

Liquor board employees ask Queen's Park to direct LCBO to replace private Agency kiosk with a real store

Liquor board employees in Ontario are asking the provincial government to order the LCBO to open a full-service retail outlet in the town of Mount Albert, east of Newmarket, where a privately-owned and operated "agency store" currently enjoys annual sales of more than \$3 million.

"We have done our homework and the result is very clear: the residents of Mount Albert want to replace the existing agency store kiosk in the Sobeys grocery store on Highway 48 and replace it with an full-service LCBO store," said Vanda Klumper, chair of the 6,000-member Liquor Board Employees Division of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

Klumper was speaking Jan. 26 to members of East Gwillimbury town council, which represents residents of Mount Albert. OPSEU is asking councilors to adopt a resolution calling on Queen's Park to order the LCBO to close down the agency store kiosk when its contract with Sobeys expires in November 2009. Sobeys earns more than \$300,000 annually in commissions from liquor, wine and beer sales at the in-store kiosk – a dividend that ends up in Nova Scotia where the company has its corporate headquarters.

OPSEU conducted a public opinion survey of more than 150 residents of Mount Albert in September



LBED chair Vanda Klumper addresses East Gwillimbury town council where she urged members to ask Queen's Park to order the LCBO to replace the agency kiosk in Mount Albert with a real LCBO store

2008. Results of the survey, conducted by Strategic Communications Inc., of Toronto, showed that more than two of three respondents over the age of 19 want to see a real LCBO store in Mount Albert.

Those surveyed cited better product selection, professional sales service and the LCBO's reputation for social responsibility as the leading reasons they prefer a real LCBO over a privately-owned and operated agency kiosk.

They also endorsed the fact that profit earned by the LCBO – more than \$1.3 billion in 2007-08 – help pay for health care, education and public infrastructure in Ontario.

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Bargaining Update

OPSEU senior negotiator Rob Field reports that important progress is being made in preparation for contract talks with the employer.

Since LBED delegates met Nov. 22 to approve the union's package of final demands, several key developments have taken place.

On Jan. 8 the union gave formal Notification to Bargain to the employer. A meeting has been scheduled for Feb. 11 between both sides to take care of logistics associated with bargaining.

LBED's bargaining team met Jan. 12-15 to review your demands and other business associated with the bargaining process. The team next meets Feb. 9-12.

No date has been set for the start of negotiations.

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LCBO agency stores were introduced in 1962 with a mandate to service remote northern Ontario communities. Since 2000, however, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of private agency stores opening in southern Ontario, many in communities just outside major urban centres. Today, the number of agency stores in Ontario stands at more than 200.

"Agency stores represent the leading edge of privatization of wine and spirit sales in Ontario. Time-after-time the people of Ontario have said they reject privatization and want to see alcohol sales and distribution stay in the hands of a public agency like the LCBO, which is a global leader in the retailing of spirits," said Klumper.

"The fact we have private retail stores like Sobeys doing more than \$3 million in annual sales undermines the purpose and mandate of the LCBO. We're calling on Premier McGuinty and Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, who oversees the LCBO, to stop the expansion of agency stores and repatriate many of the larger ones starting with Mount Albert."

In March 2007 OPSEU released the findings of a financial analysis of agency stores based on revenue figures provided by the LCBO. The study showed that 89 agency stores could be repatriated to the LCBO, resulting \$340 million in additional profits to the LCBO over a 10-year period.

"That's a tremendous amount of money that isn't going into the public treasury, especially during the tough economic times we find ourselves in," said Klumper.

*For more information about agency stores please visit:
www.opseu.org/lbed/privatization.htm*



LBED chair Vanda Klumper, left, agency store subcommittee chair Laurie Miller and consultant Russ Christianson prepare to address East Gwillimbury town council on Jan. 26

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Members back plan to repatriate Mount Albert agency store

LBED members in stores 226 and 453 (Newmarket) and 630 and 311 (Aurora) met for a special briefing on Sunday Jan. 25 to learn details of the campaign to replace the Sobeys Foodland agency store kiosk in Mount Albert with a real, full-service LCBO outlet.

More than 20 LBED members from the four stores attended the meeting. The stores are located closest to the Mount Albert agency store, which orders its product through store #226 in Newmarket. The Mount Albert agency store is one of the largest in Ontario with more than \$3 million in annual sales. Sobeys earns more than \$300,000 in commissions – profit that goes back to corporate headquarters in Nova Scotia.

“I’m really pleased that we have strong support for the campaign from our members who live closest to Mount Albert and, in the case of store #226, actually do the work to supply product to this privately-owned and operated agency store,” said Laurie Miller, chair of LBED’s ‘Keep it Public’ campaign.

There were several questions about the future of the grocery store if the inside agency kiosk was removed from Foodland. Under LBED’s plan, the real LCBO will be built adjacent to the Foodland store on property already owned by Sobeys.

Russ Christianson, LBED’s financial consultant on the Mount Albert campaign, said a stand-alone LCBO store is a destination stop for consumers and a strong complement to a grocery store. Therefore Foodland stands to gain even more shoppers, he told members at the meeting.

LBED members who live in Newmarket, Aurora and elsewhere in York region are invited to attend a special public meeting to discuss the campaign on Tuesday Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m., at the Mount Albert Community Centre.

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**WE'RE ALL IN THE
SAME BOAT!**



Liquor Board Employees Division
Bargaining 2009

GOT A QUESTION?

Call **OPSEUdirect** at 1-800-268-7376

Mount Albert wants a real



Public Meeting
Tuesday February 3rd, 7:30 p.m.
Mount Albert Community Centre



The reasons why Mount Albert should have a real LCBO store

- Product selection will more than double
- A real LCBO store will be staffed by professional customer service staff
- The LCBO will invest more than \$500,000 in the store
- East Gwillimbury will receive increased property taxes
- The economic multiplier from a real LCBO store in Mount Albert is estimated at one million dollars annually
- The people of Ontario will fully benefit from the sales at the real LCBO store
- Social responsibility is a top priority for the LCBO

Mount Albert could replace this:



With a real LCBO Store:



Two out of three Mount Albert residents want a real LCBO store

In September 2008, a public opinion poll determined that **two out of three Mount Albert residents** (over 19 years of age) want a publicly owned LCBO store to replace the Sobeys' agency kiosk.

Why? Because a **real LCBO** store offers better selection and service, and brings economic benefits to the community and the province.

The agency kiosk in Sobeys' Foodland has revenues of more than \$3 million a year. This is similar to the amount earned by many **real LCBO** stores. Sobeys receives more than \$300,000 a year in commission from these sales.

Sobeys operates its agency store on a five-year contract with the LCBO. When this contract expires in November 2009, a **real LCBO** store could replace it.

"As a provincial government enterprise, LCBO's primary stakeholders are the people of Ontario."

LCBO Strategic Plan



Like the majority of Mount Albert residents and Ontario citizens, the Liquor Board Employees (members of OPSEU, The Ontario Public Service Employees Union) strongly support maintaining the public sale and distribution of alcohol in Ontario.

EAP Hotline: 1-800-263-1401

The LCBO Employee Assistance Program is a confidential, hassle-free counseling service for eligible LCBO employees and their immediate families. For assistance, please call 1-800-263-1401.

To find out more about the program, visit:

www.opseu.org/leb/eap

Get on the list!

You can receive the Echo directly by e-mail. Just let us know how to reach you. Give us your secure e-mail address by calling OPSEUdirect:

1-800-268-7376 or 416-443-8888.

Bookmark this address! www.opseu.org/lbed

Stay on top of all the breaking news that affects OPSEU and liquor board employees by regularly visiting this website. It has all the information, updates and contacts you'll need when it comes to your union, your rights and your workplace.

The Echo is authorized for distribution by:



Vanda Klumper
Chair, LBED



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
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AND CIRCULATE**



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Ontario Public Service
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fonction publique de l'Ontario