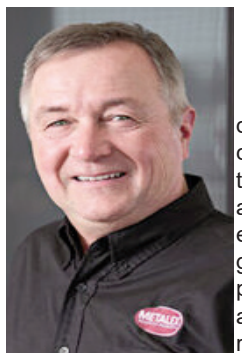

5 Minutes can change your life

By Tom Reimer

Sly returned—because of course he did. A man like him didn't accept defeat easily. He moved through your yard with the slow, deliberate confidence of someone who believed persistence was a skill. But tonight, as he crept toward your home, he felt something different in the air. Not danger. Not an opportunity. Just… irritation. Your house had embarrassed him twice already, and he wasn't about to let a building get the better of him. He started with the obvious: the doors. The back patio door stood there like a smug sentinel, gleaming under the motion-activated floodlight that snapped on the moment he stepped within range. Sly froze, teeth clenched. The light wasn't just bright—it was theatrical, like a spotlight calling out his presence. He backed away, shielding his eyes, muttering curses under his breath. Fine. Doors were out. Again.

He moved to the windows, hoping maybe—just maybe—you'd overlooked one. But every single one had a visual deterrent staring back at him. Reinforced frames. Security film stickers. Alarm decals. Even the blinds were closed tight, giving him nothing to study, nothing to exploit. He tapped one pane lightly. That same dull, dead thud. He hated that sound.

He circled the house twice, growing more annoyed each time. No door. No window. No chance. So, he started thinking like a desperate man.

Alternatives. He scanned the yard, looking for anything he could use. A shed? No. Locked. A ladder? You'd secured it with a chain. A garbage bin he could climb? Too far from the house—and you'd placed it under a camera. He spotted the camera's blinking blue LED and hissed through his teeth. You weren't just protecting your home; you were taunting him with every visual cue imaginable. He moved toward the side of the house, hoping for a blind spot. Instead, he found a sign mounted neatly on the wall: 24/7 Surveillance. Audio & Video Recording. He stared at it, wondering if it was real. Then he noticed the tiny reflection of the IR camera lens catching the moonlight. Real. He backed away again. He tried the backyard fence next, thinking maybe he could climb it and access the roof. But you'd installed anti-climb spikes—small, discreet, but unmistakable. He ran a gloved hand along them and felt his stomach sink. Even the fence was telling him to go home. He looked up at the roofline, considering a desperate scramble. But then he saw them: two fake security cameras angled downward, blinking red. Fake or not, they worked. They made him hesitate. They made him doubt. They made him feel watched.

And that was enough. Sly stood in the middle of your yard, surrounded by lights, signs, cameras, spikes, reinforced frames, and every visual deterrent you could imagine. It wasn't just a house—it was a message. A loud, clear, unavoidable message.

Not here. Not tonight. Not ever. He exhaled, defeated yet again, and slipped back into the shadows. He wasn't used to losing, but your home had turned him into a spectator—someone who could only look, never touch.

As he disappeared into the night, one thought lingered in his mind: You hadn't just secured your home. You'd secured his surrender. Not on my watch. Sly, not today, not ever—you have been outsmarted.

Next week, we are going inside because crime prevention is not only about the ones that you don't know, but an unsuspecting homeowner can fall victim and you need to be informed. Till then.

Canada's tariff retaliation is a losing strategy

By Roslyn Kunin

Tariffs meant to punish the United States risk hurting Canadian businesses and consumers more than Americans. They say we have to hear something seven times before we believe it.

If it is an idea that upsets some long-held beliefs, we may pull the adult equivalent of the childish trick of putting our hands over our ears and hollering "la la la" so we do not have to hear it at all. There is one area in which such wilful deafness has been particularly noticeable: tariffs.

We have all heard it before, but too many are still reluctant to believe that tariffs do more harm than good. They harm the country that imposes them by making imports more expensive and less available, increasing both the cost of living for consumers and the cost of doing business.

Trump and other tariff supporters believe taxing imports will encourage American production and create jobs. Tariffs can encourage domestic production by making competing imports more expensive. But making more things does not necessarily mean creating many more jobs. Modern manufacturing relies heavily on machines, automation and software, so it takes fewer workers to produce many goods than it once did.

Canada has just provided another example.

On Sept. 8, Canadian counter-tariffs took effect on $27.6 billion worth of imports from the United States, including steel, dairy products, appliances, agricultural equipment and electronics. Ottawa says it is matching the latest U.S. tariffs dollar for dollar, with Canadian rates ranging from 15 per cent to 50 per cent.

The desire to hit back is understandable. When someone hits you, it is almost instinctive to hit back. But psychologically satisfying as retaliation may be, that does not make it good economic policy.

Canadian businesses are already being hurt by U.S. tariffs that make it more difficult and expensive to sell into their largest foreign market. Canadian counter-tariffs can add another problem by making American equipment, components and other inputs more expensive.

Ottawa also argues the tariffs will help Canadian producers compete against American goods in the Canadian market. But any protection they provide comes at a cost to businesses and consumers that rely on those imports. Canadian tariffs are paid by Canadian importers when American goods enter the country. Those costs can then show up in higher prices, while consumers may also face less choice and, in some cases, goods disappearing from the Canadian market altogether.

The argument for counter-tariffs is that they will put enough economic and political pressure on the United States to persuade Washington to change course. But for that strategy to work, the pain we impose on the Americans has to be worth the pain we impose on ourselves.

Our economy is much smaller than that of the United States, and we are far more reliant on the American market than the United States is on ours. Almost 72 per cent of Canadian merchandise exports went to the United States last year. Canadian tariffs can hurt particular American industries and may create some political pressure. But we have to ask whether that pressure is worth what the tariffs cost Canadians. That is a poor bet.

Our tariffs are more like mosquito bites. They may sting and annoy, but we are likely to hurt ourselves more than we hurt the United States.

History also warns against escalating tariff wars. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, countries tried to protect their industries with tariffs. Other countries retaliated with tariffs of their own, helping drive a severe contraction in international trade and making an already terrible economic situation worse. There is a lesson there that should not require seven repetitions.

Canada should resist Trump's attempt to use access to the American market as leverage against us. But resisting does not require us to copy his economic policies.

There is a better way to fight back. Canada needs to become less vulnerable to American economic pressure. That means building needed infrastructure as quickly as possible, removing obstacles to trade within Canada and finding more suppliers and customers outside the United States. None of this means turning our backs on the Americans. Geography and the enormous size of their economy will always make the United States a natural and important trading partner. But trade and dependence are not the same thing.

The less dependent we are on one market, the less power that market has over us.

Individuals, businesses and governments are already beginning to move in this direction. It will take time and it will cost money. But money spent making Canada more competitive and less dependent buys us something that retaliatory tariffs do not: greater economic freedom.

Perhaps, after hearing the lesson enough times, we will finally believe it.

THE Mr. X Files

By John Mutton

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

Karmageddon

Data Centre Capital of Canada But Where Are the Jobs?

By Mr. 'X' ~ John Mutton, Former Mayor of Clarington

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

There has been considerable excitement at Clarington Town Hall about the possibility of making our municipality the "data centre capital of Canada." It certainly makes for a good headline. But before we start handing over some of the most strategically important employment land in Ontario, I think taxpayers deserve answers to a few much less glamorous questions. How many permanent jobs will these data centres actually create? How many jobs will they create per hectare of employment land they consume? How much electricity will they require? How much water will they consume? And perhaps most importantly: What are we giving up by putting them there? Let me make something clear from the beginning. I am not opposed to data centres. They are an important part of the modern economy. Artificial intelligence, cloud computing and virtually every part of our increasingly digital economy require them. Data centres can also represent billions of dollars of private-sector investment and significant additions to the municipal assessment base. My concern isn't whether data centres should come to Clarington. My concern is where we put them. Our Employment Lands Were Created to Create Employment Clarington's own Official Plan describes Employment Areas as strategic assets. More importantly, the Official Plan establishes a minimum employment-density target of 30 jobs per gross hectare, especially on Prestige Employment, Business Park and Light Industrial lands adjacent to the Highway 401 and 418 corridors. There was a reason for that. Municipalities don't designate employment lands simply because they want large industrial buildings. We designate them because we need somewhere for people to work. Now consider what happens when a very land-intensive development produces relatively few permanent jobs. If 100 hectares of employment land were developed at 30 jobs per hectare, the planning benchmark represents approximately 3,000 jobs. If a development occupying those same 100 hectares produced only 500 permanent jobs, it would achieve just 5 jobs per hectare. The municipality would effectively be 2,500 jobs short of the employment capacity represented by the 30-jobs-per-hectare benchmark. Those jobs then have to be accommodated somewhere else. And unlike an annual budget problem, you can't fix this one next year. The land is gone. And This Isn't Just Any Employment Land Immediately beside the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station sits the Clarington Energy Business Park. It comprises approximately 129 hectares - 318 acres. Clarington's own Secondary Plan says these lands were identified as an appropriate location for prestige employment uses that benefit from proximity to Darlington and other major employers within the energy and environment sectors. The Plan says the site has the attributes to become a focal point for new development within the Durham Energy Cluster. Think about how extraordinary that opportunity has become. Darlington is now at the centre of Ontario's nuclear expansion. Around it, Clarington has an opportunity to attract nuclear engineering companies, component manufacturers, robotics companies, SMR suppliers, research and development operations, engineering consultants, training institutions, advanced manufacturers and corporate offices. Those businesses create something more important than individual buildings. They create a cluster. One supplier attracts another. Engineering talent attracts research. Research attracts investment. Manufacturers attract their suppliers. And suddenly Clarington isn't simply the municipality where the nuclear plant happens to be located. Clarington becomes Canada's nuclear-energy capital. Why would we want to trade that opportunity for the title of data centre capital without first understanding the consequences? A Canadian Reality Check: Meta's Alberta Data Centre Here is why this question deserves more than slogans. In July 2026, Meta announced a new 1-gigawatt data centre in Sturgeon County, Alberta. Meta says the completed project will represent an investment of more than C$13 billion and employ approximately 3,000 construction workers at peak construction. But once operational, Meta says the data centre will support more than 300 jobs.

That is an enormous investment and those jobs are valuable. But it illustrates why municipalities must distinguish temporary construction employment from permanent operational employment when deciding how to use scarce employment land. Clarington's 129-hectare Energy Business Park, measured against the Official Plan's 30-jobs-per-gross-hectare benchmark, represents 3,870 jobs of employment capacity at that density. We do not know that a Clarington data centre would employ 300 people, nor should anyone pretend the Alberta project and Clarington's Energy Business Park are identical. But the Canadian example gives Council a very good reason to demand a project-specific jobs-per-hectare calculation before approving a hyperscale facility on strategic employment land.

Clarington Energy Business Park -129 ha. Official Plan employment-density benchmark - 30 jobs/ha. Employment represented at that density - 3,870 jobs. Illustrative hyperscale operational employment - 300 jobs*. Illustrative density if 300 jobs occupied -129 ha 2.3 jobs/ha. Illustrative difference from benchmark - 3,570 jobs. Share of benchmark employment - 7.8%. *The 300-job figure is an illustration using Meta's current Sturgeon County, Alberta hyperscale example. It is not a forecast for any specific Clarington proposal. Put another way: at Clarington's 30-jobs-per-hectare benchmark, just 10 hectares represents 300 jobs. That is why jobs per hectare matters. Other Municipalities Are Asking Exactly These Questions We wouldn't be the first municipality to be cautious. Oakville Council has used an Interim Control By-law to pause and study new data centres and similar high-intensity digital processing facilities on employment lands. Mississauga has also moved toward an Interim Control By-law and a comprehensive policy review examining issues such as employment, economic benefits, infrastructure, energy and water consumption, noise, heat and environmental impacts. In other words, the sensible approach is not necessarily to say no. It is to say: show us the numbers first. Then There Is Water The water question deserves considerably more attention. Data centres produce tremendous quantities of heat. How that heat is removed depends upon the technology used in a particular facility. Some systems can substantially reduce direct water consumption; others can use significant water for cooling.Meta's Alberta project is a useful reminder not to generalize: Meta says its Sturgeon County facility will use a closed-loop liquid-cooled system with dry cooling and projects no operational water use in the cooling system. That is exactly why Clarington should require disclosure rather than rely on assumptions. Before approving a major data centre, Clarington should know its projected annual water consumption, peak water demand, cooling technology, electricity requirement and whether municipal drinking water is being used for cooling. If a developer proposes a low-water or closed-loop system, terrific. Show us. If it proposes substantial use of treated municipal water, taxpayers deserve to know that too.Then there is the elephant in the room: power. The reason Clarington is attractive to data-centre developers isn't difficult to understand. We have Darlington and an enormous concentration of electricity infrastructure. But access to power is itself becoming an economic-development asset.

If hundreds of megawatts of available electrical capacity are committed to data centres, could that constrain our ability to attract advanced manufacturing, nuclear suppliers or other major employers later? I don't know the answer. But before declaring ourselves the data centre capital of Canada, somebody had better find out. Put Every Proposal Through Four Tests I think Clarington Council should establish four simple tests before approving major data centres on strategic employment lands. 1. The Jobs Test How many permanent full-time jobs will the facility create, and what does that equal in jobs per gross hectare? Compare it directly with the employment-density assumptions in our Official Plan. 2. The Water Test How much water will the facility consume annually and at peak demand? What cooling technology will be used? Where will that water come from? 3. The Power Test What will the facility's ultimate electrical demand be? What upgrades will be required? Does allocating that capacity affect Clarington's ability to attract other employment-intensive industries? 4. The Opportunity-Cost Test What land is being consumed? If it is Prestige Employment land beside Darlington, could that property reasonably accommodate nuclear suppliers, advanced manufacturing, research facilities, engineering companies or other higher-employment uses? Maybe Clarington Should Hit the Pause Button Oakville has paused to study the issue. Mississauga is examining a similar precautionary approach. Perhaps Clarington should consider an Interim Control By-law of its own while it completes a proper Data Centre Land Use and Infrastructure Study. Not because we're anti-business. Quite the opposite.