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Abitibi plant faces closure

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

Provincial Papers, the Georgetown division of pulp and paper manufacturers Abitibi Price, will shut its doors for good at the end of March, the Herald learned Wednesday.

The plant is too old and small to complete in the highly competitive and global paper market, said Sharon Paul, Abitibi Price Vice-President for Corporate and Public Affairs, in a telephone interview Wednesday.

The closure will put 21 employees out of work. The plant manufactures high gloss paper and sheeted paper. The glossy paper is used for such items as pressure sensitive labels and event tickets, while sheeted paper is used for printing, ac-

ording to an Abitibi issued press release.

A representative for the employees could not be reached for comment at press time.

Workers learned of the shut down Wednesday morning and that day relocation councillors met with employees to discuss other job opportunities, said Ms. Paul. Also, a committee will be set up comprised of representatives from government, labor and management to consider "alternative relocation approaches," she added.

Asked if the closure had any connection with a new collective agreement between management and the employees signed last fall, Ms. Paul said no. She went on to say each employee has

severance coverage through the collective agreement.

Not since last summer has the 86-year-old plant been working at capacity, said Ms. Paul. At that time, 48 people were employed but in the fall 23 people were laid off, shutting down the plant's high gloss paper operation, she said.

Ms. Paul explained Abitibi Price reported a \$40 million loss for 1990 so the company couldn't justify putting more money into an unprofitable operation which had no chance of recovery.

She didn't rule out the possibility of Abitibi closing other plants, saying "some of them are facing serious problems."

As for the Georgetown plant once vacated, Ms. Paul said the company will try to sell it.

Ferro Steel shuts down

Georgetown's Ferro Structural Steel Ltd. is the second local manufacturing company forced to shut its doors for a two-week period because of the recession.

Company Vice-President Bob Collett confirmed during a telephone interview Tuesday, the plant will be closed for two weeks starting later this month. The shutdown will mean layoffs for approximately 20 employees during that period. Mr. Collett said the workers plan to use this time as their vacation.

This past Monday another Georgetown based company,

Standard Products Ltd., closed its doors, resulting in 205 layoffs. Standard Product employees are expected to return to the job March 4.

Mr. Collett explained that January, February and March are normally slow months for construction-related companies. Most building takes place during the summer months, he said. But so far business has been abnormally slow, he said.

An unexpected delay in a \$1.3 million contract with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society is another reason for the delay,

said Mr. Collett. The company was scheduled to build a septic tank system at a society property in Norval, said Mr. Collett. The province's Ministry of Environment, however, has problems with the project and until they are resolved, it will continue to prevent the Watchtower from obtaining building permits.

The permits will probably be issued in the summer, said Mr. Collett. By that time "we won't really need the work," he predicted.

Ferro Steel was awarded the contract in September and to win it, the submitted bid was below costs, said Mr. Collett. The company's primary focus was to provide a month's work for the shop and not making money out of the job, he explained.

Education board environmentally aware

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

Halton Board of Education has passed a report issued by its environmental task force, asking the board to take environmentally friendly actions ranging from things as easy as repairing leaky faucets to changing building codes to promote the use of water conserving plumbing fixtures.

"As employers of relatively large numbers of staff, we believe programs and policies in our organization that are especially attentive to environmental issues would create a model for organizations and their employees to follow," said the five members of the task force in a report to the board.

The environmental committee is comprised of staff from the Regional Municipality of Halton, the four area municipalities and the two Boards of Education. They've been working on this policy for approximately one year.

They say the primary goal of the task force has been to "act as a think tank stimulating as many ideas regarding local government and the environment as possible."

The list of ideas, filling up seven pieces of paper, were divided into four sections: corporate actions including suggestions regarding using local government as a role model in managing its internal operations; employee-student education which briefly discusses methods to increase employee-student commitment to environmentally sound actions; public education and external policy which deals

with how local government can administer its mandate with greater sympathy for the environment.

Some other items the task force studied involved:

- research and promoting housing and planning types that were environmentally kind
- earmark tax revenues for environment programs that are generated from a related program
- energy efficient housing should be included in zoning by-laws and official plans
- increase bicycle routes
- investigate liberalizing taxes for farmers that use agricultural farming methods
- investigate alternatives to salt on roads

Passing off the recommendations means the board will assign one of their project consultants to take over implementing the policy. The committee explained their role as that of an "advocate."

The committee also indicated that the "resources available to address these concerns will be strained in 1991 as we all address very difficult budget decisions."



Marilyn Serjeanston Serjeanston appointment

Halton Hills Regional Councillor Marilyn Serjeanston was appointed as the Halton Hills representative to Halton's Joint Municipal-Regional Waste Management Committee by Regional Council Wednesday.

The committee has been formed to investigate various alternatives to handle Halton's waste, according to a Regional report.



The Royal couple

The Royal Couple of George Kennedy Public School's Winter Carnival pose with the carnival's mascot, Bonhomme. The king is Grade 4 student Kevin Moore and the queen is Hayley Curzon, a Grade 1 student. (Herald photo by Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot)

Development charges facing change

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

It appears development charges won't increase as much as was originally proposed early last month.

Halton Regional Treasurer Joe Rinaldo told Regional Council Wednesday he is recommending lower increases than those initially proposed as a result of receiving well over 100 written submissions opposing the increases.

The submissions followed a public hearing Jan. 8 in connection with the non-residential and residential development charges.

Those attending the public meeting, most of whom were developers, heard a proposal calling for development charges for commercial and industrial buildings to increase from the current \$9.15 per square metre to \$30.23 per square metre.

Many developers argued the increase would drive development to other Regions or south of the border where equivalent charges would be less.

According to the staff report, the proposed development charges should be reduced from

just over \$30 to \$25.70 representing a 15 per cent drop.

Staff is also calling for the increase charges to be phased in over a four-year period, meaning the new charge for 1991 would virtually remain the same as the current level.

The proposed development charges will go before Regional Administration and Finance Committee this Wednesday for consideration.

Some of the other staff recommendations on the development charge issue to be considered include:

- floor area that covers more than 100 per cent of the land it's on would be exempt from the non-residential development charge
- the first 5,000 square feet of the expansion or redevelopment of a commercial or industrial building would be exempted from the charge
- introduce a police regarding development on agricultural land
- remove conservation authority projects from the development charge calculation
- exempt hospital developments and redevelopments from the charge.

An Inside Look

Police P.2	Well's World . . P.10
Features P.3	Opinion P.11
Education P.5	Health P.12
Steamer P.6	Agriculture . . P.14
Seniors P.7	Norval News . . P.15
Religion P.8	Town
Environment . . P.9	Gardener P.15
Editorial P.10	Entertainment P.16
Peel's Corner . P.10	Sports P.17-19
People's	Youth Page . . P.20
Forum P.11	Classified . P.21-27

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