

Labour mobility could help counter U.S. tariff war, says MP Louis

Julian Gavaghan

Observer Staff

KITCHENER CONES-TOGA MP TIM LOUIS said boosting Canadian labour mobility is his top priority in helping the country to weather U.S. economic attacks as he spoke of his new government role amid Prime Minister Mark Carney’s visit to Washington this week.

Louis, who has held a trade ministry job since June, believes eliminating job barriers, such as different provincial occupational certifications, would benefit his own constituents as much as people in other parts of the nation.

It would also boost economic growth, he told The Observer.

“Having a skill set, and being able to move anywhere in Canada and use that skill set and work, I think is something that would have a great multiplying effect,” Louis said.

“I think it benefits everyone. I think it can benefit the people that want to move, and let’s say they want to start a family in a different part of the country, or move because of relatives, or move because of work, or the employers themselves, who can now draw on Canadians.

“Coast to coast to coast, I think it’s a win-win.”

Louis, whose job title is Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King’s Privy Council for Canada

→ MOBILITY 4

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Home sales, prices down

In September, a total of 502 homes were sold in Waterloo Region via the MLS system of the Cornerstone Association of Realtors, a 4.7% decrease from the same period last year. The average sale price for all residential properties was \$753,162, down 4.7% over a year earlier, but up 3.2% from August. Detached homes sold for an average of \$858,872, down 5.9% from a year earlier, and up 1.4% from August.

From the archives

The north end of Waterloo Region sent a solid ‘no’ back to the upper-tier government as it looks to introduce a pesticide-use bylaw. A day after Wellesley council passed on the notion, its Woolwich counterpart also gave the idea a thumbs down. Regulations to ban cosmetic use of herbicides for weed control pose a host of problems, local officials say.

From the Oct. 8, 2005 edition of The Observer



Kassie Ciaschini, 17, claimed the title at the finals of Wellesley ABC Idol.

Andrea Eymann

Wallenstein’s Kassie Ciaschini sings her way to Wellesley Idol title

Andrea Eymann

Observer Staff

WALLENSTEIN’S KASSIE CIASCHINI CLAIMED THE title at the finals of the Wellesley Idol competition, held in conjunction with the Apple Butter and Cheese Festival.

Linwood’s Eleanor Maggs was second, with Baden’s Kristine King in third place.

Musician Allister Brad-

ley, one of the judges, said the talent on display made it difficult to pick a winner.

“It was a tough decision. The three performers each came with something quite different,” he told The Observer, noting it was like comparing apples and oranges.

Bradley notes that any one of them could build a music career if she wanted it.

Ciaschini was over-

whelmed by the results.

“It was crazy. I honestly wasn’t expecting to win at all, which was the crazy bit about it all,” she said, adding that the other two finalists were fantastic.

The 17-year-old EDSS student said she originally signed up for the competition during the pandemic, but it was then shut down.

But when she submitted the first time, they told

→ IDOL 6

Newest regional councillor looking for ways to bring down tax rate

Julian Gavaghan

Observer Staff

THE REGION OF WATER-LOO IS wasting facilities that it could be making money from, with some buildings sitting almost empty while staff work from home, its newest councillor says.

Joe Gowing told The Observer that he is now pushing the municipality to carry out a strategic plan to assess property usage – and possibly consider selling some – because he is determined to avoid further inflation-busting property tax increases.

“What sparked it is that I went on a tour of 99 Regina Street, and it’s practically empty,” said the investment expert who was selected as a Kitchener representative following the April death of Coun. Kari Williams from cancer.

He said he was deeply concerned by the underusage of the “beautiful” uptown Waterloo building that houses the region’s community services and public health departments.

The region, which increased its property-tax rate by 9.48 per cent this year, currently expects its administrative staff to work only two days a week in the office.

That is changing to three days in December, almost six full years after the COVID-19 pandemic upended working arrangements.

Gowing, who previously ran unsuccessfully as a Liberal for the Kitchener-Conestoga riding in February’s provincial election, said he has since asked to tour other properties.

“I’m looking at the financial side of things because we’re paying for these buildings and they’re not full,” he said.

“If we have these facilities, we could probably partner with somebody to fill them, so that they’re not wasted space.

“We could potentially be getting rent from that.”

One or more buildings may also need to be sold, Gowing said.

“Potentially, that is an option, but I haven’t really got to that part, because, to be honest with you, we don’t have a facility strategic plan at the moment,” he explained.

“What I found out is that we had one years ago, before Covid hit and everybody went home, and now we haven’t really got back to updating it.”

Gowing said he was expecting to see another report at the end of the year that would reveal how much each building is used.

“I’m looking forward to that one,” he said.

“I’m hoping it’ll give me my answers.

“If not, I am going to be asking and possibly putting a motion forward that we start a strategic facilities plan.”

→ TAX RATE 4



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