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'At the table with no cards'
Mayors meet to plan strategy to keep GM

By Mark Reesor
 Whitby's Tom Edwards joined other mayors from Durham Region and surrounding areas Monday to develop a common strategy on the GM threat. General Motors announced Dec. 18 that a major restructuring now underway could lead to the closure of a plant in Oshawa and the loss of some 4,000 jobs. The company employs some 20,000 people at its Oshawa plants, but industry experts estimate there's an additional three jobs for every factory job, and another two or three indirect jobs.



DURHAM REGION CHAIRMAN Gary Herrema (left) and Oshawa Mayor Nancy Diamond at a news conference at the historic Parkwood Estate in Oshawa. Mayors from Durham and surrounding area met to work up a strategy that would convince G.M. not to close one of its Oshawa plants.

Photo by Mark Reesor, Whitby Free Press

Oshawa mayor Nancy Diamond convened the meeting at Parkwood Estate, the ancestral home of Colonel Sam McLaughlin, founder of GM Canada. The mayors are limited in what they can do -- a provincial law prevents municipalities from offering companies tax incentives, bonuses or land deals -- a situation Diamond likens to "coming to the poker table with no chips and no cards." Diamond says Oshawa is doing all it can to counteract U.S. cities offering generous packages to lure GM away.

"We're going to get in there and fight, and we will do everything within our power and everything that we collectively as mayors can do to pressure the province, the feds and anybody else to keep this system operating in Oshawa."

exists anywhere in the General Motors organization. If they take away an element of this size -- potentially 4,000 jobs -- that will destroy that asset that GM has for years and years to come...

"I'm confident that we can persuade General Motors that we have the necessary ingredients which will overcome \$30 million in grants, which I understand was available in Texas."

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Edwards says it's crucial to show GM it's in its best interests to maintain jobs in Oshawa.

"In my view, the product is as good as it is because of the expertise that's been built up over several generations..."

"We have one of the best apprenticeship schemes that

Jail term for fencing fraud

An Oshawa fencing company owner, found guilty of fraud involving fencing jobs that were never completed, was sentenced in provincial court on Jan. 16 to 13 months in jail.

Regional Police in May 1989 with 28 counts of theft and fraud.

Operating under the company name of Circle Industries, Zavitsky, beginning in October, 1988, collected more than \$11,000 in deposits from residents in Whitby, Pickering and Oshawa for fencing jobs.

Many residents said the work was never started or completed.

Police continued to seek residents who had dealings with the company.

In provincial court in October last year, Zavitsky was found guilty of 33 counts of fraud. He pleaded guilty to three more counts of fraud in court recently.

The judge also made 36 compensation orders, allowing homeowners to make a legal claim for their lost money against Zavitsky.

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