

The Sault Star (Sault Ste. Marie, ON)		Order/Commande
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Citizens looking at electoral reform visit Sault

Local members plan to attend

By **Brian Kelly**
THE SAULT STAR

Sault Ste. Marie and area residents who want a say in how Ontario MPPs are elected can mark Wednesday on their calendars.

The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform holds a public meeting at John Rhodes Community Centre starting at 7 p.m.

"We're looking forward to see what the folks up North have to say," said spokesperson Barry Koen-Butt in a telephone interview from Toronto.

During the Ontario election campaign in 2003, Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty promised to review electoral reform during his first mandate if elected.

The assembly, created earlier this year, is made up of 103 members.

That's one for each electoral riding in the province.

David Viitala, a fourth-year psychology student at Algoma University College, is the Sault representative.

Representing Algoma-Manitoulin is Donald Brickett of McKerrow.



Viitala

Both will be in attendance as will be Melinda Selmys. The Etobicoke riding representative wants to hear what Northerners think, said Koen-Butt.

Wednesday's meeting is one of 37 consultations being held across the province between November and January.

Koen-Butt expects participants will hold strong views on possible electoral reform.

'PEOPLE ARE QUITE ENGAGED. THEY HAVE SOME STRONG VIEWS.'

— Spokesperson Barry Koen-Butt



"It was a lively debate," he said of a meeting held Tuesday night in Mississauga.

"People are quite engaged. They have some strong views."

Anyone who wants to make a presentation can call (866) 317-3208.

The assembly asks the public to consider four questions:

- Which electoral system principles are most important to you? Why? Are there other principles you think are important? Why?

- Does Ontario's current electoral system reflect the principles that are important to you? If yes, why? If no, why not?

- Do you think Ontario should keep its current electoral system or change to a different one?

If you think Ontario should change to a different system, which one do you prefer? Why?

How does the system you prefer reflect the principles that are important to you?

- Do you have any other comments or recommendations related to the assembly's mandate?

The assembly decides what, if any, changes should be made to elect MPPs.

Its recommendation is forwarded to Minister of Democratic Renewal Marie Bountrogianni by May 2007.

A referendum is expected to be held by, at the latest, the provincial election later next year.

The assembly's website address is www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca