

Acton gets work program for psychiatric clients

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

Acton will soon get a "make work" program for 40 former psychiatric patients at the old Beardmore Tannery property.

Ken Franks, organizer of the Halton Work Program in Oakville and Burlington said Wednesday the Ministry of Health will fund the \$174,500-project that is scheduled to begin this fall.

The Old Beardmore Tannery building on 17 acres of Canada Packers Inc. land south of Agnes Street in Acton will be leased to house the working psychiatric clients, Mr. Franks said.

"All our clients have a psychiatric referral. We pay the people piecework (and) we will put a price on the job."

The psychiatric clients at the

Halton Work Program will be paid anywhere from \$2.50 to \$7.50 an hour depending on their production. In Burlington and Oakville, the workers do such things as shrink-wrapping calendars or repackaging factory errors.

Mr. Franks is hoping the Olde Hide House in Acton, which has expressed interest in providing work, and the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce could help find work for the Halton Work clients. DRG Stationery in Georgetown already provides work for the Halton Work Program.

Mayor Russ Miller and Acton Coun. Rick Bonnette said the program would be a benefit to Halton Hills.

"It'll give these souls somewhere to go during the daytime and a sense of belonging,"

said Coun. Bonnette. "They can add something to society."

"It's just good, for the general public, to have a place for these people. There's nothing worse than someone who isn't busy," the mayor said.

The Halton Work Program will create four full-time jobs in Acton. Mr. Franks said he is looking for a manager, an assistant manager, a workshop instructor and a full-time secretary.

There will be no time limit set on how long clients can stay at Beardmore, but the objective of the program is to get former psychiatric patients back into the work force. Mr. Franks said 25 to 30 per cent of clients at the south Halton work centres, re-enter the work force.

The program will "hopefully" begin this fall. It began operating

in south Halton in 1984 after receiving funding approval in late 1983.

"We have really been going strongly for four years," Mr. Franks said.

A facility for North Halton was "desperately needed for a number of years," he said.

The role of the Halton Work Program may be to help people re-enter the work force after receiving psychiatric treatment, but the centre is not a clinic.

"We're not clinicians. We're not counsellors. There are enough people out there who are professionals," Mr. Franks said.

The program is funded for 40 psychiatric clients, but will initial-

ly begin with 10 clients.

"There's no way that we can take 40 people and try to motivate them at one go," Mr. Franks said.

He said the workers will gradually build up to six or seven-hour days, beginning first with part-time labor.

"We find that the average psychiatric (client) cannot work six to eight hours to start with."

The Halton Work Program awaits confirmation from the Ministry of Health on when the program can actually begin.

"I'd like to say Oct. 1st," Mr. Franks said, but he added that he would wait for a telephone call from the Ministry of Health.

\$6 million debt will be wiped out

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The Ministry of Health will also pay for two thirds of the estimated \$685,000 cost of replacing the leaky roof at the Georgetown hospital. Work is expected to commence on the roof in the fall.

Under the financial arrangement worked out between the ministry and the hospital in months of negotiations, the \$6 million debt resulting from the construction of the Bennett Health Care Centre in 1985 should be wiped out. The ministry will pay \$3.7 million to cover a major portion of the original construction cost to operate the health care centre as a chronic care facility. An additional \$1.9 million will be raised locally.

Mr. Goebelle hopes Halton Region will cover a big chunk of that sum. The hospital will engage in local fundraising efforts in the future.

The remaining \$840,000 of the debt is expected to be covered by

revenues from the retirement home, said Mr. Goebelle.

The ministry will also increase the operating budget of the integrated facility by \$2.4 million to just over \$10.5 million.

The arrangement will mean 55 new jobs in various capacities will be created at the hospital, said Mr. Rochon.

The hospital will replace health care aides with registered nursing assistants and some employees may receive re-training at local colleges, he said.

The full-scale re-organization of health care facilities in Georgetown "was necessitated by crippling long-term debt" associated with the construction of the Bennett Health Care Centre, said Mr. Goebelle. That debt was repeatedly generating operating losses, he said.

Once the changes are made the hospital board's "vision of offering a full range of health care services on one site will be achieved," said Mr. Goebelle.

Mr. Rochon said authorities hope to make a decision on how to go about making the changes by the end of 1989.

"My guess is that we will have a new nursing home running in approximately two years. That's a guess."

The arrangement "allows us to actually operate and fund the entire complex as if it was a hospital," he said.

The goals of eliminating the \$6 million debt and establishing a chronic care centre have been sought for years, said Mr. Rochon, who took over the position at the beginning of 1987.

"It's been a mandate of mine since I've been here."

Asphalt plant approved

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

Halton Hills town councillors Monday night approved a temporary asphalt plant for the corner of Steeles Avenue and Winston Churchill Boulevard.

Councillors heard the complaints of Fred Hachman who lives across the road from the 10-acre site now used for residential purposes. But council approved a three-year deal with Bluecliff Holdings Inc. The company will erect a temporary asphalt plant on the site and use the house on the property as an office.

The asphalt plant approval was "steamrolled" through council, without "proper research," said Mr. Hachman.

"What we've seen of Bluecliff Holdings on this film (shown to town councillors several weeks ago) didn't give us a good indication" of what the asphalt operation would be like, the resident said.

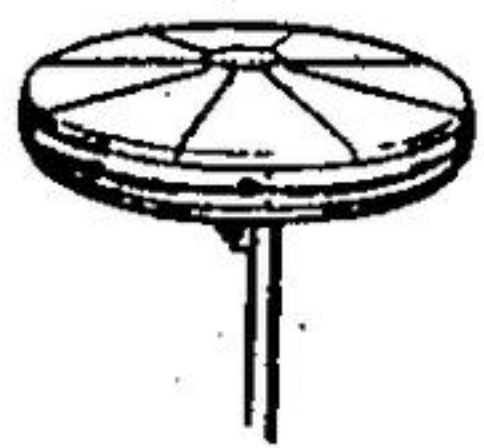
Bluecliff showed a videotape produced by the manufacturer.

Mr. Hachman said using the property to employ three people, would be a waste of "clean industrial land." In response to council's assurances that the plant would only be there for three years, Mr. Hachman said there would be "no problem" to get an extension. Three years is "three years too long," he said.

Town staff replied to area residents' complaints that the asphalt plant would be noisy and would cause pollution. Town planning director Ian Keith said he was told the plant "is a new facility based on a new technology" and does not "promote" air pollution.

"I take this to be true," he said. The planner said berms will be put at the edge of the property to reduce noise levels.

But Mr. Hachman said traffic is still a problem. A traffic study prepared by Halton Region for the area, is "one and a half years old," and does not address today's road conditions, he said.



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