

Opening notes

Minister Michael Chan, one of the few ministers in the smaller Ontario cabinet to retain his pre-election post, is back at Tourism and Culture. Already up to speed on his ministry's files and challenges, he has a head start on his colleagues as he prepares for the next session of the Ontario Legislature. It begins 21 November.

Going forward, Minister Chan will need to filter the policies and priorities of Tourism and Culture through the lens of '**jobs and the economy**' in the volatile political environment of a minority government. Despite the demonstrated economic impact of the cultural sector, with its resultant jobs, this will likely continue to be a challenge among the sceptics.

With the concurrent drive to constrain spending to control Ontario's deficit, it's clear that there is a difficult road ahead for culture. As announced in the last budget, **Don Drummond**, former Chief Economist of TD, is leading a Commission on the *Reform of Ontario's Public Services*. Its report, expected in February, will identify items like program efficiencies; code, perhaps, for spending reductions.

On a hopeful note, it is reasonable to expect that the Ontario government will move forward on the priorities identified in the Ministry's

Framework for Growth Report for the entertainment and creative cluster. It posits six pillars of activity to strengthen the sector. These include expanding Ontario's global presence and market access, an example of which is the recent film industry collaboration with India.

The *Framework* also provides for the Ontario government to address the issue of *access to capital*, the number one priority identified by the creative industries. The 2011 Ontario Liberal platform states that it will provide additional support to help small and medium businesses access new markets, a measure that is expected to help the creative industries. Details are not known yet.

While access to capital is key, the policy agenda across the spectrum of Ontario's cultural sector is much broader, ranging from sustained or increased funding to stronger training initiatives. A brief survey of these issues is found on p. 2-3.

...in Ottawa

Canadian Heritage Minister **James Moore** is moving forward on several fronts. Since the last issue, more attention is focused on plans to commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812; at the same time, the Strategic and Operating Review continues, the copyright amendments are at Second Reading and cultural leaders are out in force to meet MPs to talk about all these issues.

Looking ahead at the cultural sector and creative industries in Ontario

To get a pulse on the policy issues that Ontario's cultural sector, including the creative industries, will put forward to the provincial government, *The Arts Advocate Report* surveyed some sector leaders on their priorities. With a sector as diverse as culture, it is not surprising that common themes arise alongside unique policy goals specific to certain segments. Taken together, these issues add up to an ambitious agenda.

Common themes across the sector are:

- ✓ Sustained investment in the agencies that support culture and the creative industries: the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) and the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF);
- ✓ Access to capital: that is measures to support the creative industries in accessing the private sector investment they need to thrive in the increasingly global market place;
- ✓ Training, in order to adapt to rapid digital transformation; and
- ✓ Better inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration, particularly with regards to the Ministry of Education.

At the same time, some policy priorities are specific to parts of the cultural sector. For instance, the Ontario magazine sector faces real challenges and costs arising from the blue box program. Libraries are looking for a say in the development of, and access to, provincial literacy policies and programs.

What follows is a synopsis of what *The Arts Advocate Report* heard from various organizations.

Cultural Careers Council Ontario/Work in Culture

Government and the sector need to recognize the importance of business skills training that will help cultural workers to adapt to the digital transformation underway.

Artists and workers in the cultural sector have unique needs: They tend to be highly educated and creative, but do not necessarily have the business training to be successful entrepreneurs and contribute to the economy. There needs to be a focus on developing business skills from the beginning.

Training models and programs cannot all revolve around the Employment Insurance programs now in place. Cultural sector workers tend to be self-employed entrepreneurs who are ineligible for those programs. Alternatives are needed.

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Ontario's public libraries have three priorities they want the Ontario government to address:

- Fix the provincial operating grant system for libraries, one that is seen as disjointed and results in a patchwork of service levels across the province;
- Provide an infrastructure fund exclusively for libraries;
- Consult with libraries in the formulation of provincial literacy programs and policies.

Film Ontario

For Film Ontario, screen-based industries are not cultural files. Rather, they speak to industrial, economic and jobs priorities.

Access to capital is a film industry priority that all political parties addressed in their campaign platforms.

Magazines Ontario

Access to capital is the number one issue for the creative industries, including magazines, so long as there is the flexibility within the construct to accommodate the business realities of the specific industries.

The government has been proactive in supporting cultural industries and home-grown content through its arms-length agencies. It will be important to keep them on solid ground and maintain the engine that creates both economic and cultural dividends for the province.

The new digital environment means that the traditional silos of the industries are rapidly dissolving. There is a tremendous role for government to play in using this opportunity to integrate and strengthen the sector.

Ontario's blue box program puts provincial magazine publishers on an uneven playing field because they bear a disproportionate share of the cost for the initiative. The program needs to be revamped to be fair and equitable.

Ontario Museum Association

Ontario museums are looking to the provincial government to sustain investment in various museums programs, particularly the Community Museum Operating Grants. At the same time, there is a growing desire to engage the Ministry of Tourism and Culture in a dialogue to rethink the various museum support programs. The sector needs the ministry's help to better address challenges around innovation, exhibit renewal and other museum-specific issues.

Also on the radar: the place of museums in Ontario's tourism strategy.

Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario (OBPO)

Last spring, the OBPO went to Queen's Park with three priorities:

- Investment for Transformation: the digital transformation so profoundly affecting the book-publishing sector requires a collaborative effort between government and Ontario publishers for the sector to succeed in the new environment;
- Access to capital: a priority with others in the creative industries
- Increased cooperation among ministries, particularly education, to improve the relationships between Canadian authors and school boards.

Provincial Arts Service Organizations (PASOs)

The coalition of Ontario arts service organizations put forward four priorities during the Ontario election, all of which it will continue to press on the new minority Liberal government:

- Confirm and sustain funding to the OAC and OTF;
- Invigorate the *Status of Ontario's Artists Act* and the Minister's Advisory Council on Arts and Culture;
- Be an advocate for Ontario's artists and arts organizations in matters of federal jurisdiction; and
- Strengthen inter-ministerial collaboration within the Ontario government to maximize efficiencies.

The Arts Advocate's Twitter presence continues to grow. At 670 now, we're aiming to reach 700 by month's end!

@TheArtsAdvocate

Capital Report

Parliament is on a break this week so, at least on the surface, things are quiet. Behind the scenes, cultural organizations are extremely active in working with decision makers and government officials to address a wide variety of issues, ranging from the predictable funding questions to the complexity of the copyright bill, currently at Second Reading in the House of Commons.

Amid this, the Conservative government is putting its stamp on upcoming national milestones, like the bi-centennial of the War of 1812. Its goal is to urge all Canadians to stand prouder of their heritage.

Arts and Culture on the Hill

This fall, leaders and representatives from many sectors across the cultural sector are on Parliament Hill, meeting with MPs and Senators to brief them on the issues facing the sector.

In October, both the Canadian Arts Coalition (CAC) and Festivals and Major Events (FAME) were in Ottawa to put forward their requests. For the CAC, it was about sustained funding for the Canada Council for the Arts and various programs at Canadian Heritage. FAME members are looking for the re-establishment of some version of the Marquee Tourism Events program. Among the meetings, the CAC met with Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore and FAME met with Finance Minister **James Flaherty**. Minister Moore also attended, and was well received, at a reception hosted by the Canadian Arts Coalition.

This month, representatives of the Canadian Museum Association will be on Parliament Hill on 29 November, to press forward on the recommendations it submitted in its pre-budget submission. A major facet of this is a proposed matching donations program to encourage greater private sector support for museums.

Magazines Canada will also be in Ottawa in late November, to ensure that key decision-makers are aware of the importance of the recently renewed Canada Periodical Fund.

Many cultural sector organizations submitted pre-budget recommendations to the Standing Committee on Finance. Their briefs can be found at the Committee's website.

... what's ahead

Cultural leaders are feeling good about the results of the Parliament Hill initiatives. None of this however, affects the prospect that Ottawa's Strategic and Operating Review is expected to result in a 'hair cut' to programs. There is quiet optimism that the cultural sector will not be singled out in any way, but the reality is that all departments have been asked to put forward spending reduction scenarios of 5 and 10 percent. The results of the review will become clear following the federal budget next Spring.

200th Anniversary of the War of 1812

This fall, the federal government launched a significant effort to commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812. A multi-faceted effort that is intended to increase Canadian's awareness of the war, referred to as *The Fight for Canada*, it will include an educational campaign, historical re-enactments, permanent memorials and investments in key infrastructure, including sites like Toronto's Fort York.

It follows that the Niagara Region has been designated as a Cultural Capital for 2012.

Not least, all of this activity is part of the lead-up to Canada's sesquicentennial, in 2017.

People

Federal order-in-council: **Byron Neiles** was recently appointed to the Canadian Museum of Nature Board of Trustees; **James Bradley Stafford**, is a new member of the Board of Directors at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21; and **Rudy Buttignol** was recently appointed to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board.

Minister James Moore recently announced that **Marie Chapman** will be the first Director of the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

Minister Michael Chan is back at Tourism and Culture. The Progressive Conservative Critic is **Ted Chudleigh**, MPP for Halton. The NDP's Tourism and Culture Critic is **Paul Miller**, MPP for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

Staffing in Minister Chan's office remains to be finalized.

Peter Caldwell becomes the next Executive Director of the Ontario Arts Council, effective February 2012. He succeeds **John Brotman**, who is retiring.

Cathy Masterson is the new Manager of Cultural Affairs in the City of Windsor.

Holly Nimons joined the Coalition for Music Education as its new Executive Director this past summer.

ACTRA and the **American Federation of Musicians-Canadian Federation of Musicians (AFM-CFM)** have signed a formal strategic and friendship alliance in order to promote solidarity and greater unity of purpose between the two labour unions.

The Arts Advocate Report is a periodic publication designed to keep Ontario's cultural community apprised of federal and provincial political and policy developments affecting it. More timely updates are issued as news merits them.

Beyond the Report, Micheline McKay + Associates offers government relations, policy research and cultural management to clients in the cultural sector.

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