

Former area paramedics chief running for PC MPP

By Sarah Sobanski

Another familiar face has joined the race for the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario nomination.

Former Chief of Hastings-Quinte Paramedic Services and Bay Lake, Bancroft local John O'Donnel has announced he'll be seeking the PC nomination for Hastings-Lennox and Addington riding in the 2018 provincial election.

O'Donnel retired from emergency services earlier this year after performing as chief for three years. He said his time as chief has showed him the ins and outs of municipal and provincial politics.

'I hadn't had aspirations for politics, but when [current MPP] Todd Smith announced he would be running for [the Bay of Quinte riding] and it would open up here,' said O'Donnel. 'I'd like to make sure both counties can put a face to a name. Time is short but I'm going to try and get the nomination.'

O'Donnel worked primarily out of Belleville during his time as a paramedic. He said that gave him the advantage of knowing leaders in the south of the riding as well as the north here, where he lives. He said Bancroft and North Hastings are an important part of the riding's economic structure.

'When the riding was Prince Edward-Hastings we had the ridings of Quinte West. I think those larger centres will now be locked into the Quinte area. We have a big geography,' said O'Donnel.

'I have always had a passion for making positive changes to better the area I serve and I believe the timing is right to build a strong force in the next year and a half to unseat the Liberal Government that is crippling our province,' he stated in his announcement.

Over the course of his 40 years in health care, O'Donnel said he has volunteered in natural resources, Aboriginal affairs, at Algonquin Park and with other tourism promotions and health care projects.

'I think I have something to add that would help rural communities,' said O'Donnel. 'As a proud resident of our riding, a husband for 35 years, father of three beautiful girls and now a grandfather, I want to ensure I can make a difference by bringing prosperity, jobs and restoring Hastings Lennox and Addington as a better place to live, work and visit.'

O'Donnel is up against former MP Daryl Kramp and Town of Bancroft Councillor Tracy McGibbon for the proposed Nov. 26 Tweed nomination election.