

# Pomeroy unloads in inaugural address

By BRIAN MacLEOD  
Herald Staff

Peter Pomeroy unloaded on provincial bureaucrats in his inaugural address Wednesday after he was unanimously re-instated to his third term as Regional Chairman.

Although Halton Region has "matured," its attempts to provide affordable housing have been stymied by nameless provincial bureaucrats, said Mr. Pomeroy.

Development in Georgetown and a 100-unit low-cost housing development in Burlington have been delayed "by a handful of provincial employees who don't seem to know yet about the premier's commitment (to affordable housing)," said Mr. Pomeroy.

"I thought I heard earlier this year that affordable housing was a provincial priority. I thought I heard the premier say it, and I'm sure I heard the housing minister say it," he added.

"I listened closely when they announced a commitment to streamlining the approval process and cutting through the bureaucracy and red tape.

"So far though, it's not working the way it should, and not working the way it'll have to, to deliver low

## Lead levels not as critical

The Halton Board of Education was issued a "two-minute warning" when pipes in the newly-built Abbey Lane school in Burlington registered high lead levels.

The school was one of four Halton schools tested for high levels of lead from solder located in water pipes. A test by the Ministry of the Environment determined 72 parts per billion of lead in the school's water. The acceptable level is 50 ppb.

But Halton Board of Education Communication Officer Brian Woodland said "once the water had run for two minutes (at the test site in Abbey Lane) the levels were lower than the recommended limit." According to the Board's Director of Business Services Jerry Jenkins, the level dropped to 18 ppb after two minutes.

However, the Ministry of Education issued a "strong recommendation" Nov. 28 to all schools in Ontario to flush their taps out for five minutes each morning. Halton schools began this practice the first week of December.

The emphasis on lead-content in water is not as pertinent for North Halton, where no new schools have recently been built, said Mr. Jenkins. Older schools have "no problems" with the pipes, he said.

The five-minute flushing recommended by the Ministry of Education is a "precautionary measure," says Mr. Woodland.

"The concern is when the fountains have sat overnight," he said, adding that older schools with lead pipes instead of the copper used in newer schools, will also be tested.

Ministry of Environment district officer John Budz said the lead-level testing was the result of a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation study. "All we wanted to do was confirm the data the CBC had gathered," said Mr. Budz.

Schools were sampled randomly in Halton and Peel by the local Ministry officials, but Abbey Lane was the only one in Halton found to have an unacceptable lead level.

Mr. Jenkins said he suspects the Ministry will test all Ontario schools within the next few months, but Mr. Budz says the issue is now in the hands of the Ministry of Education.

"Our role from here, would be to provide assistance and technical advice to the Ministry of Education," he said.

The Ministry of Education is presently organizing a province-wide testing of lead levels. The testing will include all elementary schools and "a sampling" of secondary schools, says Ministry architect Steve Mitchell.

The testing procedures should begin by the end of next week, with laboratories chosen by the Ministry of Environment, he said. Testing should be completed by February.

cost housing to those who need it," he said.

Two provincial ministries who instructed the Region to look for more water sources to service the upcoming development, now say the town may not be able to use newly found water from a Main Street well, he said.

The Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources say taking water from that well could reduce the water flow in Black Creek, thus changing the temperature of the water. That could "stress" the newly-stocked fish, he said.

"If I sound frustrated, it's because I am. It's taking too long to turn this super-tanker around."

He instructed Chief Administrative Officer John Fleming to prepare regular updates for council on any projects which have an affordable housing component to them.

Chairman Pomeroy asked Halton North MPP Wall Elliot, who was at the inauguration, to provide the Region with names of bureaucrats who hold up such projects.

Mr. Pomeroy said he has supported a call for a review of Regional government because it "should always be welcomed if it's necessary" and because the role of Regions in the greater Toronto area will soon change.

"I believe what will emerge is an enhanced responsibility for Regions generally," he said.

He defended the process of having council appoint the Regional chairman in the face of a recent Burlington referendum which showed 78 per cent of the voters are in favor of electing the Regional chairman directly. "I believe that the issue of



Chairman Pomeroy

selection of the Regional chairman cannot be reviewed in isolation of the representation and accountability of all council," he said.

Of the pending Regional review the chairman said, "It's my hope that any review of Regional government would come to terms with political representation and accountability without impairing our ability to forge (a) consensus on major issues.

"I make a commitment to you now. That consensus will once again be the hallmark of my leadership for this term," he said.

Chairman Pomeroy also supports Halton seeking a "heightened corporate identity" in the Region through the use of the logo and motto on public vehicles and facilities.

The possible implementation of commercial and industrial lot levies and management of Halton's booming growth as a part of the greater Toronto area are two other major

## RIDE round-up

Halton Regional Police pulled over 3,438 vehicles in last week's RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) program between Dec. 4 and Dec. 11 in Halton Region.

Of the vehicles stopped, four drivers were arrested on drinking and driving-related charges, including one refusal to provide a breath sample and two charges of having over 80 mg of alcohol in the bloodstream.

And 133 ALERT (Alcohol Level Evaluation Road Tester) tests were

issued to drivers. Of those tested, 99 passed, 32 blew a warn (which means they were issued a 12-hour suspension) and two failed the test. Those who fail the ALERT usually proceed to the police station where they are tested with a station breathalyzer.

Police issued 202 warnings to motorists, and laid 85 charges under the Highway Traffic Act for traffic violations and operating vehicles with faulty equipment.



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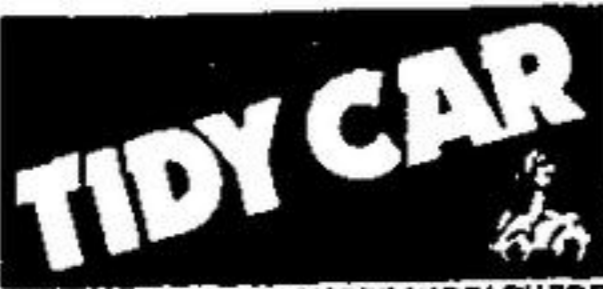
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