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NEWS LOCAL

Local businesses say not a good time for minimum wage increase

By Yasmin Mayne, Spruce Grove Examiner/Stony Plain Reporter
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Last week minimum wage increased to \$12.20 per hour. The Alberta Government plans to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2018 - Metro Creative Graphics.

Last weekend, minimum wage in the province increased by \$1, but the local business community is concerned it is not the right time for a hike.

The Alberta Government has plans to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2018, but for this year it will be increased to \$12.20 per hour.

"The overwhelming message we are hearing from our members is that the timing is all wrong," said Penny Gould, executive director of the Stony Plain Chamber of Commerce.

"First Bill 6, then the minimum wage hike, and soon the carbon tax, all coming at a time when we are still dealing with a very fragile economy."

Ian Havin, who owns the two Tim Horton's franchises in Stony Plain, echoes this sentiment of bad timing for the minimum wage increase.

"I am disappointed that this is happening at a time when the Alberta economy has taken a dive," said Havin.

"If we had been a booming economy ... then it would have been great."

Havin also points out that business owners may not be able to sustain the current differential in wages between minimum wage workers and those who are paid above minimum wage, with this new increase.

Havin said employees who are paid above minimum wage are going to expect an increase as well.

"I can't see how business owners can sustain that difference ... without an increase in products and services," Havin said.

However, Havin explains that if the price of goods and services increased, it could affect sales, especially in this economy.

"People may not go out for meals as often as they used to," Havin said.

According to Gould, in a survey that was conducted by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce, last year's minimum wage increase affected businesses negatively.

"Of the 800 respondents, 80 per cent said when the minimum wage increased from \$10.20 per hour to \$11.20 per hour, it had a negative impact on their businesses," Gould said.

"As well, of the respondents who had laid off workers since the last minimum wage increase, two-thirds said they laid off only minimum wage earners and expected this trend to continue with further minimum wage increases."

According to Gould, there are alternate methods to help minimum wage workers.

"Feedback from business is that perhaps lower personal income taxes on low wage earners would better serve both the individual and business."

Benefits of a higher minimum wage

According to the province, the increases to minimum wage will help support low-income families.

"Low-income earners should be able to support their families without having to visit the food bank," reads the Alberta Government website

"A higher minimum wage can help to reduce poverty, lessen the burden on social support programs and improve the quality of life for vulnerable Albertans."

According to the province's research, gradually increasing minimum wage doesn't affect overall employment levels, but does lead to multiple benefits such as increased consumer spending and reduced wage inequality, especially for women.

On Oct. 1, 2017 minimum wage will increase to \$13.60 per hour, and on Oct. 1, 2018 it will become \$15 per hour.

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This Week's Flyers

A flyer for London Drugs featuring Nikon cameras. The top section has a blue header with 'HI-TECH SAVINGS!' and 'LONDON DRUGS' logo. Below, it says 'Nikon Welcome to photography' and 'SnapBridge Share instantly with SnapBridge'. A 'NEW' badge is next to a Nikon camera image. The bottom of the flyer has a 'HOVER FOR FLYER' button and the London Drugs logo.

HI-TECH SAVINGS!
phone | electronics | computers | audio-video systems | groceries
LONDON DRUGS
Save Friday, September 30 - Wednesday, October 12, 2016
PROUDLY CANADIAN SINCE 1948
Nikon
Welcome to photography
NEW
SnapBridge
Share instantly with SnapBridge
Take better images
HOVER FOR FLYER
LONDON DRUGS

A flyer for Home Depot featuring Samsung appliances. The top section has an orange header with 'THE HOME DEPOT' logo and '2 WEEKS ONLY' text. Below, it says 'BIG FALL SAVINGS Appliance Event' and 'SAMSUNG'. A price tag shows '\$497' and '\$699'. The bottom of the flyer has a 'HOVER FOR FLYER' button and the Home Depot logo.

THE HOME DEPOT
2 WEEKS ONLY
THRU OCTOBER 12, 2016
BIG FALL SAVINGS
Appliance Event
SAMSUNG
NOW \$497
\$699
HOVER FOR FLYER
THE HOME DEPOT

A flyer for PetSmart celebrating its 20th anniversary. The top section has a pink and white header with 'PET SMART celebrates 20 YEARS' and 'it's party time'. Below, it says 'Join us Saturday, October 8th in ALL stores to celebrate our 20th Anniversary' and 'SPEND \$50 GET \$10 SPEND \$100 GET \$30'. A dog wearing a pink party hat is featured. The bottom of the flyer has a 'HOVER FOR FLYER' button and the PetSmart logo.

PET SMART celebrates
20 YEARS
it's party time
Join us Saturday, October 8th in ALL stores to celebrate our 20th Anniversary
Free treats and giveaways - for people & pets!
PLUS
keep celebrating all weekend long with these savings!
SPEND \$50 GET \$10
SPEND \$100 GET \$30
HOVER FOR FLYER
PET SMART