



# Insider

*News and Stats for Association Members!*

**December 13, 2011- Volume 11 - Issue # 25**

## Minimum Wage Meeting with Minister of Labour

Minister of Labour Linda Jeffrey has spent a few weeks in her new office and the ORHMA was quick to secure a meeting with her to stress the negative impact any increase to the minimum wage would have on the hospitality sector. Ontario employers have been faced with continued annual minimum wage increases between 2004 and 2010. The minimum wage has increased by 50 percent through these annual increases, positioning Ontario's rates as the highest of all provinces. These increases outpaced inflation and have created a tough economic environment within the hospitality sector, where labour costs account for 33% of expenses. Minister Jeffrey confirmed that the government's intention to form a business and labour committee to advise on any changes to the minimum wage for 2012 and beyond has in fact been delayed but the intention is to form this group as soon as possible.

At the meeting with the Minister of Labour, the ORHMA relayed its satisfaction with the newly developed Regulator's Code of Practice. This has been a priority recommendation from ORHMA under the Open For Business initiative stemming from hospitality operator feedback on improving the inspection purpose and conduct. The ORHMA relayed to Minister Jeffrey the importance of inspector training procedures and the inclusion of metrics as key factors to successfully executing and evaluating the new code of practice. With amendments to codes of practice, inspectors will play a new role in assisting employers with advice on how to comply with existing standards. A "new and improved" focus on education is currently lacking as inspectors simply indicate when they believe there is non-compliance (strictly enforcing). This new role is a welcome amendment for employers. It is based on sound business and professional principles.

Before concluding the meeting with the Minister of Labour, the ORHMA also took the opportunity to share its support of the Harry Arthurs funding review of the WSIB. We emphasized that the goal to eliminate the unfunded liability simply can not be generated by raising premiums as it is counter-productive. Moreover, the ORHMA was able to impress upon the minister the importance of considering the history of how we came to be faced with the situation we are currently in and that in order to effectively address the issues, this factor must be considered. Considering how the WSIB reached its current critical state of funding and why Ontario performed poorly as compared to the other provinces is part of the ORHMA's submission to the Arthur's review, as part of the Employers Council of Ontario.

## Canada – US Action Plans to Improve Border Traffic Flow

Two ambitious action plans expected to improve security and the flow of goods and people across the Canada - US border were released on December 7th. Prime Minister Harper and President Obama first announced the Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness initiative, along with the creation of the Canada - US Regulatory Cooperation Council, last February and as reported by the Insider we had

expectations of improvements to traffic flow at the borders. The announcement includes enhancements to move travellers more efficiently across the border.

The initiatives are expected to include enhancements to the Nexus program which would see a harmonization of the benefits and a combined marketing campaign to increase membership. Nexus is a program geared toward frequent, low-risk travellers and helps expedite border crossings between the two countries. The program's enrollment and renewal processes will be updated while plans are underway to expand the inclusion of other trusted countries.

Investment in a five year border infrastructure plan will see expansion in technology and in the physical layout of Customs facilities. Sharing of information on travel issues will be part of both countries Customs services. The plan also calls for full pre-clearance of passengers travelling by rail or cruise ships.

The ORHMA welcomes these initiatives as an important step toward removing border barriers that are impacting Ontario's hospitality industry.

### McGuinty Government Adds the Role Of Sport to the Minister of Tourism and Culture

Premier Dalton McGuinty announced on Dec 7th that the Honourable Michael Chan, Minister of Tourism and Culture, will assume responsibility for the portfolio of sport in the province. With Ontario preparing to stage the 2015 Pan/Parapan Am Games, Minister Chan will work closely with the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games, Minister Charles Sousa, to ensure they are a memorable success. Click [here](#) for more info.

### Preparing for the New Disabilities Act

The first accessibility standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is now law. Businesses will have to comply with the Accessible Customer Service Standard as of **January 1, 2012**. The Government of Ontario has been working closely with ORHMA to develop tools and resources to ensure that the hospitality sector is prepared to comply with the requirements of the standards. Please see the ORHMA website for additional resources.

#### **Emergency Procedure Disclosure component:**

Obligated organizations that prepare emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and make the information available to the public must now also provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports as soon as practicable, upon request. The deadline for compliance with this requirement is also January 1, 2012.

Following implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standards component of the AODA, the Act's next three accessibility standards will aim to remove barriers in the following three areas:

- Transportation - making it easier for people with disabilities to get to where they need to go;
- Employment - expanding Ontario's labour pool and welcoming people with disabilities into more workplaces; and
- Information & Communications - giving people with disabilities access to more of the information we all depend on.

Review the time table of the Integrated Accessibility Standards [here](#).

A plan is in place to create a standard that would involve physical alterations to business premises, such as ramps but this component of the Act has yet to be finalized. Physical accessibility standards are intended to make improvements on a go-forward basis and there will not be a requirement for business to retrofit their buildings and premises to meet the standard. Once it becomes law, the standard will apply only to new construction. This will allow organizations to integrate accessibility planning in the design and construction phases.

## Housekeeping Injuries and the Employee Satisfaction Factor

A bill working its way through California's legislative process has brought much attention to a repetitive strain issue facing a key demographic in the hospitality industry: hotel and motel housekeepers. Although the issue may seem narrowly defined, the solution applies to all industry sectors. Click [here](#) for full article.

## WSIB and Safety Groups

At its November 16, 2011 meeting, the WSIB's Board of Directors gave its approval for Safety Group participants at or beyond the 5 year mark to continue in the program for another year while the WSIB transitions responsibility for Prevention to the Ministry of Labour. The Board also directed that there will be no further extensions to the 5 year participation term. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Safety Groups program.

## September Foodservices Performance in Ontario

Overall Ontario sales for the food services and drinking places industry grew by (+6.2%) from September 2010 to September 2011. The growth in the year to date comparisons holds at (+4.9%). Sales compared with the previous month of August 2011 fell by (-2.7%). Click [here](#) for additional September stats.

## 2011-12 ORHMA Toronto Restaurant Awards - Attend, Sponsor & Vote! (2 days left to cast your votes)

The 2011 / 2012 ORHMA (Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association) Toronto Restaurant Awards will honour industry professionals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the Toronto Restaurant Industry.

**Attend!** Join emcee Roger Ashby of 104.5 CHUM FM for the Awards on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the Palais Royal for the 2011-2012 ORHMA Toronto Restaurant Awards Reception, Dinner & Awards Presentation. Limited tickets remaining - [Click here to register now!](#)

**Sponsor!** A few spaces still remain for Award Sponsorship. For more information on sponsorship, please email: [Jason@AboveTheLineSolutions.com](mailto:Jason@AboveTheLineSolutions.com).

**Vote!** *Vote for your favourites now before the December 15th, 2011 deadline - 2 days left!*

- [Public Voting](#) - Vote for your **Favourite Restaurant, Bartender & Server**.
- [Industry Voting](#) - Vote for the **Restauranteur of the Year, Chef of the Year and Valued Supplier of the Year Awards**.

For more information about the event: Public website: [www.torontorestaurantawards.com/](http://www.torontorestaurantawards.com/)  
Industry website: [www.torontorestaurantawards.ca](http://www.torontorestaurantawards.ca)



## ORHMA Members Save 3.5¢ at the Pump with ESSO

ORHMA members receive incredible savings with the ESSO program. Save 3.5 ¢ per litre off on all fuel products, Esso Extra and Aeroplan points loyalty programs. Reap your rewards today! Click [here](#) for ESSO application.

### Mark Your Calendars!

- January 24th, 2011 ORHMA 2011-2012 [Toronto Restaurant Awards](#), Palais Royal, Toronto ON
- March 2012 - Ottawa Restaurant Awards... **details coming soon!**
- March 4th - 6th, 2012 - [Canadian Restaurant Foodservice Association Show](#) - Direct Energy Centre, Toronto, ON
- June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012, ORHMA 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Provincial Golf Tournament
- Other Industry Events - click [here](#).

### Issue Advertisements

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