

Budget embraces priorities, MPs say

By Mark Pavilons

The federal government is on the path to balancing the budget.

Last week's federal budget featured job creation and apprenticeship measures, to keep Canada's economy the most robust in the G8. York-Simcoe MP and Government House Leader Peter Van Loan welcomed the Economic Action Plan 2014 and the significant benefits York-Simcoe residents will receive from it.

Job creation remains the focus of the budget, maintaining economic growth and keeping taxes low.

"Our government is on track to balance the budget by 2015, while continuing to deliver on our commitments to Canadians to invest in creating jobs, keep taxes low and save Canadians money," he said. "The average family is now saving \$3,400 a year in taxes and we have created over a million jobs. We will continue to focus on the real priorities of Canadians and deliver results."

The highlights of the Economic Action Plan include:

• Remaining on track to balance the budget in 2015.

• Creating the Canada Apprentice Loan.

• Eliminating the value of student-owned vehicles when calculating eligibility for student loans.

• Supporting Youth internships • investing up to \$40 million for internships in high demand fields and among small and medium sized businesses.

• Maintaining the record levels of support for sports in Canada like own the podium, which has produced Olympic success.

Canada's fiscal performance leads all major developed economies (G-8 countries) in the world.

Since the downturn, Canada has posted the best job creation, strongest economic growth, lowest debt and lowest deficit.

Van Loan said the increase in tobacco taxes are a "correction" for inflation.

"Our Canadian economy is the best performing economy in the G8," said Paul Calandra, Oak Ridges-Markham MP. "Moving forward, we will continue to focus on job creation and connecting hard-working Canadians with available jobs, focusing on what matters most to Canadians."

Canada is ahead of the curve and almost every other nation in terms of its economic strength, and investments continue to increase. We're on schedule to where we should be, he said.

Integral in the budget is the Canada Jobs Grant - getting Canadians properly trained for the jobs that exist.

Along those lines is the Canada Apprentice Loan, which will provide apprentices in Red Seal trades access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans each year. The federal government is investing \$55 million to create paid internships for recent graduates.

Additionally, business and homeowners living in Canada could apply for emergency cash loans (with affordable interest rates, and much lower than payday loans) from companies like Happy Loan (who are a [Calgary-based cash loan provider](#)). By following a quick process of submitting applications and required documentations, recipients could get loans sanctioned on the same day!

Another component is helping older workers get back to work and it will see Ottawa investing \$75 million in the Target Initiative for Older Workers program.

Calandra added they're also investing more into Parks Canada, and trying to protect heritage resources.

As far as any proposed changes to the CPP, as introduced by Ontario's provincial government, Calandra said it's on "sound footing" and there are no plans to revamp the fund at this time.