. Swap outdated fixtures, increase wattage where needed, and open up curtains. A bright home feels more inviting and photographs significantly better online, which is where most buyers will begin their search.

Finally, decluttering and staging are non-negotiable. You’re not just selling a property; you’re selling a lifestyle. Clean, open spaces help buyers emotionally connect, and that’s what drives stronger offers.

At HeyRay, we know what Spring buyers are out there looking for and we’re grateful for all of our clients who trust us year after year to help them navigate these important decisions! ♦

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Grown with the community: Three Halton Hills farms where people come first

By Lyndon McLean



In Halton Hills, farming has always been about more than crops. It's about families working together, neighbours supporting neighbours, and places where memories are made year after year.

Three farms tell a story of resilience, tradition, and a sense

of responsibility to the people who walk through their gates. Allison's Farm Market, Andrews Farm Market and Winery, and Wheelbarrow Orchards may differ in size and focus, but they share a common purpose: serving their community in ways that go far beyond the field.

Allison's Farm Market: Six generations of connection

For Allison's Farm Market, community is not a buzzword – it's what the business was built on. Family run it and to this day the farm's roots stretch back six generations of farming in Ontario.



The market itself began in 1975, when Christine's grandparents, Bill and Isla Allison, opened a modest mini market on their farm on 8th Line in Georgetown.

From the beginning, their mission was to bring people fresh, local food. Sweet corn in the summer and pick your own pumpkins in the fall quickly became cornerstones of the business. Christine's father Bob carried that legacy forward, earning a reputation across Halton Hills for his home grown sweet corn while expanding the market to include seasonal produce and preserves sourced from fellow local farmers.

As the business evolved, so did the family's role. Christine and her sister Katelyn eventually took over running the retail market, allowing Bob to focus on farming. In 2024, the family relocated to 15 Side Road, placing their operation firmly within Georgetown's Greenbelt – a move that was both challenging and deeply supported by the community.

"Our community is at the heart of our business," Christine says. That support was especially evident during difficult moments: droughts, the COVID 19 pandemic, and the transition to a new location. But customers stayed loyal, valuing the importance of supporting small, local businesses.

Today, Allison's Farm Market is truly multi generational. Bob still grows his famous sweet corn and pumpkins. Christine grows sunflowers. Bob's son in law Jesse grows beans and garlic. Even Bob's young grandson Curtis is learning the ropes growing blackberries.

The people they serve are often as connected to the farm as the family itself. Many customers are



now second generation shoppers who grew up eating Allison's sweet corn. Children who once visited the pumpkin patch now bring their own families. Former employees who had their first job on the farm are seeing their children work there today. For Allison's, farming isn't just about feeding a town – it's about growing alongside it.

Andrews Farm Market and Winery: A place for shared traditions

When Bert and Lauraine Andrews established Andrews Scenic Acres in 1980, they imagined a farm that would welcome families, celebrate healthy food, and create lasting memories. More than 45 years later, that vision continues to shape

everything Andrews Farm Market and Winery does.

Nestled along the Niagara Escarpment, Andrews has grown into a destination that balances agriculture, recreation, and community gathering. The farm has expanded over the years to include a winery, playground, farm animal area, and a “proud to be local” farm store. It remains deeply rooted in its agricultural purpose, offering pick your own fruits and flowers such as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, pumpkins, squash, asparagus, rhubarb, sunflowers, dahlias, and corn.

Now entering its 46th season in 2026, Andrews remains open to the public from spring through the end of October, with occasional seasonal events outside that window. For many families – especially before the rapid growth of nearby Milton – Andrews was a staple. Seasonal visits to pick strawberries or flowers became traditions passed down year after year.

Community support has made that longevity possible, and the farm returns that support, regularly donating produce to organizations like Second Harvest, supplying strawberries to the Milton Strawberry Fair, and providing pumpkins to the Optimist Club and local schools. They also offer subsidized admissions when possible and maintain strong relationships with local tourism groups.

Education and accessibility are equally important. School tours and field trips introduce children to

farming firsthand, while new rental spaces allow community groups, birthday parties, corporate teams, and dance groups to use the farm as a shared outdoor space. Every visit, whether quiet or celebratory, helps keep greenspace and agriculture alive in Halton.

Wheelbarrow Orchards: Feeding communities near and far

For Brad, Heather, Pete and Dan Fraser, community service takes many forms – and often happens behind the scenes. Their operation includes three interconnected businesses: Wheelbarrow Orchards, Harvest Goodies, and Fraser’s Beverage Company.

The Frasers purchased their apple orchard in 2005, opening as Wheelbarrow Orchards. What began with 200 trees has grown into a 2,500 tree orchard offering 11 apple varieties, a pumpkin patch, walking trails, and a peaceful, family friendly experience.

In 2007, they launched Harvest Goodies, transforming an old apple storage building into a production kitchen. What started as a way to support their own market grew into a wholesale operation now supplying over 100 independent and on farm retailers across Southern Ontario. Their products include jams, chutneys, sauces, dressings, relishes, fruit butters, and more – all made with locally grown ingredients and shared far beyond Halton Hills.

Their son Pete added another layer in 2016 with Fraser’s Beverage Company, producing Fraser’s Hard Cider, followed by Spark, a line of sparkling fruit water is



now distributed through Harvest Goodies’ network.

Despite their reach, community remains central. The Frasers donate generously to silent auctions, raffles, and local charities. They support Christmas meal programs, host annual field days for individuals with mobility challenges, participate in events like the Terry Fox Run, Tour the Hills, and Hike for Hospice, and even prepare meals for local seniors’ gatherings – simply because they can.

As Heather puts it, “If it’s good for the community, we try to help.”

More than farms

These farms demonstrate that agriculture in Halton Hills is not just about what is grown, but who is served. Through food, employment, education, generosity, and shared tradition, Allison’s Farm Market, Andrews Farm Market and Winery, and Wheelbarrow Orchards continue to nourish their community – one season, one family, and one relationship at a time. ♦



A big part of the community: Celebrating Hometown Hero Doug Penrice

By Lyndon McLean

If you ask Doug Penrice, this year's Hometown Hero, how he ended up spending half a century shaping the business and community life of Georgetown, he'll probably shrug and say something modest like, "Well, I just got involved." But the truth is far bigger than that. His story is one of commitment, quiet leadership, and a willingness to roll up his sleeves whenever the town needed him. It's the kind of lifelong service that happens when someone really cares about the place they call home.

Doug's journey began in the family manufacturing business, where he first learned what it meant to be part of the local economy. His father was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and believed strongly that business owners had a responsibility to support and strengthen their community. That belief rubbed off on Doug, and by the time he officially joined the business in

1972, he was already being nudged toward volunteering.

"My dad encouraged me to get involved," he recalls. "He felt it was important for business people to help promote business."

In 1975, Doug joined the Chamber – and walked into what he describes as "an old boys' club." Back then, the Chamber was traditional, slow-moving, and not especially connected to the younger business community. But he and a group of like-minded newcomers saw potential. They believed the Chamber could be more proactive, more engaged, and more reflective of the town's changing landscape. So they did something about it.

By 1976, Doug was a director, and by 1978 he'd moved up to vice president. And in 1980, at just 29, he became the youngest Chamber president in its history. His



term marked a shift: younger voices were stepping in, women were joining the board for the first time, and the Chamber was beginning to modernize. One of the initiatives he helped launch was the Chamber’s first Business of the Year Award – the seed that eventually grew into the multi-category awards program we know today, including the Hometown Hero Award itself.

But Doug’s leadership didn’t stop there. In 1987, after selling his business and working out of town for a period, he returned to Georgetown to become the Chamber’s first full-time general manager. Until then, the role had been part-time and low-profile, but he helped transform it into a professional operation with an office, staff, and programs that could sustain the organization financially.

“It was exciting,” he says. “We had to come up with new ideas to make the Chamber self-sufficient.” He stayed

in that role until 1992, leaving behind a stronger, more visible organization.

His career path after that reads like a tour through every corner of the local economy: real estate agent, new-home sales, customer service manager for a builder, and eventually Economic Development Officer for the Town of Halton Hills. That final role felt like a perfect fit.

“A colleague told me this was the job I was built for,” he says. It brought together everything he’d learned – business, development, planning, real estate – and allowed him to help shape major projects that continue to influence the town today.

But if his professional life was full, his volunteer life was overflowing.

He joined the Jaycees as a young man, gaining early experience in leadership and community service. When he aged out, he moved on to the Georgetown Lions Club in 1992 and never left. Over the years, he’s been involved in nearly every Lions project imaginable, from fundraising to community events to long-running traditions like the Georgetown Citizen of the Year program, which he has personally shepherded for more than two decades. “If you do something half-decent, you have the job for life,” he says.

Doug’s service extends far beyond the Lions. He’s been deeply involved with St. George’s Church for the past 15 to 20 years, applying his business and building-maintenance experience to help manage





the aging facility. He was a founding board member of the United Way of Halton Hills, and he has supported the Candlelight Tribute, a Dutch-Canadian tradition honouring veterans, for many years. Along the way, he has coached minor hockey, baseball, and basketball – because community, to him, has always included the next generation.

His contributions have not gone unnoticed. Over the years, he has received numerous Lions Club honours, the Canada 125 Medal, and others. Still, he insists he never volunteered for recognition. “You don’t do it to get a pat on the back,” he says. “But it sure is nice when you do.”

That’s why the moment he learned he’d been nominated for the Hometown Hero Award was so meaningful. Chamber President Melanie Frazer had asked him to help with another nomination, and after he spent a few hours on the process, she said, “Oh, by the way, you’ve been nominated too.” Later, she told him he’d been selected. “I was really gratified,” he says. “Just to be nominated was an honour.”

At the awards banquet, surrounded by colleagues, friends, and people he’d worked with on countless projects, he felt the full weight of the moment. The Hometown Hero Award was the final presentation of the night – a fitting tribute to someone whose fingerprints are on so many parts of Georgetown’s story.

Doug Penrice has lived in Georgetown all his life and has served in more ways than most people can count. And he has done it all with humility, humour, and a genuine love for his community.

He’s indeed a hometown hero. ♦



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Member Moments





DG Greenhouses has a passion for plants

By Lyndon McLean



DG Greenhouses has been a familiar landmark in Georgetown since 1962, when the DiGirolamo family left the city behind and took a chance on what owner Nick DiGirolamo describes as “the worst farm in the area.” More than 60 years later, it’s the only one of those

original farms still standing – and thriving.

It all began as a vegetable operation, with the family working 300 acres across owned and rented land. As the market shifted, small independent stores disappeared, and new regulations made large-scale vegetable farming

harder for small operations to sustain.

“The market dried up, and it would have cost a fortune to keep up with the regulations,” Nick says. “So we leaned into the greenhouses. That’s where we could really make a living.”

By 1981, the family had opened their garden centre, and it quickly became the heart of the business. Today, DG Greenhouses grows and sells a wide variety of plants and herbs on-site at 8890 8th Line in Georgetown: upwards of 50 kinds of herbs, another 40 to 50 perennials, a huge range of vegetable plants, annual flowers, and a selection of baskets.

The retail season peaks in May, June, and July, with another busy stretch in September and October. Beyond the greenhouses, the farm still produces fall vegetables and maintains 500 apple trees for pick-your-own. Customers can head into the fields for pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, peppers, rapini, broccoli, and more.

“If we don’t grow it, we don’t sell it,” Nick says. “You pick it, you wash it, you take it home. We’ll do a bit of pre-picked, but not much. People like the experience.”

DG Greenhouses runs on the strength of a loyal, long-term team. Nine seasonal workers from Mexico and Trinidad return each year – some for decades. “One fellow

DG Greenhouses runs on the strength of a loyal, long-term team. Nine seasonal workers from Mexico and Trinidad return each year – some for decades.

was with us 26 years,” Nick says. “When he passed away, his daughter came up to take his place.” The business also employs several local seniors for light seasonal work and a group of university students each summer. Finding local labour for the farm side is tough, Nick admits, because the work is seasonal and the pay can’t compete with year-round jobs.

Despite the challenges, Nick’s passion for the work hasn’t faded.

“I grew up with this, and I love the work. Growing plants is fantastic,” he says. “It’s the business side – the red tape, the regulations – that’s hard. We built this place ourselves, and to retrofit everything to meet new rules would be costly. But we make a living, and we support three families now. My son works with us too.”

As spring approaches, the team is busy seeding, planting, and taking cuttings, waiting for the weather to settle so they can open more greenhouses without battling the cost of heating oil. “Some days it’s cold, some days it’s hot – typical,” Nick laughs. “But we love what we do. We’re proud of it. And we’re still here.” ♦



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Georgetown Lions Club celebrates its 95th anniversary



It was a cold night that 6th of February 1931, when 20 new Lions met at their inaugural meeting at the Georgetown Inn with their sponsors from the Downtown Toronto Lions Club. Special guest and presiding was Lion Joe Sheedy, commissioner of Lions Club International. The officers selected that night were Honorary President J.B. McKenzie, President W.V. Grant, 1st Vice President A.H. Feller, 2nd Vice President J.D. Kelly, and Secretary-Treasurer G.W. McLintock.

Right from the start, the Georgetown Lions helped the community in so many ways. The club has set a high standard of service and commitment to the community. It should be remembered that the 1930s was a turbulent time – the world was gripped in a depression, yet the club started projects to raise funds for community services and infrastructure.

In 1932, the club organized and financed the first Santa Claus Parade and have not missed a year since. Held in November, the parade delights 10,000 spectators, featuring 1,000 people in the parade and 70 highly decorated floats. The nighttime parade dazzles with the floats all lit up to celebrate Santa's arrival.

The club has staged dances, draws,

dinners, an annual rodeo, and horse races, with all the proceeds going back into Georgetown. In 1955, the club fully financed the first outdoor pool at the cost of \$55,000 – over \$600,000 in today's currency. In addition, in 1974, the club rebuilt the change rooms and entrance at no cost to the municipality or the residents.

The Lions have been avid supporters of the Georgetown Hospital, even raising funds years before the construction started in the late 1950s. Each year, the club hosts a golf tournament with proceeds going to this worthy cause. The Lions have been named a Friend of the Hospital with total donations approaching \$500,000 since 1960.

The Lions realize how important volunteers are to the well-being of the town, and each year since 1973 have awarded the Citizen of the Year to a worthy individual, couple, or organization. This year's winner is Nicola Gauntley.

Lions are visible and involved in all type of projects and events – Walk for Guide Dogs, Classics Against Cancer, Canada Day in Glen Williams, Mother's Day Brunch, Food4Kids, Light up the Hills, Breakfast with Santa, and Random Acts of Kindness, to name some of the exciting things that we do.

The Lions are always looking for

others to share our goals, and we are fully inclusive. If you operate a business and want to help or sponsor an event, please reach out.

The Lions have a proud history in Georgetown, and like our motto says, "We Serve"

About the Georgetown Lions Club

The Georgetown Lions Club is part of Lions International the largest service club organization in the world with over 1.4 million members in over 200 countries. The Georgetown Lions was chartered in 1931 and over the last 95 years has provided support to the community of Georgetown. Through our support of Lions International programs, it has touched the lives of people around the globe.

The Georgetown Lions organize a number of signature events in the community, including the Annual Citizen of the Year, the Head for the Hills Beverage Festival, and the Santa Claus Parade. The Lions meet the first and third Tuesday of each month at the Mold Masters Sportsplex, and guests are always welcome.

For more information, contact Doug Penrice at 905-873-8469 or doug1951.p@gmail.com.

"We Serve" ♦

How Georgetown has always shown up for its hospital



For 65 years, Georgetown Hospital has been there for this community. The emergency department alone sees 32,000 patients a year. Neighbours, parents, and children from Halton Hills and well beyond walk through those doors when they need care close to home. And for 65 years, this community has shown up in return.

That relationship is what makes Georgetown Hospital run.

Behind every patient interaction, there's a care team working quickly and carefully to assess, monitor, and respond. One of the most essential tools supporting that work is patient monitoring technology, which tracks heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen levels, and breathing in real time. These devices allow clinical staff to oversee multiple patients at once and detect subtle changes before they become critical. The earlier a care team can intervene, the better the outcome tends to be.

At Georgetown Hospital, many of the current patient monitors have reached the end of their lifespan. That is why Georgetown Hospital Foundation has launched a spring appeal to fund 15 new patient monitors. This technology will support care across multiple departments and help clinical teams deliver the standard of care this community counts on.

Georgetown is a community hospital in the truest sense: its equipment is not funded by the government. It's funded by the people who live and work here. The mammogram machine now serving patients at Georgetown Hospital is the result of a generous community deciding that women in Halton Hills deserved access to life-saving screening, close to home. The patient monitors we need now are the next chapter of that same story.

Every gift to this appeal goes directly toward that goal. But if you are looking for a way to make your support go further, becoming a monthly donor is one of the most powerful options available. Monthly giving creates a steady, reliable funding base that allows the Foundation to plan ahead, invest in the right equipment at the right time, and respond to the hospital's needs without waiting for a single annual campaign to carry all the weight. It's the kind of support that compounds, year over year, department by department.

As the community it serves continues to grow, so does the demand for care at Georgetown Hospital. The support of donors like you is what helps ensure the hospital can continue delivering the care this community depends on.

To support the spring appeal or become a monthly donor, visit www.georgetownhospitalfoundation.ca. ♦



Community Living North Halton: Supporting people in the community

Community Living North Halton (CLNH) provides services and programs for people with developmental disabilities, helping them live, learn, work, and participate in the community. The organization offers a range of programs designed to meet individual needs and promote independence. These include recreational and leisure support, community accommodation (MCCSS), supported independent living (MCCSS and FFS), supported

employment and volunteer opportunities (MCCSS & FFS), Children & Family Services (CFS), adult day programs (MCCSS & FFS), transition planning from high school to age 21 (FFS), and respite support.

CLNH is supported by a dedicated team of staff who provide guidance and assistance across all programs. Their focus is on practical support, skill development, and helping individuals achieve personal goals.



Across all programs, CLNH emphasizes clear processes, structured supports, and accessible services to help individuals and families meet their goals.

A key part of CLNH's community engagement is The Lunchbox Café, a social enterprise that provides work experience and training for individuals interested in employment in hospitality. The café offers quality food and beverages while providing a supportive environment for participants to gain practical skills and work experience. Visitors consistently note the welcoming atmosphere and professionalism of both staff and participants.

In addition to core programs, CLNH has developed specialized support for individuals on the autism spectrum. Friday Night Hangout offers autistic youth a structured social environment to connect with peers. Caregiver Drop-In Nights provide family members and caregivers with an opportunity to access resources, ask questions, and share experiences in a supportive setting.

Across all programs, CLNH emphasizes clear processes, structured supports, and accessible services to help individuals and families meet their goals. The organization works closely with community partners and funding sources such as MCCSS (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services) and FFS (fee-for-service) to deliver flexible services that meet the needs of each participant.

Through its programs and services, CLNH supports individuals to participate in daily life, pursue employment and volunteering, develop skills, and engage with the broader community. The combination of structured services, practical support, and dedicated staff enables people and families across North Halton to access the resources they need efficiently and effectively. ♦



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Inside Milton's award-winning intermodal project

TRACCS recognizes CN's Milton Logistics Hub with a 2025 Environmental Excellence Award



When the CN Milton Logistics Hub project team accepted the 2025 Environmental Excellence Award at the Transit Rail Association for Canadian Contractors, Maintainers, Operators and Standards (TRACCS) Rail Achievements Awards, it was a rare moment when the behind-the-scenes environmental work became the main story.

"This award reflects what we've been working toward at the Milton Logistics Hub," says Ricky Chiu, Manager Environmental Impact for the project. "A science-based approach that protects the environment and supports efficient goods movement, with monitoring and engagement built in from the start."

What is the Milton Logistics Hub

The Milton Logistics Hub is a new intermodal facility being developed by CN in a provincially designated employment zone in Milton. It's designed to transfer containers between trucks and trains so more freight can move by rail for long distances, with trucks handling local deliveries. CN expects the facility to be operational by 2027. The project underwent one of the most comprehensive environmental assessments for a rail infrastructure project in Canada, resulting in 325 legally binding federal conditions that apply through construction and operations.

Darren Reynolds, Project Director for the Milton Logistics Hub, says the award reflects decisions made early and carried through the project.

"We knew the environment had to be a major part of the project from day one," Reynolds says. "It had to be embedded in how we planned, how we built, and how we will operate."

A national award that came down to the details

TRACCS is a national industry association that brings together contractors, maintainers, operators, and standards leaders in the transit and rail space. Its Rail Achievements Awards recognize projects that show leadership and innovation in areas like safety, performance and sustainability. Environmental Excellence, Chiu says, is about proving that environmental protection can be planned, built, measured and adaptively managed over time.

That is where the Milton Logistics Hub stood out.

First, the project leaned hard on modelling before construction began. Advanced tools were used to simulate air quality, noise, and hydrology so the team could anticipate impacts and adjust the design early. That work informed practical mitigation built into the



footprint, including vegetated berms, buffers, and floodplain enhancements to reduce noise and community impacts and improve flood control along Tremaine Road.

“Modelling helped us make better decisions earlier,” Reynolds says. “It supported the placement of features that reduce impacts while still supporting an efficient operation.”

Second, the project’s biodiversity work was designed to be specific and visible. Extensive field studies identified sensitive wetlands, woodlands and habitat, including species at risk. Programs include monitoring and protocols for species such as monarch butterflies

and snapping turtles.

Monarch larvae found on milkweed patches planted in 2023 in the Indian Creek enhancement area.

Third, the project put in place a long-term monitoring system designed to ensure environmental commitments are met. CN developed an Environmental Protection Plan tailored to construction and established 14 individualized follow-up programs that track potential changes to air quality, noise, light, surface and groundwater, fish habitat, wetlands, migratory bird habitat, monarch, snakes, turtles, Western Chorus Frogs, progressive reclamation, and country foods. These programs

verify the predictions made during the environmental assessment, measure mitigation performance and apply adaptive management if unforeseen impacts occur.

“Monitoring isn’t just about verifying performance,” Chiu says. “It’s also how we stay accountable – detect, respond, and adaptively manage when needed.”

Nature-based solutions were incorporated into channel realignment and habitat restoration designs to accommodate the terminal footprint, while enhancing natural flow patterns and floodplain control, protecting wildlife corridor function and improving terrestrial and aquatic habitat. Culverts were designed to accommodate flooding events, some serving as eco-passages to maintain connectivity and safer movement for mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish.

Before (2023) and after (2025): Indian Creek restoration at the Milton Logistics Hub site, showing a redesigned channel intended to restore natural flow patterns and strengthen riparian habitat along the creek.

Indian Creek realignment and wetlands enhancements offer a



Finally, sustainability was built into the facility itself. CN says features include solar power, with 84 per cent of terminal buildings designed to be powered by solar energy and an administration building designed to meet LEED Bronze standards.

clear example of restoration in action – demonstrating how a nature-based solution delivers tangible habitat enhancements, supported by evidence of wildlife returning to use these enhanced areas.

Finally, sustainability was built into the facility itself. CN says features include solar power, with 84 per cent of terminal buildings designed to be powered by solar energy and an administration building designed to meet LEED Bronze standards. The project also includes a rainwater capture and recycling system, and advanced stormwater management, such as engineered ponds, oil grit separators, and controlled outlets

designed to treat terminal runoff and protect water quality in local creeks and watersheds.

What happens next

CN expects the facility to be operational by 2027. As construction continues, CN says follow-up monitoring and annual reporting will continue through construction and into operations, alongside ongoing engagement through the Community Consultation Committee. The team is also planning education and outreach initiatives tied to environmental awareness, including a youth artwork workshop and a bat conservation session developed

with a First Nation community.

“For us, the award is encouraging,” Reynolds says. “But the real test is the day-to-day work, monitoring what we built, learning from it, and sticking with it over the long term.”

Learn more

To learn more about the Milton Logistics Hub, including project updates and environmental reporting, visit cn.ca/en/about-cn/milton-logistics-hub.

You can also follow CN on Facebook, LinkedIn and X.

To learn more about TRACCS, visit traccs.ca. ♦

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