

Region briefs

Director resigns

Regional Business Development Director Matt Fischer has resigned from his post, accepting another offer from Niagara Region.

In a report to the region's administration and finance committee, Chief Administrative Officer Dennis Perlin said the only reason for Fischer resigning was a better salary offer and benefit package.

He will start as the General Manager of the Niagara Region Development Corporation in the fall of this year.

Receive and file

Administration and finance committee decided late Wednesday afternoon not to financially aid a county hit by a tornado on May 2. Councillors opted to receive and file the request for funds from Lambton County.

Lambton County is trying to raise over a \$1 million to help offset the \$3 million in damage caused by the tornado.

The same day, a request by the County of Northumberland asking school boards to collect their taxes was denied.

"It's not necessary to comment on these (requests)," claimed regional chairman Jack Raftis. "We could fill a whole agenda with these. I move to receive and file."

Committee did the same with a request by the Borough of York to establish a pension plan for elected municipal officials like that of provincial members.

Diversion keeps records clear

By BARB JOY

By giving back to society, young Halton offenders can prevent themselves from getting a criminal record.

A new Juvenile Diversion Program under the auspices of the Community-Resource Services of Halton allows young people under 16 who might otherwise be charged, or are charged, with an offence under the Juvenile Delinquent's Act, to sidestep possible criminal records.

They do it by repairing the damage or by paying the costs. They are sent out into the community to work in parks, put out chairs at the seniors' recreation centre, clean up church basements or help at special events.

However, it does not apply to those who committed an offence while using a firearm or threat of serious physical violence or one which resulted in serious physical harm or death.

Since its inception in January, the pro-

gram has met with the approval of the courts, the community, families and, in many cases, the young offenders themselves.

"They grow from it," said Deborah Metrakos who supervises the program. "It's a good way to get the guilt out."

Formerly, young offenders often did not suffer the consequences of their actions, she said. They were let off with a warning and sent home to their parents.

When they became 16 and committed the same offence, however, they were given no second chance. They had broken the law and were automatically charged in adult courts.

The juvenile-suddenly-turned-adult was often devastated, not realizing that their juvenile records were not destroyed on their 16th birthdays and so could well work against them in adult courts.

Obviously, it is in their own best interests to avoid criminal records before 16. That is

what the diversion program is all about.

Lori Chapman in the Milton office, and Patty Holloway in Oakville, sent out letters to churches, YMCAs, senior citizens groups and non-profit agencies to determine the need for the services of young offenders.

They informed parents of the juveniles about the program and invited them to take part in it. Many parents, not knowing what else to do with their young law-breakers, saw the program as a fitting method of providing restitution to victims as well as a learning process for their children.

Both child and parent must agree to the contract the resource worker proposes. Its terms could include restitution to the victim, community service work, apologies, curfews, or other variations that can run from a period of three to nine months.

If the charged juvenile is successful in fulfilling the agreed-upon terms, the diversion committee may recommend that the court consider an absolute discharge.

Small business takes loss during road work

Threatened with the prospect of losing business due to a road closure, a group of small store owners tried unsuccessfully to squeeze money out of the region Wednesday afternoon for the loss in business.

About a dozen small business owners, angry at the region for closing part of Guelph Line temporarily due to construction, vented their anger at council Wednesday.

One of the most vocal was owner of the Lowville General Store, Carol Brooks, who told council she had sunk her life savings into making the store work and the possible month-long closure could ruin it.

Pointing out that August is her busiest time and that 85 per cent of her business is transient she said the closure will cause a "great" drop in business.

"I'm begging for help," she said. "The region should have to make restitution for business loss."

She said she had been gradually building her business up until now when she was

"stabbed in the back," a remark regional chairman Jack Raftis strongly objected to.

"I don't often take exception to delegations, but I don't think the region is stabbing anyone," Raftis said.

But Brooks steadfastly maintained the region was wrong. "Why did I have to read this in the papers?" she asked. "Isn't it a courtesy to inform businesses along Guelph Line that it would be closed?"

Admitting it would have been a good public relations move on behalf of the region, Raftis claimed the region could not foresee "every eventuality."

The project was advertised in local papers, but the closure was not mentioned, prompting Chief Administrative Officer Dennis Perlin to admit regional staff may not have been "as sensitive as they might have been."

"In future, we will make sure there are public meetings with the municipality," he assured the owners.

He explained to the owners that anyone

can make a claim under the expropriation act of Ontario, but the claims have to be "valid."

"What considerations are every given to a small business?" an angry Alfred Retz of the Mount Nemo Sales and Service Ltd. commented, asking council to either give compensation in lieu of business loss or choose another detour route.

Council chose another detour route, which would allow access to the businesses and said they would erect signs stating the businesses would be open.

Originally, the region wanted to use Cedar Springs Road as the detour route, but conceded that would not allow access to the stores.

Burlington councillor Joan Little, after saying she was glad the region compromised, said she was embarrassed the region had to make the compromise at such a late date.

Construction begins on August 2.

Board briefs

Halton Board of Education Thursday evening accepted the recommendation by board vice chairperson Betty Fisher that taxpayers' funds would not be invested in any institution with less than a R1 medium rating.

This came on the heels of last winter's close call with over \$6.5 million tied up in Crown Trust after the assets of the firm were frozen by the provincial government.

The board also voted to provide schools with five per cent of the profits from cafeteria revenues, and administration will receive one per cent.

This came despite Ivan Armstrong's pleas to use the schools' co-operative programs, and vice-chairperson's Betty Fisher's contention the program is close to socialism. At the last school board meeting, Fisher noted Acton High School maintains their own cafeteria and realize about \$6,000 a year profit. With the other school's getting five per cent of the caterer's profits, they will be receiving about \$4,000 a year for doing nothing more than eating, while Acton has to work for their money.

Acton trustee Arlene Bruce, Thursday evening, disagreed with this. She commended staff for thinking up a new source of income without increasing the taxpayers' burden.

Bruce said Acton's program would probably not be possible anywhere else because of the cafeteria management. She noted they inspire the staff and the cafeteria employees. The board cannot hire a manager for the cafeteria, they must hire teachers. In Acton's situation, they have both in just a few hard working people.

Ms. Lucette Daoust has been appointed to the staff of George Kennedy / Robert Little schools effective September 1, the board decided Thursday.

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