



Statement from Mayor Stewart Strathearn

With Health Care and Economic Recovery the focus, Provincial Budget hits the right note for local municipalities

March 31, 2021 – Last week, the provincial government delivered its 2021 budget: *Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and our Economy*. Having reviewed it over the past week, and having just completed our own 2021 Budget, I can appreciate the hard work that goes into constructing a budget and all factors taken into consideration for a municipality. At the provincial level the factors and considerations are magnified and further reaching, and I congratulate Ontario Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy on tabling his first budget as Finance Minister. During these uncertain times, it's encouraging to see priority being given to health care and the economy. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic affect all of us, and the Town of Midland continues to do our part to support the government in the vaccination efforts with the use of our facilities and staff, and to serve our residents and local business.

Our local businesses have had a challenging year, and the continued support of the province through the Small Business Support Grant will provide eligible businesses with up to \$20,000 of added support while we can continue to work towards a return to normalcy.

As a tourism destination, the Town of Midland has been impacted greatly by the pandemic, with most, if not all, events being cancelled over the past year and many already cancelled for 2021, including Ontario's Best Butter Tart Festival, an annual event that attracts 50,000 plus visitors to our town each year. The introduction of the Ontario Tourism and Hospitality Small Business Support Grant is welcome news, and I know our eligible local businesses will appreciate this additional support.

We continue to face challenges as a smaller municipality, and we expect a challenging year again with additional costs and lost revenues resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while we continue to provide our essential services.

We look forward to working with the provincial government and thank Premier Doug Ford, Deputy Premier Christine Elliott, Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy and our Simcoe North MPP Jill Dunlop for their leadership and commitment to our safety and recovery.

