



Pierre Lebrun stands beside his two Wellington Dukes jerseys that were given to him for billeting players. Photo By Laine Sedore

Soaring gas prices hit students

By Laine Sedore

With gas prices so high, people around Loyalist College are worried about money.

"My parents drive a lot and they commute to work so I am a little concerned about the rising gas prices and affecting how much they can spend on other things such as groceries, but yeah it's going to put a little bit more of pinch on my parents," said Kacey Chapman, a student at Loyalist.

Gas prices in the Quinte region hovered around \$1.30 a litre this week and things don't look to be changing soon. With the summer traveling season coming, gas prices are likely to rise even more.

"That's the time where demand for fuel is at its peak, and you could probably bet that gas prices will continue to rise over the summer. Which will wreak havoc on everything from day to day consumption patterns and ability to have extra money for tourism and stuff like that," said Scott Maxwell, spokesperson for Liberal MP Dan McTeague, founder of the website Tomorrow's Gas Price Today.

Others around Loyalist say that driving is a necessity and aren't too concerned with the price of gas.

"It's not going to affect my driving unfortunately because I still have to get places, but my goodness what is it \$1.29 a litre right now that's ridiculous," said Peter Sinclair a student at Loyalist.

If prices stay the way they are or even start to rise, people may be forced to find another way of transportation.

"It certainly does force people to make other decisions in terms of how they get to and from certain places work and other things and at times people say that it has helped foster greener ways of traveling and may force governments to put more money in public transit. Really the reality of the problem is that it shouldn't be .25 cents higher then it was last year which is what we're seeing on average in Eastern Ontario," Maxwell said.

Maxwell said no one really knows if gas will go up or down. Higher gas prices will lead to higher retail prices he said.

"If we have some sort of instability in the world you'll see automatically, speculators drive up the price for the next month or the month after that in terms of the contract for refined fuel."

Wellington loves their Dukes

By Laine Sedore

Wellington Dukes booster

Bonnie Thompson has been following the team since the day she was able to walk to the arena.

Thompson now has her own children but she's still a fan of the Dukes.

"Years ago when I was a teenager we traveled on the bus with the players," said Thompson. "At the time we didn't take a fan bus. There are a few gaps of years in between when I had children but I have always been a Dukes' fan

The Dukes are the perfect example of a small-town hockey with a big-time fan base.

The Dukes have made the playoffs in the Ontario Junior Hockey League for 22 straight seasons. They have played in 41 playoff series in the past 11 years. They also currently hold the record for all Junior A teams in Ontario for the most consecutive 30-win seasons at 12.

In 2003 the Dukes were

semi-finalists in the RBC Cup, the national championship.

Although the Dukes have had their fair share of success over the years, one fan says this year wasn't even supposed to be their year.

This year they are marching toward another national championship berth. They are one win away from capturing the OJHL championship series and moving on to compete for the Buckland Cup and the right to advance to the Dudley Hewitt Cup.

If the Dukes go on to win the Dudley Hewitt, you can be sure to see a large group of screaming fans from Wellington in Camrose, Alberta, for the RBC Cup.

"It was supposed to be a rebuilding year, and of course every year is always a rebuilding year but they have just done so well," said Pierre Lebrun who billets players in his home.

Lebrun, a chiropractor, has been a Dukes fan since he moved from Toronto 10 years ago.

"I had a practice in Toronto,

and one of my patients was a member of the Waxford Raiders and the parents and he had come and said they had to take off to Wellington for a game. I said 'where's Wellington and what is it' they said 'it's a Junior A team and the fans there are just crazy you have to come and see a game in Wellington because the fans dominate the whole thing,'" said Lebrun.

One memory sticks well with Thompson.

"When we realized for the first time in 2003 that the boys were going to get a chance to go to the Dudley for the first time - that game was an all time high," Thompson said.

Todd Lavender, one of hundreds of Dukes fans and a sponsor, said the crowd plays a large part in the Dukes success.

"Without the crowd and the support from the businesses here in Prince Edward County there wouldn't be a team that could function in a market the size of Wellington," said Lavender. "So the community is certainly a big part of that and the fan base, I'm sure if you ask

any player in the league they'd prefer to play in front of 500 to 700 people a night instead of 10 to 25 people you get in the some of the bigger cities."

The old Duke Dome, which was home to the Dukes for many years, gave way to the new ESSROC Centre this year. But Thompson will never forget where she watched so many Dukes games.

"The atmosphere at the old Duke Dome, you could look and see who was missing, now in our new arena it's bigger you don't see everyone. At the old arena you knew who was missing and it's just different, but we do love our new arena," said Thompson.

"I remember back when we went to Charlottetown for the RBC, which we drove down 17 hours straight, so I think the RBC is within reach but we haven't got that far yet.

"We take one step at a time, but we will definitely be going to the Dudley in Huntsville."

Chiefs appeal for native foster care system

By Amanda Monahan

A local First Nations chief is working towards creating a foster care destination for native children.

Chief R. Donald Maracle of the Mohawks in the Bay of Quinte and Chief R. James Marsden of the Alderville First Nations were vocal guests at a press conference on Tuesday.

Their concerns were expressed during the announcement of the amalgamation of the Hastings Children's Aid Society, and the Children's Aid Societies of Northumberland and Prince Edward County.

Chief Marsden said he hopes the amalgamation will benefit First Nations children but their big concern would be the customary care, which is a system that integrates the traditions and customs of First Nations children.

He said there are guidelines parents must follow which is why they aren't stepping to the plate for foster care.

He added there's got to be a different process to finding families of First Nations foster children because they want their culture.

Chief Marsden has a goal of having a destination for First Nations children within the

next five years, but it's not going to be through the CAS.

"It's going to be on the same principle but we want to do all our own programming. There's so much controversy especially with CAS or something, getting the native child and having them never seen again," he said in an interview.

"Our vision is to have our own destination of our own to look after our kids, that's what it's all about," he said.

Maracle said through his experiences, chiefs tend to be very concerned about the rising numbers of First Nations children in foster homes.

"Poverty has a lot to do with children being taken into care. A lot of families can't find affordable housing, the rising energy cost for hydro and fuel are forcing a lot of people to not being able to pay those kinds of bills and buy new clothes for their children and have proper nutrition," he said during the press conference.

Maracle said there are way too many people on the poor end of the spectrum depending on local food banks to survive. He thinks one of the main issues the CAS should do is put pressure on the government to address poverty that not only affects the adults.

"Our vision is to have our own destination of our own to look after our kids, that's what it's all about."

Chief James Marsden



"Children need to have a steady home environment something that is dependable. They don't need the stresses of being without hydro or without food to be able to interact with other children in a healthy way," he said.

Too often the First Nations people are severely marginalized and unemployed, he said, citing education at all levels as one method to correct the social gap between First Nations people and other Canadians.

Maracle said education could help them escape the trap of poverty and have the means to look after their own families.

"I think the goal of every society should be that we don't have a lot of children in care, that our society is functioning properly so that we don't have these kinds of issues of family neglect and abuse," he said.

Maracle said the amalgamation of the three local societies is a way for them to create efficiency.

"As long as the services are provided and are culturally appropriate in the needs and goals and aspirations of First Nations people then we support it," he said during an interview.

The merger was a move to improve accessibility, a change

that Marilyn Curson, board chairwoman of Northumberland CAS, hopes is the only one the public will see.

"The availability of site is going to remain as they are, so there will be no change that way.

"But the hope and the promise is that by joining together we'll be able to improve our services where the need arises and take advantage of what's out there for the enhancement of the services for the children," she said.

There also won't be many changes with staff according to Curson.

She said there will be some minor reductions in terms of senior leadership as one organization is not going to necessarily require as many senior managers and directors.

They are not anticipating any reductions to the front line staff.

All three agencies will each receive a one-time grant to retire all prior debts in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 from the ministry, giving them a clean slate for when it is all finalized.

They expect to hear the final decision of approval within 60 days. Their goal is to have the new agency constituted and operating by April 1, 2012.

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