

Chamber gives green light to VIA survey

Acton Chamber of Commerce has given the green light to the marketing study to see how much interest there is here in trying to persuade VIA to stop its passenger trains here.

The questionnaire, which will be paid for by the Chamber and conducted by grade 11 marketing students at Acton High School, was endorsed by Chamber directors Thursday.

Councillor Rick Bonnette, who first raised the idea of asking VIA to once again stop trains here a few weeks ago at council, told the Chamber board he has received overwhelming support for the idea from the community.

He's heard from dozens and dozens of residents who say they'd use the VIA trains to commute to Toronto or for pleasure trips to the city, if VIA stopped here.

Bonnette noted he's even heard of a woman in Grand Valley who drives every day to the GO train in Georgetown who plans to write a letter saying she'd switch to commuting on a VIA train if it stopped in Acton.

people it's up to the community to try and bring some of these services back, Bonnette declared.

VIA trains would be used not only by commuters, he said. He's heard from many seniors who don't care to drive to the city or don't have cars who would like VIA service so they can leave Acton once in a while.

One plus in persuading VIA to stop passenger trains here would be that they aren't going that fast through Acton anyway, Bonnette explained. There are signs on the tracks on either side of town directing train crews to slow down to 45 miles an hour going through Acton. "So it wouldn't be that hard for them (passenger trains) to stop."

The survey will determine how many people would use the trains for commuting; how many would likely use them for pleasure trips; how many people have friends and relatives who would use the train to come to Acton; which currently scheduled trains would be most popular; etc.

of Commerce, Post Office Box 415, or to any of the local councillors.

About 250 homes or approximately one in seven Acton households will receive the survey. Interim Chamber president Steve Dawkins said 250 questionnaires would produce a representative picture of interest in VIA here.

"We need these kinds of services if we are going to encourage growth in Acton. The population here has decreased by about 250 people in the last 18 months," Bonnette declared.

Armed with a fairly "professional" survey which should show VIA some financial benefits in again serving Acton, Bonnette and Chamber officials hope to make a presentation to VIA in late March.

Ted Tyler said he supports the idea fully, but warned if Acton can't show VIA it will make money the trains won't stop. "VIA won't stop just to be nice to Acton." The survey results will have to show VIA there's a certain amount of business that it isn't getting and likely would get if the trains stopped here. It won't be helpful if the results show the business would shift to Acton away from Georgetown or Milton where local people possibly now go to catch the train.

Community and political support will be needed, in addition to financial viability, in making Acton's case to VIA, Dawkins said. He said it was a good project for the Chamber to become involved with since it will impact on every area of the local economy. It would be a service not only to the community, but a plus in encouraging residential and industrial development here. Having train service for Acton could even bolster local property values.

There's no hope VIA would change its schedule, Dawkins said, so Acton will have to tie into the trains going through town now. The times aren't that great for tourists coming to Acton, Dawkins explained. But, with lots of promotion, for example through the Hide House's extensive advertising, the trains could eventually become a plus in bringing shoppers to Acton.

After the students distribute the questionnaires they will be left in the home for a few days and then collected. The Hide House computer will be used to analyse the survey results.

will do its own marketing study anyway before stopping the trains. VIA would likely look at not just Acton, but the surrounding area such as Rockwood and Ospringe too, Knechtel said.

"We don't need it to be too sophisticated. We're doing this to get VIA's attention, to show the community wanted the service enough to do something on its own. Let the high school students have a large say in the questions," he advised.

One obstacle will be to convince CN to let VIA use its land beside the tracks in Acton, Dawkins said.

The situation here has changed quite a bit since passenger train service was stopped. The population has increased and there was no VIA back then, just CN and CP which both wanted out of passenger service, Dawkins said.

When passenger trains quit stopping here there were only 12 or 14 people using them daily to commute, Paul Nielsen recalled. At the time about 500 people were leaving Acton daily for work. Today there's probably around 1,500 people leaving town for work daily and the big question is how many would use the trains.

Dawkins warned there may not be the demand for all trains to stop here, just some of the 10 which go through town daily.

Back when Acton had only 3,000 people the community had lots of services, like a train stop and its own ambulance. However, over the years services have disappeared from Acton and with a population of close to 7,000

He emphasized that those who don't receive a questionnaire in the next week or so and are interested in VIA service should sit down and write a brief letter of support. Letters should be sent to the Acton Chamber



Members of the Scout and Guide movement in Acton paraded to a special church service at Trinity United Church Sunday afternoon. The parade commemorated Scout and Guide week February 19 to 25. Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers, Brownies, Guides and Rangers, and their leaders, marched down Main and Mill streets. The parade and service were just part of events to give the public the opportunity to learn more about Scouting and Guiding.

Meeting February 27

Tourism theme for Chamber

Tourism development will be the theme of the Acton Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting next Monday night at the Legion.

Acting deputy minister of tourism for Ontario, Michael Baker, will be the guest speaker. According to interim Chamber president Steve Dawkins, Baker is expected to not just discuss the importance of tourism in a board sense but also specifically about Acton.

Also a film will be shown dealing with municipal tourism development.

Dawkins says business people and others attending the dinner and meeting will learn a lot about the impact of tourism on the local economy and the positive impact tourism can have on both residential and industrial development.

He promises those attending will be in for an "interesting" evening.

It won't be an evening filled just with "hard core Chamber business," but a fun social evening as well.

"It should be a worthwhile evening for anyone if business, or any other citizens as well," Dawkins declared.

Tourism development, along with industrial development will be major features

of the Chamber's work in 1984. Tickets at \$10 a person are available at Halton Hills Furniture, J and T sports, Acton IGA, Nielsen's Clothing, and the Hide House.

Prior to the dinner there will be a cocktail hour.

Warning!

Fire Chief Bill Cunningham has a warning for business people. He wants them to know that anyone soliciting ads for a fire prevention publication has no connection with Halton Hills Fire Department.

He said he had received information that there are people in the area, now, who are selling such ads.

Last year many businesses bought ads, thinking the publication was endorsed by the local fire department.

Firefighters have sleepless nights

Volunteer firefighters went three straight nights without a full night's sleep last week.

At 1:56 a.m., Wednesday they responded to a resuscitator call at a Longfield Rd. home, at 2:38 a.m. Thursday, they had a similar call to Tidy Ave.

At 2 a.m. Friday, the men extinguished a fire in the shavings bin at Hornby Box and Pallet on Main St. About \$1,000 damage resulted.

Council urges more rules on pornography

Halton Hills council wants a review of the Criminal Code on all matters relating to pornography, including manufacturing, distribution and sales.

Clear, concise regulations for police and all enforcing agencies are needed, said

Mayor Russ Miller in a letter to council asking for their endorsement.

Council backed the mayor's position and will send their concerns to the Solicitor General, the Attorney General of Ontario, and provincial and federal Members of

Parliament.

In his letter, the mayor pointed out local government has little authority, although the Town Bylaw Enforcement Officer Jack Lusty has obtained the co-operation of many store owners in having some magazines placed out of reach of children.

Baptism at St. Albans

On Sunday, February 19, at the 10:30 service, Peter Frank Andreas was baptized by the Rev. Arthur Tribe and welcomed into the Church of Christ and into the Family of St. Alban's. Peter is the son of Klaus and Shirley Andreas and brother of Joshua and Benjamin. His godparents are Roger and Lesley Dale.

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