

Ontario Liberals announce area candidate



The Hastings-Lennox and Addington Provincial Liberal Association has nominated its riding president, Tim Rigby, as its next candidate. / SUBMITTED

By Sarah Sobanski

The Hastings-Lennox and Addington Provincial Liberal Association has nominated its riding president as its 2018 election candidate.

Riding president Tim Rigby was announced as the riding's uncontested Liberal nomination candidate March 17.

"I think it's important to do. There's a lot of good things that have happened with this government and I want to make sure that as much as possible they continue to happen," he said.

There are many changes going on in society today that are creating a "real fear and real vulnerability economically and socially for people," Rigby told *Bancroft This Week*. He said he believes the Liberal government has "really begun to work hard to begin to try and address these kinds of issues so that people aren't left in the economic dust heap without good jobs or the ability to feed their families."

Rigby noted the government's \$15 minimum wage, pharmacare plan, additional OSAP funding and its basic income pilot.

"Ontario has just done fantastically well at economic growth and of course, if you don't have a good economy you don't have those jobs, and that fairness piece drops off again."

If elected, Rigby would succeed official Opposition hydro critic for the Ontario PCs Prince Edward-Hastings MPP Todd Smith. Smith has criticized how the Ontario Liberals have handled power. When asked on his thoughts on hydro, Rigby said problems with hydro's consumer costing and management have been "fixed."

"The government retained control [of hydro], gets paid dividends and I can see the day when it will be profitable enough to perhaps even match the income that it was providing before," he said.

When it comes to some major North Hastings issues "roads, infrastructure funding needs and policing costs" Rigby said municipalities are the "backbone and base for what makes it possible" to live rurally.

"The property taxes absolutely cannot fund all of the things that need to be done so I certainly will be advocating for that," he said.

Rigby said he is familiar with the challenges of rural life. He isn't worried about the area being a blue stronghold or coming into the game late when compared to his rivals PC candidate Daryl Kramp and NDP candidate Nate Smelle. Kramp was nominated in late 2016 and Smelle was nominated at the beginning of February.

"We're certainly going to work hard to make sure we bring on another upset... I know Premier Wynne is low in the polls, but I've

talked to her, I've worked with her. She's just an amazing compassionate woman who listens as a premier? and really does understand what the issues are,? he said. ?When you compare that to other leaders I think if you just set aside whatever the social media? it's not always fair? I think if people just listen to what's possible and what's out there it's going to tip things to the favour of the Liberals and my upset of the Opposition.?

Rigby is a civics teacher with a background in theology and physical education. Though he currently teaches with Limestone District School Board, he has a history with local schools after facing them as volleyball rivals while he taught in North Addington. His other knowledge of the North Hastings area comes from taking trips with his mother to see the changing fall colours when he was young. His great grandparents are buried in Eldorado and Madoc.