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Halton rolls back 11 per cent tax hike

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

Halton Region will keep tax increases below 9.85 per cent in 1990, Regional councillors decided Wednesday.

Councillors rejected a finance staff proposal to raise the tax-supported budget by 11 per cent

A 9.85-per-cent increase will mean the average Halton resident will pay \$578 a year for Regional services and water and sewer service. That's an increase over last year's average of \$537.

Taxes paid to the Region will be an average \$271 and water and sewer costs will be an average \$307

in 1990, said Regional budget and finance director David Birkett.

The combined average increase for Regional rates and water and sewer rates is 4.8 per cent. Water and sewer rates will increase 5.7 per cent in 1990. The increase in 1989 was 2.5 per cent.

To meet council's reduction in

the proposed Regional tax, Halton's finance staff must cut the expected budget for 1990 by \$960,000. Mr. Birkett said increases meant to "retain existing levels of service" will be sliced.

A revised 1990 budget will go before Regional council in November.

Coun. Kevin Flynn said the Region promotes growth but can't afford it. "Everybody likes growth," he said, but the Region knows "full well" there is not enough funding to study its own needs.

But Regional finance commissioner Joe Rinaldo maintains the taxes are low in Halton.

"Halton has been enjoying tax increases below the rate of inflation since 1981," he said. The

average tax increase in the last eight years is six per cent.

The Regional tax budget increased by 7.4 per cent last year. In 1988, the tax went up 2.2 per cent and in 1987, Halton residents faced an increase of 5.2 per cent.

Halton Regional Police, which is fully funded by the Region, is asking for an additional \$250,000 next year to cover costs of a new Ontario legislation. Bill 187, a police courtroom security act, leaves responsibility for policing courtrooms in the hands of local officers.

The police department is now reviewing how to implement the new task. But these and other costs could be reduced when Regional financial staff review the 1990 budget to cut almost \$1 million in funds.

Halton police begin two-month crackdown on speeding motorists

By BEN DUMMETT
Herald Staff

Halton Regional Police have begun cracking down on motorists speeding, not wearing seat belts or driving impaired, Sergeant Ken Bonham of the force's regional traffic bureau said.

The force will be concentrating their efforts in pulling over speeding motorists in the next two months. Speeding is identified as a major reason behind the 116-per-cent increase in fatalities in Halton Region this year from January to July over last year during the same period, he said. Traffic fatalities jumped from six last year at this time to 13 this year.

Sgt. Bonham heads up the newly formed Rural Region Traffic Force which over the next two months will be concentrating on the roads north of Highway 5 in the 80 kilometres per hour speed zones, in an attempt to reduce the number of personal injury accidents.

"There will be no breaks. Strict enforcement will apply," he said.

Sgt. Bonham explained 84.6 per cent of this year's speeding related fatalities occurred north of Highway 5 and 69.2 per cent of them happened in the 80 kilometre per hour speed zone.

The crack down will last two months after which Sgt. Bonham will analyze the data to see if there is a reduction in the number of personal injury accidents during the same time last year.

The force is composed of two of

ficers from each of Halton's four police districts and officers from the Regional traffic bureau, he said.

But Sgt. Bonham says the program's success depends on the public's co-operation.

People have to start wearing their seat belts, he said. Five people have been thrown from their vehicles so far this year. He added drivers must also keep their car in good working order. Many injuries could be avoided if people regularly check the condition of their car brakes, he said.

Halton police isn't the only force asking people to drive with safety in mind.

The Ontario Provincial Police has already investigated over 500 traffic-related deaths - a seven per cent increase over last year.

During last year's Labour Day weekend alone, there were 19 people killed, a jump from 11 deaths on the same weekend in 1987, police say.

Ontario Provincial Police officers have been instructed to use everything at their disposal, including radar and radar detectors, as well as RIDE program initiatives to stop speeding motorists, OPP Commissioner Tom O'Grady recently said.

The OPP will also be on the lookout for seat belt violations. Of the fatal accidents investigated by the OPP this year, more than one-third of the people have been thrown from their car, police say.



"Come to mamma"

This pigeon wasn't about to fly the coupe. It was perfectly willing instead to entertain the lucky people of Georgetown during Kelly's 3 Ring Circus in back of Georgetown's Alcott arena last Thursday evening. Like a well-trained dog this amazing bird would come

when beckoned. And it was just one of the spectacular acts that included elephants, trapeze artists, clowns and magicians performing under the big top. (Herald photo by Ben Dummett)

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