

Queen's Park UPDATE



Strut Your Stuff

Ontario by-elections and PC Ontario AGM



March 5, 2010

Yesterday by-elections took place in the ridings of Ottawa West-Nepean and Leeds-Grenville in Eastern Ontario. The by-elections were called because Liberal MPP Jim Watson resigned his seat to run for Mayor of Ottawa and PC MPP Bob Runciman was appointed to the Senate. Leeds-Grenville was expected to be a safe seat for the PC Party as the Tories have held the riding for nearly three decades. Ottawa West-Nepean was expected to be a closer race as federally the riding is held by John Baird and by-elections usually favour opposition parties.

In Leeds-Grenville, former Brockville mayor Steve Clark was easily elected with over 66% of the vote. Stephen Mazurek ran for the Liberals and earned just over 20% of the total vote. Steve Armstrong ran for the NDP. Anthony Giles ran for the Libertarian Party. Neil Kudrinko ran for the Green Party.

In Ottawa West-Nepean, former Ottawa mayor Bob Chiarelli was elected with 43.46% of the vote. The PC Party ran Beth Graham a former aide to Lisa MacLeod. She received 38.99% of the vote making it a close by-election race. Pam Fitzgerald was the candidate representing the Ontario NDP. Mark MacKenzie ran for the Greens. John Turmel also ran as an independent candidate.

The results PC Party mean there is no change at Queen's Park in terms of party standings in the legislature. Both parties will spin the by-elections to attempt to show momentum. For the PC Party, there is excitement about holding Leeds-Grenville with such a large margin and closing the gap in Ottawa West Nepean. They argue that the HST, eHealth and other issues have eroded Dalton McGuinty's popularity including in his home city of Ottawa. Ontario Liberals argue that Ottawa West-Nepean is held federally by John Baird and is an essential seat to win if the PC Party expects to form government in 2011. Recently polling shows



provincially Tim Hudak's Ontario PC Party has a slight lead over Dalton McGuinty's Ontario Liberal Party. Despite that, Ontario Liberals have won three out of four by-elections since Tim Hudak was elected leader of the Official Opposition.

This weekend, Ontario PC delegates will head to Ottawa to attend the PC Party AGM. Darryl Wolk will be there representing CG Group and its clients. The convention will focus on preparing policies for the policy convention expected in early 2011. There will also be sessions to help prepare individual riding associations for the 2011 campaign. Tim Hudak will update the membership on the status of election readiness for the Ontario PC Party. Federal Industry Minister Tony Clement is hosting a session Saturday morning on the economy. On Sunday, voting will take place for various party positions including President. The mood of delegates will be interesting to watch given the defeat in Ottawa West-Nepean.

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