



Photo by Nam Phi Dang

Richard Belanger, owner of Scalliwag Toys on Front Street, said he believes that the penny being discontinued by the Royal Canadian Mint is not a big deal and something people will get used to. Belanger has less than 25 cents in pennies in the cash register.

A penny for your thoughts?

Local business people share two cents worth on penny's farewell

By Nam Phi Dang

Canadians' pockets will see some change – or less of it – as the Royal Canadian Mint phases out the penny this month.

On Monday, businesses began rounding items to the closest five or zero cents. For customers, this means less pocket change and weight to deal with.

Businesses in downtown Belleville are adopting the change. Many made the switch in advance of the official date. Business owners are not fazed by the change.

"A penny is not a big thing," said Anil

Vadhera, who owns Roluf's on Front Street. His store sells a variety of items, from cameras to vintage products and includes a Canada Post outlet.

"It doesn't really matter to me. We will lose a little bit but it is okay and really, we don't have any choice. It's not good for a business though but again, no choice," said Vadhera.

The items at Roluf's vary in cost, but Vadhera doesn't think the penny's demise will have a major toll on his business.

"It won't change anything in my business. Everything is still the same and after six months we will find out how much we may have lost," said Vadhera.

Richard Belanger, owner of Scalliwag Toys, said he sees the penny as currency that has been slowly forgotten by consumers.

"The penny itself is handy in some ways at a children's store, but it is one of those things that people have not been

taking for years. They either forget, leave or not take them so I don't feel it'll affect a business too much. Definitely less weight in your pocket," said Belanger.

Belanger said he doesn't think the change will affect the day-to-day operation of his business. Unlike bigger retail operations that have had to revamp cash registers and software, he and his wife, who run the business together, will simply round prices for cash purchases.

"We don't have to make a cash machine change because we are such a small business. Prices will still appear on the computer at the exact price but if it is a cash transaction, we will just round the price."

Belanger said he isn't worried about the effect on his customers.

"I don't think it will change anything. Many customers don't really realize how much change they get anyway as long as it is close to what they are supposed to get back," said Belanger.

Linda Greer, the manager at Y'Wanna Hav A Café is delighted about the penny being discontinued.

"As a consumer, I am thrilled to death that they are not going to be around anymore because it will just be less carrying. Business-wise, I don't think it will be a problem. Most people won't want to be carrying them and most of our customers don't have or want pennies back so I think it will be fine. Not going to be an issue at all," said Greer.

Greer and her employees at the café have always practised rounding up and down and knocking off pennies on their items.

"We here have always been rounding. For example, if someone did not have a penny, we would knock it down. Plus, we would not always keep pennies in the cash so sometimes we would not have them to give back, which is when we would round – normally in the customers favour. Now

it will work one way or the other," said Greer.

The end of the penny isn't expected to affect Belleville's economy on a whole.

Sarah Tummon is the executive director at the Belleville Downtown Improvement Area. She sees the change even on a larger city scale as having no impact.

"The development plans in downtown Belleville are mostly on a large scale so I don't think this would affect any future investors or the plan the City of Belleville would have," said Tummon.

The Royal Canadian Mint estimates that taxpayers will save \$11 million each year with the penny's demise.

The penny will hold its value as legal tender but will not be redistributed. The change will only affect cash transactions – chequing and electronic transactions will not be impacted.



Photo by Marta Iwanek

Jordan Marlowe of the Lancers rushes at the net as Christoff Pierre of the Lords attempts to block him at the Loyalist College Lancers vs. Durham College Lords men's basketball game at the Loyalist College gym Tuesday. For story, see page 3.

Get ready for more winter weather

By Catherine Jackman

While the Quinte area is no stranger to unpredictable winter weather, residents have begun to adapt their lifestyles to accommodate for the constant changes.

Environment Canada is predicting a winter storm to hit the Belleville and Quinte area Thursday lasting until well into the day Friday.

With 15 to 25 cm of snow expected to fall and harsh winds to blow from over Lake Ontario, Environment Canada says the heaviest snow will occur during the Friday morning rush hour along the Highway 401 corridor from London to the Greater Toronto Area to Kingston and through the Golden Horseshoe.

That's good news to businesses that rely on the snow through the winter season.

"The snow storm will have a great affect on our season. People assume that when they see snow melting in the city, that the snow on the hill is melting too, and that just isn't the case," said Morgan Casement, administration manager at Batawa Ski Hill.

The ski hill, she said, had an increase of traffic this year, compared to last year, which she blames on the lack of general snow. Casement said that even when all the snow is melting, that they have generators which at minus -5C can produce snow.

"Weather's not going to tell you much about this year, instead you have to look at climate over the last few years and compare," said David Phillips, a climatologist with Environment Canada.

Phillips said that the winters within the next 30 years are going to start getting increasingly shorter.

"There won't be any extreme cold, but the snow and ice will stay," said Phillips.

A weather change might prove beneficial for farmers in the Quinte region, who don't need the cold, but do require the blanket of snow.

"Well, in the ideal situation we would have snow cover until sort of mid-March until it warms up enough for run off, which will at least begin the season with a high water table, and a lot of moisture in the soil for planning," said Andrew Miller, farm manager at Cherryvale Organic farm.

Cherryvale, located just outside of Cherry Valley, is an organic farm specializing in organic produce, grains and on a smaller scale some organic fruit.

The farm, which is currently covered in a blanket of snow, is only growing crops within a small greenhouse.

"This is a much better winter compared to last winter. We didn't have any snow cover last winter and it was a fairly warm winter. So in the 2012 production season we actually ran into an increased amount of insects, not

the usual time that we see them," said Miller.

With the phenomenon of global warming becoming more and more relevant, this type of winter is going to become more and more of the norm, said Phillips.

"The future will bring warmer conditions, there will be more precipitations and longer growing times that include no frost. So there is good news: that farmers can grow new crops that they couldn't grow before, but there is also bad news in that the prolonged spring generally brings more bugs, disease and more drought," said Phillips.

Phillips said that farmers consider coming up with alternative options, and adapting to the new weather.

"The way farmers need to approach this change is accept good times and bad, they're going to have to do something different. Risk equates to bankruptcy and bounty," said Phillips.

It's a change which many of the farmers in the area have already taken into consideration.

"I think we're on top of it right now, as far as we want to go in terms of new ideas, but we don't really have anything on the horizon. I think that everyone in agriculture or that system of innovation at the next wave of innovation for the industry. I'm not really sure what that is yet, hopefully I'll know when it gets here," said Miller.