

HUMBER

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Biden cancels major Canadian energy project on Day One

Eli Ridder
NEWS REPORTER

Hours after the Canadian government congratulated new U.S. president Joe Biden brought the end to the Keystone XL pipeline that could have a lasting impact on Canada's oil industry.

Biden signed an executive order on Jan. 20 to cancel the construction of the U.S. \$9 billion Keystone XL pipeline, a significant energy initiative supported by his predecessor Donald Trump.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was working ahead of inauguration to avoid the cancellation and continued his advocacy with Biden to reverse his decision in a phone call Friday.

But, since Biden included cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline in his platform since running for the Democratic nomination, it was unlikely the president would make a u-turn.

Trudeau acknowledged as much and said in a statement he understood the issue was

important to the newly-elected president despite his own disappointment.

Environmental advocacy groups however hailed the cancellation as a win.

Members of the Green Party and the New Democrat Party went further and argued this was a chance for Trudeau to implement his election promise of funding retraining workers for the green economy.

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, who leads the province that stands to benefit the most economically from the pipeline, said he was "deeply disturbed" by Biden's action in a statement following the rollback.

Kenney argued Canada's emissions reduction plans are "more ambitious" than the new government in Washington, D.C., and so Keystone XL should be considered part of the shift to green energy.

"And now a decision has been made without even giving Canada a chance to communicate formally with the



REUTERS/BLAIR GABLE

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speak in Ottawa.



REUTERS/TERRAY SYLVESTER

Part of the pipeline in North Dakota in the middle of the winter. Joe Biden has cancelled the project in his first day in office.

new administration," he said. "That's not how you treat a friend and ally."

Indigenous communities in Canada were divided on the Keystone XL. Some groups feared the environmental impact of Canada's crude oil while others were supportive of the project because of the employment opportunities it offered.

Dale Swampy, president of the National Coalition of Chiefs, told The Canadian Press that Indigenous Peoples in Alberta are "closely entrenched" with the oil and gas industry there.

Dr. Sui Sui, a professor in Global Management studies at Ryerson University, told Et Cetera that Biden's move wasn't personal.

"I don't think [the executive

order] is targeting the Canadian government," Sui said. Instead, it's "a clear message" the U.S. is ready to fight climate change again after four years of Trump.

The U.S. president explained Jan. 22 he isn't looking to hurt Ottawa with another economic hit after the Keystone XL cancellation.

"It's 'a clear message' the U.S. is ready to fight climate change again after four year of Trump."

Dr. Sui Sui

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT RYERSON UNIVERSITY

"The President acknowledged Prime Minister Trudeau's disappointment regarding the decision to rescind the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, and reaffirmed his commitment to maintain an active bilateral dialogue and to further deepen cooperation with Canada," a White House briefing statement

said.

Sui shared the same mindset of many Canadian experts, that the certainty a Biden White House will provide in comparison to the sometimes chaotic approach by Trump in regards to commerce with Canada will be much appreciated.

While in the short term, the loss of Keystone XL project will be painful to Canada, in particular Alberta, Sui said the long-term benefits of a Biden

presidency will include more predictability for Ottawa and a renewed partner in the fight against climate change.

Biden has since taking office on Jan. 20 signed executive orders that the U.S. rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement, and to ensure science plays a major role in fighting climate change.

Toronto restaurants relying on delivery services to survive lockdown

Erin Leblanc

NEWS REPORTER

Since the beginning of the pandemic, more than 140 Toronto restaurants have closed.

Indoor dining and patio services are no longer allowed and restaurants must rely on takeout and delivery to keep afloat. To facilitate this, many restaurants have turned to third-party delivery apps, such as Uber Eats.

"As a new business, they offer different promotions that kind of help boost you out there. If you're an everyday Joe scrolling through your app they bump you up for someone to see and click on," Raul D'Souza said.

D'Souza, the Chef du Cuisine at Ration Food Lab at The Beverley on Toronto's Queen Street East, said the eatery uses apps like Doordash and Uber Eats to promote its recently opened business and facilitate deliveries.

"They set everything up for you, send you a photographer... they use their own drivers, and their interface is easy to use," D'Souza said.

But despite the ease of use and convenience for customers,

there are many drawbacks to using third party delivery services.

In December, the 'Supporting Local Restaurants Act' came into effect in Ontario, requiring delivery companies to limit charges to 20 per cent per transaction, and cap commissions at 15 per cent. "Twenty per cent is still a lot. That's 20 cents on every dollar coming out of our pocket," D'Souza said.

To entice customers to take out through the restaurant, businesses such as Ration Food Labs give discounts to customers who pick up the food themselves through curbside pickup.

But as the lockdown drags on, other alternatives to third-party delivery apps are becoming available for businesses and customers.

"We pretty quickly realize that it [Uber Eats], it's not a really good deal," Roger Yang said. "Not just because of the commissions ... it's detrimental to the restaurant's image and the customer service."

Yang is the creator of LocalEats.to, a co-operative of

Toronto restaurants that handle their own deliveries.

"Uber is commoditizing the food and it takes away the character, the things that make restaurants unique and interesting. That is detrimental to the whole industry. I think we need to have alternatives," Yang said.

Websites such as LocalEats.to and Not UberEats give restaurants an alternative platform to sell their food, without paying commission.

"We need to see how we can help restaurants market themselves and how they can make a more fair delivery process ... it doesn't make sense for restaurants to be barely surviving or not making a profit on delivery," said Randy Singh, the creator of Not UberEats, a website that catalogs more than 100 Toronto restaurants and allows direct ordering from customers.

Using websites like these is beneficial not only to the restaurants and community but also to the customers.

"We hire people selectively," Yang said. "We make sure to equip them with equipment like insulated bags that can carry



JON TYSON

Food delivery services like UberEats are taking large chunks of restaurants profits.

pizza. This results in just a better experience for the customer ... food's more likely to get there warm. And in one piece."

Singh said customers will see a slightly lower bill by ordering directly.

"You have delivery fees, service fees, and whatnot, you

notice your bill ends up being quite high on delivery apps. So, normally when you order directly it's actually quite a bit cheaper," Singh said. "If you care about your community, especially during this time, making sure restaurants stay open is important."

Overcrowded Hospitals brings stress to healthcare workers and patients

Cassandra Spurrell

NEWS REPORTER

Ontario's COVID-19 cases were on a sharp incline this winter, overcrowding hospitals and leaving patients in hallways and exhausting medical staff.

Premier Doug Ford issued a province-wide stay-at-home order in an attempt to decrease COVID-19 cases on Dec. 26.

"This difficult action is without a doubt neces-

sary to save lives and prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed," Ford told the media five days earlier.

With more than 200,000 cases in Ontario, hospitals are struggling to provide appropriate space and beds for the massive number of patients coming in each day.

"The situation of COVID-19 in a hospital setting is getting worse," said Nadine Young, a nurse at Etobicoke General

Hospital near Humber College. "With increased volumes and increased acuity of patients, the hospital is feeling the pressure to treat everyone as safe and as fast as possible."

Ford announced that Ontario will inject \$125 million to support hospitals as the number of COVID-19 patients peak. High-

The hospital will open with 185 beds, which will include more than 35 critical care beds and 150 general internal medicine beds for patients.

"This hospital will take in critical care patients from surrounding hospitals to help ease capacity pressures around COVID-19," Ford said.

Healthcare workers are still under a lot of stress while trying to care not only for patients but for themselves.

"Mental illness among healthcare workers is a major concern," Young said. "A caregiver burnout can cause physical and mental stress that may lead a healthcare worker to be out of commission."

Because of the extensive amount of stress healthcare workers are going through, there are services at Ontario hospitals that help staff deal with stress or mental health issues they may be experiencing.

"Many nurses are overwhelmed, stressed and exhausted."

Marianna Melcore-Giugni

HEALTHCARE WORKER

risk hospitals will receive 500 critical care beds to assist with the influx of COVID-19 patients.

A significant amount of the funding will be allocated towards Mackenzie Health's Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital to act as a resource support centre for Ontario's high rate of COVID-19 cases. It will officially open on Feb. 7 and is expected to ease the stress of healthcare workers and decrease patient crowding in hospitals.



MACKENZIE HEALTH

Health Minister Christine Elliott at Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital opening a new wing.

"Many nurses are overwhelmed, stressed and exhausted," Marianna Melcore-Giugni, a long-term healthcare worker said. "There has always been resources for nurses. They can be found at their workplace and nursing organization."

Although the Ontario government has issued strict restric-

tions to decrease COVID-19 cases, the public has continued to disregard government orders which has led to a surge of cases.

"It's not how the government case ease the strain," Melcore-Giugni said. "It's how people should be following public health recommendations to ease the strain."



MARISSA MONTAÑEZ

Hannah Wondmeh, who's stage name is Hunnah, shares songs meant to be seen as a narration for her life experiences.

Award dedicated for Canadian Black musicians makes win more significant

Christian Collington

ARTS REPORTER

The announcement of the Canadian Black Music Awards recipients gave Hannah Wondmeh something to celebrate during the pandemic.

"Last year was a really hard year for a lot of people," Wondmeh said. "It was hard in general to navigate life."

Wondmeh, a singer-songwriter from Toronto who goes by the stage name of Hunnah, won SOCAN and SiriusXM's emerging artist award with her submission of her songs *Away* and *Think About It*.

"Think About It was my first single and one of the first demos I made," Wondmeh said. "*Away* was a bit more recent and emotionally driven."

The award was more significant to Wondmeh because it showcases the talent of Black Canadian artists.

"The award meant more knowing that it's specifically meant to recognize Black talent in Canada because there's an incredible pool of people," she said.

When Wondmeh first started making music, she felt isolated and alone being in rooms with white men and how she found that it could be demoralizing.

"Being a Black woman in the industry, I think finding other people in my community to work with and definitely to lean on and find support through is

important," Wondmeh said.

She has also explored what it means to be a Black woman in society and express softness and vulnerability. "It means the most to me that Black women will connect to my music or that it'll mean something to them, to people that share my lived experience," Wondmeh said.

Charlie Andrews, executive director of the SOCAN Foundation, has created Canadian music awards such as the Indigenous Songwriter Award.

The Canadian Black Music Award's goal was to advance equity in the music industry.

"We felt that this was an important opportunity to celebrate Black excellence among the Black community of music creators in Canada,"

Andrews said. The awards were a first for SOCAN, however, receiving more than 300 applications for the award was higher than what they expected for a new program.

"It really validates that one, there is an incredible roster of Black music creators in this country," he said.

"It also validates that there's a demand for us to continue holding space and incubating and fostering these diverse creators."

Paul Cunningham, SiriusXM's senior vice-president of sales and marketing, was surprised by the number of submissions.

"We were blown away by the outstanding talent and submissions from Black music creators

from across the country," Cunningham said.

SOCAN and SiriusXM have partnered in the past with the Canadian Country Music Awards as well as the Young Canadian Songwriter Awards. The decision to collaborate again wasn't difficult.

"That's what's so great about working with them and having this trusted and really innovative relationship that we can create initiatives at a rapid pace," Andrews said.

Moving forward, SOCAN plans to work on the next edition of the Canadian Black Music Awards.

In the meantime, they're focusing on making its 30th anniversary special this year.

"We're open to new ideas on how we can be innovative and really ensure that we're positioning ourselves to really respond to the needs of music creators and publishers," Andrews said.

Along with winning the award, Wondmeh also received a \$5,000 grant.

"I would say that it's important that grants like this exist beyond the award," Wondmeh said.

"There are so many obvious barriers that exist for Black artists or Black creatives."

She said she plans to work on an EP that she hopes to release this year.

Wondmeh also hopes the investment into Black creatives can continue, with this award being a great step in showcasing support for their work.

Movie theatres may stay closed this year

Nicholas Seles

ARTS REPORTER

Movie theatres face further disruptions as distributors weigh the risk of postponing blockbuster titles once again.

There was an attempt at opening doors and concession stands last summer for a tentpole film like *Tenet*, but the result was underwhelming.

The question now becomes how long these delays can continue without theatres suffering permanently.

"Any protracted amount of time where theatres can't be open, just like any business, is going to damage their income," said Charlie Keil, a professor of cinema studies at the U of T's St. George campus.

"Compound that with the unreliability of supply of product. Say you are a theatre that happened to be open in a market right now where there was limited concern about being open," he said.

"Do you have product to put on your screen in order to get patrons to come?"

The product in this case are the films themselves. MGM announced on Jan. 21 its *No Time To Die* had been pushed back to Oct. 8, 2021 — almost two years from its original release date of November 2019.

Edgar Wright's new film *Last Night in Soho* has also moved to Oct. 22, 2021, from April 23.

The approaching awards season has become muddled because of 2020's scattered release schedule.

It's expected that Netflix's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, Amazon's *Borat: Subsequent Movie Film* and HBO Max's *Judas* and the *Black Messiah* are to be in consideration for the 2021 awards, according to *Variety's* Oscar predictions.

Harrison Smith, a second-year Humber student in the Film and TV program, said Oscar movies can be tough to keep up with even in a normal year.

"I never really tracked Oscar movies until I connected with other film students, but now it's harder not being able to go to a theatre and see potential Oscar movies throughout the year," he said.

Former Humber student and graphic designer Magen Vaillant has taken an interest the future of theatres and their longevity.

"I have been watching the market lately for theatres and they are very slowly climbing their way back up, but there are hints that their stock prices might crash because of new streaming platforms and theatres may file for bankruptcy," Vaillant said.

"AMC is opening theatres back up in the States as of yesterday, but the movies themselves are still delayed so their stock prices are halted again," she said.

How much longer patrons will be out of movie theatres is yet to be determined, but it could be another four to six months at the least.

Canada's largest theatre chain, Cineplex, declined to comment on their plan to survive further theatrical delays.



KRISTIS LUHAERS

Cineplex focuses its thoughts on how it will try to survive until the pandemic is over



COURTESY OF ALEX BIRD

Alex Bird and the Jazz Mavericks, seen here performing before the pandemic shutdown, are just some of the many struggling artists and gig workers who have lost income due to work drying up because of COVID-19.

Toronto performing artists struggle amid COVID lockdown

Tyler Cheese

ARTS REPORTER

Alex Bird is an up-and-coming jazz singer and songwriter. With his Rat Pack style and swagger, and recognizable sideburns, he's a regular in Toronto's jazz scene. Or at least he was. These days, the closest he gets to an on-stage performance is doing an Instagram Live stream with his future father-in-law on guitar, standing in for his band.

"It's been extraordinarily hard," he said. "And it's still going to be hard for a while."

When the pandemic hit, Bird's live gigs dried up and was laid off from his day job at the Art Gallery of Ontario, he said.

Bird said he feels lucky to be able to turn to family in uncertain times, but his story is one that many of the city's struggling performing artists have felt.

According to the Toronto Arts Council website, over 10,000 artists lost work at the beginning of the pandemic.

The site also states many of these artists are self-employed and don't qualify for Employment Insurance. Jessa Agilo, founder of I Lost My Gig Canada, estimates the arts and other gig-based industries have lost almost \$2 billion.

Agilo started Canada's branch of I Lost My Gig last March to

advocate for and gather information about Canada's gig workers impacted by pandemic closures.

An ongoing survey paid for by I Lost My Gig Canada and conducted by Hill Strategies, found that Toronto gig workers lost almost 3,000 paid gigs between March 30 and Aug. 15, 2020.

That amounts to about \$3.6 million lost in income, more than \$31,000 per person.

The incomplete survey presented figures based on 995 complete respondents from all across Canada.

Self-selected respondents could choose to answer different sections of the survey.

Sixty-nine per cent of respondents identified as self-employed.

The gender breakdown of the survey respondents was 67 per cent women, 30 per cent men and four per cent gender diverse.

In addition to financial troubles, Bird said the loss of live gigs has had a significant impact on the mental well-being of Toronto's artists.

"A lot of musician friends of mine, and myself to some degree, fell into a bit of a funk," he said. "I think a lot of people fell into a very dark place."

However, he also said that many artists are now beginning to bounce back. For instance,

he and his band released their debut album, *Whiskey Kisses*, last October and they landed some live streaming performances over the holidays.

Similarly, Christine Cortes, an emerging actor and filmmaker in Toronto, said she tries to focus on the opportunities that have come about during this time.

"I'm writing my own play right now and I have other ideas that I still need to start," she said, speaking over video from her bedroom which doubles as her workspace.

Cortes said she has been involved in some film projects that have been shot remotely, using technology like Zoom.

But it isn't the same, she added.

She said she misses the experience of creating something with a community of her peers.

"I love connecting with people and just working with each other and kind of having this whole family."

Cortes said she began to hear about emergency relief funds for artists soon after the film industry shut down last March.

In addition to the federal government's Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB),

Toronto artists began sharing news of independent funding efforts in the city, she said.

The TOArtist COVID Response Fund was one of these. The fund was launched by the Toronto Arts Council for the purpose of supporting artists facing financial headaches due to the pandemic.

Haroon Khalid, Toronto Arts Council's interim Communications Manager, said the fund raised a total of \$836,347 that was distributed to 982 Toronto artists. Qualifying artists received up to \$1,000 each,

The fundraising campaign ended last summer, but a new fund is under consideration amidst Toronto's ongoing second lockdown, Khalid said. Meanwhile, in Toronto's gay village and elsewhere in the city, drag performers have faced the same struggles as other artists in the city.

Miss Shay Dee, real name Ivan Bocanegra, began performing in drag shows in late 2019.

Even out of drag, she exhibited the telltale signs of a performer as she spoke about her craft.

Shay Dee said her drag career was just taking off when the pandemic hit.

"I had all these plans, all these bookings, and then everything got cancelled," she said.

Outside of drag, she was also laid off from her day job as a nurse coordinator at the begin-

ning of the pandemic, but she said she was able to benefit from CERB as well as a \$500 grant from the Community One Foundation.

The foundation's website indicates that it regularly provides grants to LGBTQ+ artists.

She also got the opportunity to appear in a Netflix series which will air later this year.

But performing for the camera just isn't the same as performing for an audience, she said.

"I love being my true self when I do drag," Dee said.

"I just hope that this ends soon."

As the pandemic continues, the federal government recently announced more funding for Canada's most vulnerable industries in its fall economic update.

The Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program will include more than \$180 million that will go toward planning and presenting safe arts events, both live and digital, into 2022.

In the meantime, as hard as things have been on the city's performing artists, the early rollout of COVID-19 vaccines has sparked some optimism.

"My hope is that we will open up again," Cortes said.

"My hope is that things will go back to normal."

'Brazil is broken,' President Bolsonaro says he can't fix it

Anna Beatriz De Santanna
NEWS WRITER

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil is a nation devastated by COVID-19, with 8,697,368 confirmed cases as of Jan. 21.

And its president said there's nothing he can do about it.

Jair Bolsonaro, who has spread dubious information about the virus, claims the pandemic has been "enhanced by the media" and the country is broken beyond repair.

Alessandra Melo, a dentist in Rio de Janeiro, which was closed for the time required by the government, thinks the president should have "greater control over funds, to face the pandemic."

Raphaella François, who was working as an au pair in New York when the pandemic began, feels differently. She lived in the city for almost a year and saw a big difference in the way the disease was treated due to Bolsonaro's comments downplaying its severity.

François said while each American state has its own response, New York made the appropriate restrictions and ordered everyone to stay at home. In the meantime, "people in Brazil had to take crowded trains to go to work, even with the pandemic breaking out."

In New York, when she went for a walk, she saw people were afraid of any kind of contact, while in Brazil they were creating conspiracy theories.

Some in the United States and Canada, like François, have already received their vaccine, while Brazil dragged its feet and only began distributing the vaccine to citizens on Jan. 23.

The delay was caused by Bolsonaro stalling on approving the vaccine, saying it was made too hastily.

"It still has no security," he said. "No one can force anyone to take something that you are not sure of the consequences."

Virna Mac-Cord Catão, who holds a doctorate in Public Policy and Human Training at the State University of Rio de Janeiro and specializes in distance education, said Bolsonaro as head of the state needs to start managing the nation.

"Since the beginning of his candidacy, there was no management project, this was perpetrated at the beginning of his government, and during the pandemic the absence of management was confirmed," Catão said.

Bolsonaro's lack of oversight during the pandemic, along with the crisis involving Manaus' oxygen supply, has caused the president's popularity to take a



REUTERS/AMANDA PEROBELLI

An image of Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro with the phrase "How many deaths until impeachment" is projected on a building during a protest against his policies and Manaus' health crisis at Santa Cecilia neighbourhood in Sao Paulo, Brazil on Jan. 15.

hit, sparking protests across the country calling for vaccinations and his impeachment.

Despite the president saying that "the country is broken," Catão said the private system has continued to generate income, allowing the economy

to continue to function.

"A country that is broken means that it does not work, it will not honour its debts, the economy is not circulating at all," she said. "And even during the pandemic, with the social and work world reinventing itself,

money continued to circulate."

Catão said step one of minimizing the effects of the pandemic would be Bolsonaro acknowledge it exists, saying he needs to "recognizing the risks and the role of science," and be an example for his people.

Brazil's hospitals run out of oxygen for COVID-19 patients

Julia Alevato
NEWS REPORTER

RIO DE JANEIRO —The hospital system in the Brazilian city of Manaus has reached a breaking point while treating a second wave of COVID-19 patients, with reports of severe oxygen shortages.

The city, located in the Amazonas state south of Venezuela, was one of the worst-hit Brazilian cities in the first wave of the pandemic and is getting worse now. More than 7,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Amazonas since the pandemic began last year.

"We are facing the most critical moment of the pandemic,

something unprecedented in the state of Amazonas," Wilson Lima, governor of Amazonas, said during a news conference.

"The public health is collapsing, there are no hospital beds, no oxygen, nothing," said Wildla Garcez, 20, from Manaus.

"People are dying because of it and no one is talking about it. The minister and the governor want to push the drugs chloroquine and ivermectin that have no proof of scientific relevance against COVID," she said.

COVID-19 patients are suffering from respiratory complications, and some are dying of

asphyxiation in the city's hospitals because there is no oxygen to give them.

About 60 premature babies were airlifted from hospitals in

"People are dying because of it and no one is talking about it." Wildla Garcez

MANAUS RESIDENT

Manaus for emergency care in São Paulo.

"São Paulo will receive all babies that can be transported. This is the end of the world, not having oxygen for premature babies. What irresponsibility of the Bolsonaro government," São Paulo's Governor João Doria

said.

A local female medical worker shared a video that went viral on social media, where she asks the internet for help. "We're in an awful state. Oxygen has simply run out across the whole unit today," she said.

"There is no oxygen, and lots of people are dying. If anyone has any oxygen, please bring it to the clinic. There are so many people dying," she said via video.

"In the last two weeks, three people I knew have passed away. I am uncomfortable with the lack of empathy and responsibility that people have. Yes-

terday some friends of mine had a party," said Thais Costa de Queiroz, 17, of Manaus.

Fourteen non-profit organizations merged to create the SOS AM movement to help people from the Amazonas state to get the supplies they need.

"The objective was initially to help the hospital with water and snacks, but then it took on a larger proportion, and we are now helping with hospital supplies, oxygen, medication and everything necessary," Thiago Souto, a member of Salaada Solidario, one of the organizations part of the movement, said.

The movement collected 86,000 litres of oxygen between Jan. 16 to Jan. 23, and are accepting more donations.

Ukrainians celebrate holiday traditions despite lockdown

Natalie Vasyliuk

NEWS REPORTER

KOROSTYSHIV, Ukraine — Among all the winter holidays, Epiphany in Ukraine includes traditions that are literally freezing. The Eastern Orthodox celebrated Jesus' baptism on Jan. 19, an event marked by Ukrainians testing their courage in the Yordan River; also known as the Jordan River.

People cut cross-shaped openings on frozen rivers and lakes with and jump into ice-cold water following religious ceremonies. It is believed those who submerge their bodies into the water three times are going to be blessed and healed from illnesses.

This ritual has gained popularity in the past several decades. Even those who do not truly believe in the ceremony dive into the water for the adrenaline rush and unforgettable experience.

People were taking part in the ceremony in the picturesque canyon near the city Korostyshiv, about 107 kilometres west of the capital Kyiv. Trembling from



NATALIE VASYLIUK

People meeting and enjoying cups of mulled wine during the Epiphany dipping at the Canyon in Korostyshiv, Ukraine on Jan. 19.

the cold, but with a happy smile, they were getting into the water one by one, enduring the temperature of -20 C

Priests usually take part in the process of cutting through the ice, but because of the pandemic, ceremonies were officially banned to avoid gatherings. Nevertheless, people cut

through the ice themselves for the Epiphany celebration.

Prior to Epiphany diving, it is important to get used to the cold temperature of water by taking cold showers at home. This preparation will reduce the risk of getting sick after swimming in the icy river.

Denys Karasiov has been

taking part in the ritual since he first dipped into the water three years ago after spontaneously taking part in a ceremony with a friend.

"I enjoy how it takes your breath away when you submerge into the water," Karasiov said. "Each time I do it, I feel like a new man."

Ukrainians hold many superstitions about the holiday. They believe if it snows on Epiphany, the bigger the snowflakes are, the better the harvest farmers will have that year. In contrast, it is believed a cold sunny day on the holiday means a dry summer ahead.

For many people, Epiphany is a holiday, but for some, it is also a great opportunity to earn money. At the Korostyshiv Canyon, which was once a quarry, brothers Mykhailo and Pavlo Onishchenko made mulled wine and sold it for 40 hryvnias (C\$1.79) per cup.

"I don't see the reason why not to use this as an opportunity to earn some money," said Pavlo while pouring red sour wine into a cauldron. Mixed with oranges, honey and cinnamon, the wine was heated in the cauldron and poured into the paper cups.

Delicious smells attracted many people who came to get a hot drink or stand by the fire to get warm after diving into the freezing water. Despite lockdown rules prohibiting social gatherings, everyone was celebrating.

Utility prices spike during quarantine in Ukraine

Sofiia Rusyn

NEWS REPORTER

ZBARAZH, Ukraine — Ukraine's Utility prices spiked in Ukraine by almost double as unemployment is rising and monthly incomes are dropping, placing pressure on the nation during the pandemic.

More than half a million people registered with the State Employment Centre in 2020, officials report, but the government nevertheless boosted utility rates at the end of December, some doubling.

The unemployment rate was at 9.3 per cent last September in the nation of about 41 million people, up from 8 per cent in September 2019. The average monthly income dropped in November 2020 to 11,987 hryvnia, or about C\$545, from 12,174 hryvnia, or about C\$553 a month earlier, according to government sources.

Officials explained they set European prices, but the salary and pension in the European

Union are five times higher than in Ukraine. This means Ukrainians could be spending almost 90 per cent of their income on utilities.

People went to the streets demanding officials to lower their bills.

The furious crowd reached the administration office in Uzhgorod, about 800 kilometres southwest of the capital Kyiv. Vitaliy Shatylo, the head of the natural company Transcarpathian Gas, was hiding behind his chair as dozens of indignant people entered his office.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky allowed the Cabinet of Ministers to raise utility prices but has recently swung the other way, attempting to lower prices in the face of angry protestors.

At the beginning of the quarantine, prices for utilities were significantly lower. For the first 100 to 150 kilowatts of electricity people paid 0.9 hryvnias (four cents Canadian), and the price would almost double for

the rest of the month.

But during the pandemic, the government decided to double rates for all time periods, and doing it in the middle of the winter forced people to turn off heating. One kilowatt per hour can only heat two small rooms for an hour.

Water suppliers have also been forced to raise their prices. Fees rose by 16 per cent and now ranges between \$1 and \$2 Canadian in some cities for a cubic metre of water, equivalent to a shower a month.

And the cost is higher in small towns.

Ukrainians are dependent on natural gas for heating and cooking. Before the quarantine people paid six hryvnias for a cubic metre of gas, or about 27 cents Canadian, and a year later it is averaging nine hryvnias or 41 cents for the same amount.

"For the water supply, rates are set by the local authorities," said Roman Polikrovsky, mayor of Zbarazh, about a six-hour



SOFIIA RUSYN

The open Zbarazh city council meeting to discuss high utility prices on Jan 27, 2021.

drive west of Kyiv.

"The price depends on a lot of components. In each locality, it is different depending on the length of network and number of subscribers."

Citizens in Zbarazh have even more to complain about. The changes were announced on Jan.

5 but were implemented all the way back in October of 2018, a fact only released after the recent mayoral elections.

Polikrovsky said he didn't remember when he discovered the new utility prices, although, without his vote, the current rates couldn't be set.

EDITORIAL

COVID-19 variant found in multiple long-care term homes in Ontario

Last year was arguably one of the toughest years we encountered. The COVID-19 pandemic changed how society works, how people interact and how we earn our livelihoods. We entered 2021 with hope as vaccines come into play.

But it won't be easy. As the rollout of vaccines is being hampered by its own issues that require immediate attention, Ontario health officials are now investigating the presence of the new COVID-19 variant from the United Kingdom that is considered to be more contagious. The U.K. B.1.1.7 variant was found in three retirement homes, including the Bradford Valley Care Community in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont., and the Roberta Place Long Term Care Home in Barrie.

The Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit found the genome following testing at the Roberta Place home. Testing confirmed that the variant was in other homes, including the Bradford Valley centre.

"The rapid spread, high attack rate and the devastating impact on residents and staff at Roberta Place long-term care home have been heartbreaking for all," Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), said on Jan. 23.

Gardner said three days later the investigation found two persons positive for the United Kingdom variant. Shortly after, 99 people tested positive and the numbers are expected to fluctuate.

"This certainly makes us con-

cerned that the variant may be more widespread, and that in turn means that we need to really take public health measures that prevent spread of the virus much more to heart," he said.

Gardner rightly shared the information about the outbreak because of the speed the variant is moving through the central Ontario community and note "the only way it can move is through people."

"We need to absolutely follow the stay-at-home order so that we can protect ourselves, those who are more vulnerable and our health care system," he said. "We need to assume that a variant of this virus is everywhere and do everything we can to drive it out."

Based on the current situation,

all long-term care homes should restrict the visitors' hours and lower the number of visitors coming into the building. That stay-at-home order is a good start no matter how fatigued we are by the lockdown and heart-broken about not seeing loved ones in LTC homes.

Elderly people appear to be more vulnerable to the virus than teenagers and adults, in part because of a weaker immune system that leads them to contract the virus faster than usual. That is the reason they are first in line to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The government needs to come up with new and efficient guidelines to avoid more outbreaks.

Since 2020 began, the province recorded 20,077 cases

inside all 626 long-term care homes across the province in which 14,264 are residents and 5,813 are staff members. As well, the Ontario long-term care homes suffered a huge loss with 3,473 total deaths of which 3,462 were residents and 11 were staff members. Throughout 2020, about 229 homes experienced outbreaks and 397 did not.

The arguments and statistics on the long-care homes suggest a new model is needed because, despite the guidelines, residents are still dying, contracting, and passing the virus. Ontario's government must come up with a new plan in how LTC centres operate.

But until then, the best way to fight COVID-19 is to stay home as best as we can. And wear a mask if leaving home is necessary.

OPINION

Governor General vacancy leaves Canadians with important question



Jared Dodds
NEWS EDITOR

Ever since Julie Payette's appointment as the 29th Governor General in 2017, the coverage around her has been tumultuous.

Years of sparring with the media culminated in a July 2020 report stating the former astronaut has manifested a toxic work environment, and six months later she offered the prime minister her resignation.

The vacancy has led to criticism for all involved, and rightfully so. It is clear Justin Trudeau and his government did not vet Payette sufficiently, and perhaps they should have taken three years of reporting citing her lack of work ethic and bullying more seriously.

But there will be the time in the future to examine these shortcomings. What is more pressing is a question that has begun to pick up steam: should Canada have a Governor General in the first place?

This is not the first time critics have called for the abolishment of the position, and they present some persuading arguments. It is a largely ceremonial role tied to a monarchy we are no longer subjects of and, perhaps more importantly, commands a salary of almost \$300,000.

But the salary is just part of the expense. Between travel, security, housing, and all the things necessary for someone to properly "represent the queen," the tab can run over \$20 million. In a time where COVID-19 has forced the government to expend billions of dollars just to keep the country afloat, saving that money is certainly attractive.

Canada wouldn't even be the first country to do it. Barbados announced in its throne speech last September that it would be removing the position, with a speech written by Prime Minister Mia Mottley saying "the time has come for us to fully leave our colonial past behind."

So it's an expensive job that's viewed as largely ceremonial and there's precedent to eliminate it. Done deal right? Not quite.

For a start, it's not actually as expensive as it sounds. Sure, \$20 million is a large stand-alone number, but when it's put into the context of a budget that regularly tops \$300 billion, the number loses some of its grandeur.

It's also not like that investment doesn't buy us anything. There is an argument having someone in the Queen's stead preside over our government gives us a closer relationship with the monarchy, and therefore the government in the United Kingdom, which is currently the fifth largest economy in the world.

As for the precedent, while it may have happened recently, it certainly does not happen often, as the last country to do so was Mauritius in 1992.

But perhaps the most salient point for the removal of the position is the simple fact that it doesn't accomplish much. While Governor General's will meet with world leaders, they do not contribute to Canadian policy decisions. They don't even help decide who gets the Order of



CHRIS WATTIER

Payette, seen here at the announcement of her appointment in 2017, was said to have promoted a toxic work environment during her time as Governor General.

Canada, an award they hand out.

But saying the Governor General has never participated actively in Canadian politics would be misleading. It was a Canadian Governor General, Lord Byng, who forever changed how the position worked around the world after the King-Byng crisis in 1926, and more recently it was Michaëlle Jean's decision to prorogue parliament on Steven Harper's request that arguably earned him his next two terms in office.

So there is clearly good and

bad with the position. I am of the opinion that watchdogs like the Governor General are important in any democracy, no matter how ceremonial their power may seem. And there is something to be said for the simple matter of tradition.

I am not arguing Payette was a good Governor General. Clearly, she was wrong for the position. But taking one woman's failure and using it to dismantle a fixture in Canadian politics would be hasty, and potentially, ill-advised.

TALES FROM HUMBER

Small town Ontario versus the COVID-19 global pandemic

Sierra Macpherson

NEWS REPORTER

INNISFIL, Ont. — I remember driving down the empty, snow-dusted backroads of my Central Ontario hometown to work in December, only to spend most of my shifts discussing a common concern with my coworkers: What if city-dwellers brought the virus to us and forced us into lockdown?

It turns out this was a very valid concern, as the Ontario-wide lockdown was ordered on Boxing Day. The large numbers of holiday shoppers travelling to malls like the one I worked in, and others who blatantly disregarded their cities' restrictions certainly contributed to that outcome.

It was incredibly frustrating to have to stand by and watch as the numbers continued to rise and not much was done to prevent it.

I live in Innisfil, Ont. — a relatively small town of about

37,000 people, compared to the nearly three million in Toronto and more than 760,000 in Mississauga. Since March 2020, Innisfil has had fewer than 500 confirmed COVID cases; Toronto has had over 80,000. Even Barrie, the closest city to Innisfil, has had less than 1,700.

"I think the concept of lockdown was well-intended but wasn't very effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. We've seen record highs for daily cases, and the whole province has had to shut down," 20-year-old Innisfil resident Mitchell Duval said. "I think a lot of the spread does come from big centres like Toronto."

The fact is, towns and cities with smaller populations, more spread out and are further away from large, high-traffic cities like Toronto, are safer during the pandemic. That's why the Simcoe-Muskoka region was able to stay open longer than Toronto and Peel. However, many urban residents broke their lockdown restrictions by travelling to

towns like ours, and it resulted in a provincial shutdown.

"When the GTA was in lockdown and we weren't, people were just coming up here and spreading the virus, and a lot more people were contracting it because they were still out and about," Deanna Haslam, a 19-year-old from Springwater, Ont., said. "I don't believe we should have been put into lockdown because of people in the GTA coming up here."

"There should have been a stricter plan in place for travelling much earlier," she said.

Haslam and I worked together at Tanger Outlets in Innisfil, and the number of people we saw who came up from the city to shop in December was astounding. My coworkers and I would have daily discussions about them and how they would eventually force our region to close down.

"I feel like we would barely have any cases if people from the city just stayed home when



SIERRA MACPHERSON

Small towns like Innisfil fear an influx of shoppers from the city during the pandemic.

they were supposed to instead of bringing it here," Innisfil resident Jenna Ross, 20, said.

Although people who did not stay home like they were supposed to contribute to the December lockdown and second declaration of emergency issued by Doug Ford on Jan. 12, they were not the only factor. The lack of security measures taken to prevent travelling from lockdown regions was baffling.

If smaller regions were to

open up again, we would not be safe — but not because of our own residents. We would not be safe because of people travelling between regions and not staying home as ordered.

Lockdowns can be extremely difficult to endure, and staying home can make people stir-crazy. The urge to get out of the house and do something can be hard to resist, but understand that following through on these urges impacts the lives of others.

Security concern leads WhatsApp users to other social media platforms

Nur Dogan

NEWS REPORTER

People are wondering what's up with WhatsApp.

A new privacy policy on the popular messaging application is worrying users that their personal information would be shared, so some are abandoning it for alternative applications, such as Signal or Telegram.

WhatsApp has been experiencing an exodus of users, considered the largest in its history. The company's new terms of service announced on Jan. 6 backfired and has cost almost eight million active users because of personal privacy concerns.

"The users will give consent to share their activity information, which is called metadata, through which people will give up their identifying information on the data they produce and consume in the virtual world," Tansu Kacmaz, a Turkish lawyer residing in Canada, said.

"They cannot see our messages, but they can pull the background information from it. This is what we will be giving the consent for," she said.

The new regulation makes users' phone numbers, profile names, photos and even messages available to Facebook, the parent company of WhatsApp. The information would also allow businesses to connect with users.

If users do not sign the agreement by May 15, they cannot continue using the app.

The app's new policy also secures the company from any possible lawsuits. Based on the new conditions, if the users accept the policy, they cannot sue WhatsApp for their rights of privacy and publicity. Resolution would have to be reached by arbitration.

"I watched a documentary recently and it said, 'If a product is free, you become the product. They make a profit out of you,'"

Kacmaz said. "WhatsApp will ask us about the policy change in a few months. We either give our consent and be the 'product' or we can switch to some other 'safer' options."

Signal and Telegram applications are considered safer than WhatsApp. Signal does not store users' chat history, while WhatsApp saves chats on cloud technology. Users are not allowed to bypass this default automatic storage mechanism.

Telegram users can save their message content by archiving automated chat history storage via the "secret chat" button.

"With this contract, we will know that when we are talking with someone it can record or read by a third one," said Betul Arslan, a material engineer who switched from WhatsApp to Telegram. "That is why I prefer to use Telegram instead of WhatsApp because Telegram seems safer."

Another user Harun Saglam no longer trusts WhatsApp and switched to Signal.

"According to the news I read and researched, Signal is the most satisfying application in terms of privacy. So, I downloaded Signal," Saglam said.

Kacmaz said Signal seems to care more about ethical and privacy concerns.

The non-profit app is currently being used by journalists and activists and found to be more reliable than other chat apps. Based on the data from Apptopia on Jan. 6, after the WhatsApp policy was announced, 7.5 million users downloaded Signal across the world.

Saglam, who has been using the three applications said, "if my contact list starts to discover Signal and move there, I can only go on with Signal."

WhatsApp LLC, however, provided an exception to European Region. The new 'Terms of Service and Privacy

Policy' notification that enforce users to share data with Facebook companies was not sent to European users' devices.

European users, however, will get updated terms of service that won't include sharing data with Facebook.

"The first detail that catches my attention is that the European Union is excluded from this scope," Saglam said, wondering why the North American policy doesn't apply to EU member states. "Why this discrimination?"

WhatsApp Ireland Limited, which operates the company's Europe and U.K. services, did not make any change to the data privacy policy while WhatsApp Inc. pushed the policy change notification in Canada and the U.S.

The reason for this significant difference between European and American countries arises from the different approaches to data privacy in the two continents.

COVID-19 restrictions affect post-secondary students living in residence

Sierra Macpherson

NEWS REPORTER

The restrictions caused by COVID-19 and Ontario's stay-at-home order have drastically impacted the residence experience for post-secondary students across the province.

Many first-year students move into residence to participate in orientation activities, meet friends and attend parties. For many, this year that was not possible.

"It's definitely hard not to wonder what a typical first-year residence experience would look like, and how it differs from what we have right now. I do feel like we're missing out on a lot," said 18-year-old Julia Bullard, a first-year food science student at Guelph University.

Most residences are operating at a limited capacity, and guests are prohibited during lockdown. Masks must be worn inside and dining halls are takeout only. Indoor gatherings are not allowed and students are not allowed in each other's rooms, making the experience very different from previous years.

"Everything is harder," said Trent University forensic science student Brooklyn Lefler,

18. "Online school and making friends are both a lot harder. I haven't really become friends with anyone here because I want to be safe and stay away from big groups."

Although many students took the opportunity to move into residence over the winter break, safety remained a big concern.

"My dad didn't want me to go at all because he was so nervous about it and so was my sister, but my mom eventually talked them into it because she knew I was upset being at home," said Hannah Faubert, 19, a Guelph University Family Studies and Human Development student.

Bullard said some students at Guelph's residence have been breaking the lockdown rules and gathering, despite the university's efforts to enforce them.

"We didn't know what would happen if we broke the rules, but a few of my friends in another building unfortunately had to learn by experience," she said. "If they broke protocol, they were given a \$120 fine.

"Others were caught by the police and given a much larger fine and usually a write-up to go with it," Bullard said.

Humber College's residence is only open to those who need



ELI RIDDER

Residences like this one at Humber College have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, adding additional stress to students.

to be on campus for in-person learning, and very tight restrictions are in place.

Unlike other schools, all of the common areas at Humber's residences are closed and students do not have suitemates. Residents and staff must wear masks and frequently complete self-assessments and no non-essential visitors are allowed inside.

The college also held a fully virtual orientation this year to further prevent gathering.

Humber residence life manager Phil Legate said the residence is running at about 20 per cent capacity this year, with only 300 students occupying more than 1,400 beds between the North and Lakeshore campuses. Staff numbers have also dropped.

"We made a decision back in the summer that because of the way the year was unfolding we only wanted returning staff to work with us," Legate said. "By

the time April rolled around, we had about 20 or so with offers to come work for us, and of that 20, we essentially got five that decided that they wanted to work here, just given what the year looks like."

Eighteen-year-old Josefa Fowler, a Child Studies student at Guelph University, said she feels grateful she's able to live in residence at all, but she still wishes she could have a "normal university experience."

Meal plans help prevent emotional eating during pandemic lockdown

Ayesha Raizada

NEWS REPORTER

Emotional eating during pandemic has led to unhealthy coping mechanism.

Mindful and intuitive eating approaches are key ways to support overall health and well-being during the pandemic, experts say.

Amanda Li, a registered dietitian with Wellness Simplified, said eating is not a means to an end.

Li said if people do not eat a full meal, they would feel like snacking every hour.

"Meal planning, to be present in the moment and relish every bite is super important," she said.

Li said when minds are mentally distressed, people often end up doing mindless eating.

"My goal is helping you make healthy eating the easier choice,"



FLICKR.

Eating vegetables like these are a good start to any healthy diet, essential especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic.

she said.

Jonathan Wade, a health and fitness trainer with LA Fitness and Goodlife Fitness, said the biggest issue around health is the North American diet, which is a carbohydrate-rich diet that includes rice, bread, pasta, and processed food.

That type of diet coupled with long periods of sitting and a lack of exercise could spell trouble.

Wade said it is important to implement healthy eating habits combined with exercise for well-being, especially during a pandemic.

A study by the College of

Kinesiology at the University of Saskatchewan found that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted university students' mental and physical health. Staying indoors led to a worsening of eating habits, increased snacking, consuming more high fat and sugary foods, alcohol, while reducing

consumption of nutrient-dense food.

The study found poor dietary habits pose a greater risk to mental and physical health.

Registered dietitian Chelsea Cross, with MC Dietetics, said an emotional relationship with food should be shunned to avoid stress eating and irrational overeating.

"If you have certain trigger foods in the house readily available all the time and you say no to yourself all the time, that causes a lot of anxiety and just the fact that you're telling yourself no, eventually you will crave those foods," Cross said.

She said it is important to stuff the pantry with the basic staples in the house to make meals quickly, to avoid irrational eating.

Cross said choosing to cook more balanced meals at home, as opposed to ordering convenient food, is the way to maintain good health.

Building Hope worldwide one court at a time

Cassandra Daley

SPORTS REPORTER

Humber College student Hope Agbolosoo returned to Ghana three years ago, where he was born, and knew something had to be done to help young basketball players there.

The 21-year-old owner of Hope Fitness, who arrived in Canada when he was 10, said he noticed the basketball courts were in bad shape in the African nation.

"No traction on the court, and really unsafe," said the Milton trainer who's currently enrolled in Humber's Sports Management course. He decided he was going to return to Canada to continue and use Hope Fitness to make a difference.

He returned to Ghana three years ago to run a basketball camp called Hope Fitness Without Borders. The camp was a huge success, with the help of teachers from different schools in the community. But, being back home made him realize that there were more ways he could help give back.

Agbolosoo raised enough money to build two new basketball courts, one in his old neighbourhood, and the other at

his father's former high school. That experience and seeing the impact it had on his community has inspired him to continue with this initiative, calling it Project Hope.

"I used to be that little boy that dreamed of playing the game and not only am I playing the game, but I am building a bridge to provide that same hope for others," he said.

Since then, he launched a GoFundMe page for Project Hope, and is reaching out to media outlets to spread awareness.

Agbolosoo said he started his business four years ago intending to use it as a platform to "showcase and nurture athletes to bring out their full potential.

"I look at it like, 'if younger me was looking for someone to look up to, would I look up to the person I am today?'" he said.

Since starting up his business, Agbolosoo has trained different athletes including former Miami Heat professional basketball player Kyle Alexander.

He said coming to Canada at the age of 10 was a huge culture shock; "I did not want to be here. I was worried about the language barrier and making



HOPE AGBOLOSOO

Just some of the children in Agbolosoo's home country of Ghana who benefited from the construction of new basketball courts.

friends...it was a huge change."

Although he was worried about making friends, sports was his way of making connections. In Grade 8, his cross country coach suggested he should try out for the basketball team to see how he liked it.

He fell in love with the sport instantly, but a broken femur from a dunk in his final year of high school put his playing days on hold.

While going through his recovery process, a parent from his high school in Milton asked

if he could train one of her children. Initially, he agreed but didn't think much of it.

But demand for his training skills grew by word of mouth and before he knew it, he was training eight kids, and with that the spark to create Hope Fitness.

Toronto Six debuts inside the NWHL bubble in Lake Placid

Garrett Thomson

SPORTS REPORTER

With the bubble up and running in Lake Placid, N.Y., the NWHL and its players have finally been able to get back on the ice. The highlight, at least for Canadians, is the debut of the Toronto Six to the league.

The NWHL has finally begun its 2020-21 campaign in a bubble season tournament format that began on Jan. 23. The bubble is based in Lake Placid's Herb Brooks Arena, named after the coach of the 1980 Olympic gold medal U.S. Miracle on Ice hockey team.

The bubble format has been used throughout the pandemic by professional leagues to keep players safe while letting them continue to compete.

"They have done the best they can with a tough situation, they



TORONTO SIX

Emma Woods, a Toronto Six forward, is among the players in the NWHL bubble.

have a lot of constraints," said Six coach Digit Murphy, discussing how the bubble season has been scheduled to help best fit the players work schedules on top of their

professional hockey schedules.

The long-awaited debut of the Six marks Canada's return to centre stage in women's hockey following the demise of the Canadian Women's

Hockey League in 2019.

"To be behind the bench again, it's a very fun experience," Murphy said, talking about the feeling of being on the bench and the emotional return in the team's first game.

"There is not one person that isn't smiling," she said.

Murphy said it's important to create an enjoyable environment for the players, allowing them to get back on the ice while creating a transparent team with everyone being able to communicate.

The Toronto Six had their first two games on the weekend of Jan. 23 and 24, losing the opener to Metropolitan Riveters 3-0, and then losing in overtime to Minnesota Whitecaps.

The team posted its first win with a 2-1 score against the Boston Pride on Jan. 26, and continued their winning ways on Jan. 27 beating the Buffalo Beauts 4-2.

Samantha Ridgewell, part of the Six's goaltending tandem with Elaine Chuli, got the nod for the Sunday's game against the Whitecaps.

"I was nervous before the game, but once we hit the ice for warm-ups, you just get back into your groove and it doesn't feel like a year has passed," Ridgewell said.

With the NWHL bubble going smoothly and the Toronto Six holding the top spot in the league as of Thursday, the season has had an interesting start for Torontonians, to say the least.

All games are being shown live on twitch.tv and the finals are being broadcasted on NBC Sports in early February.

With the publicity the league is currently receiving it expects many of its new fans will follow for years to come.