

H & K Communications

72 Elvaston Avenue
Nepean, Ontario
K2G 3X9

Phone: (613) 829-1800
Fax: (613) 829-2449
E-mail: hturkow@rogers.com

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PRIME MINISTER'S PHOTO-OP AT ECONOMIC CONSULTATION

H & K Communications

Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-6181 E-mail hturkow@home.com

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RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Ok, you all set?

NON-IDENTIFIÉ : On est prêt.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Ok, well, greetings, everybody. We have here with me today a group of business people from Peel region who represent a range of different economic sectors, actually represent the cross section of the business community here in the area. And we're going to talk a little bit about our government's plans and some of these people's hopes and expectations for the budget that we'll present in the spring. As you all know, the Canadian economy has continued to do relatively well, at least compared to other developed countries, through a period of continuing global uncertainty. That continues to be the backdrop, and you know, we understand that we do have to stay the course. We have to keep our taxes down. We have to keep moving forward to balance the budget, but do so in a way that we're also making the right investments and right decisions for the Canadian economy. We have seen the creation of 900,000 net new jobs since the end of the recession, but nevertheless, we're certainly aware that Canadians in Peel region and across the country remain concerned about their economic prospects. So I really do appreciate that everyone here is able to take the time out of their busy schedules on a weekend, a little bit of time away from their businesses to share their views and share their impressions of the needs of their... not just their own firms, but their workers and their neighbours. So thank you, and I look forward to our discussions.

UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, Prime Minister. Thank you very much.

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UNIDENTIFIED: All right, guys.

(310 words)

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