

MPP appointed as energy critic

By Sarah Sobanski

There isn't one part of your life the electricity crisis hasn't made more expensive, said Prince Edward-Hastings MPP Todd Smith via press release. It stated that the longtime local electricity advocate is making his Opposition official.

Smith has been appointed as the official Opposition energy critic at Queen's Park. According to the release, he will be responsible for the PC caucus response to one of the government's largest and most complicated ministries.

It feels like I've been dealing with electricity concerns since before I was elected, Smith stated via press release. Across the province, electricity consumers have seen their rates skyrocket, largely because of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the electricity system.

For much of his time in government Smith has been rebutting Ontario's rise in hydro prices which he said used to be the most affordable in North America. He said he blames the government's failed energy experiments.

The Auditor General reported, as a result of political meddling, residents and businesses have paid \$37 billion more than the market price for electricity. We will pay another \$133 extra over the next 15 years. It's because of these bad energy deals that delivery charges for home owners and global adjustment fees for businesses are out of control.

Smith will now be responsible for critiquing electricity rates and the Liberal government's energy policy. His release suggested the government is paying natural gas generators not to produce power.

The amount of times that this government has asked ratepayers to pay for power that was never produced is unprecedented, stated Smith in the release. This government has actually set up a system where we pay for power whether we need it or not.

Smith has been investigating the costs of hydro on schools, businesses and hearing stories from local constituents on the need for change.

We've seen hockey and curling rinks increase costs for ice time. We've seen electricity rates put a crunch on board of education and hospital budgets across the province.