

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

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head to South Africa**
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Halton Hills' award-winning newspaper

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swarmed
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WEDNESDAY...

Designs are unveiled for the Town's new fire headquarters and Georgetown South station. See Wednesday's edition for details.

For breaking news go to:
www.independentfreepress.com



*Light up
with
savings*

Karen Armstrong of Halton Hills Hydro demonstrated the difference in power use between a traditional bulb (left) and a new energy efficient bulb (right). The display was at the Halton Hills Hydro Summer Savings Plans kickoff barbecue, Thursday afternoon behind the Alice Street office.

Photo by
Ted Brown

Budget '08: \$50 more out of taxpayers' pockets

MELANIE HENNESSEY
Special to The IFP

Local residents could end up paying about \$50 more in regional taxes next year, according to projections put forward by Halton staff.

At Wednesday's meeting, regional councillors approved the budget directions to staff that could bring a four per cent hike on the Halton portion of residents' tax bills, or \$49.70 based on a \$300,000 assessment. The approved increase for 2007 was 2.5 per cent, or about \$30.

On the water and wastewater rate side, homeowners could be dishing out 6.5 per cent more,

which equates to \$43.86 more for a home that uses 300 cubic metres annually.

While there was little discussion amongst council members about the numbers, Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette emphasized that he doesn't want residents to think they're etched in stone.

"These are guidelines," he noted. "I've seen the numbers change



MAYOR RICK BONNETTE
'numbers not etched in stone'

many times."

Acting Commissioner of Corporate Services Mark Scinocca detailed the big-ticket items driving the proposed budget up, like \$4.1 million to cover staff compensation and inflation. Top dollar value projects proposed in Halton's 2008 tax capital budget include:

- \$27 million— Halton Regional Centre expansion plans
- \$6.7 million— police headquarters realignment
- \$4.7 million— Winston Churchill Boulevard reconstruction from Old Pine Road to River Drive

He also said an additional \$4 million would be needed for waste

management, some of which could help implement the GreenCart program quicker than originally planned, depending on the new 2008 waste collection contract.

The projected \$49.70 tax increase is comprised of two components—\$24.54, or 2.9 per cent more for regional services and \$25.16, or 6.2 per cent more for police services.

The budget resolution also states that the 2008 tax-supported base budget should be prepared with a tax increase that doesn't exceed 2.9 per cent and the rate-supported budget put together with a maximum rate hike of 6.5 per cent.

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