

Tourist industry rebounds

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

Ironically, the ongoing recession could have a positive impact on Halton Region's \$166 million per year tourist industry, said Halton Tourism Coordinator Pam Banks, during an interview Friday.

Ms. Banks said the uncertain economic times means people will use their savings to pay off their debt loads instead of spending it to go on vacation. As a result, people will tend to take more day trips to tourist spots within commuting distance to their homes.

Since the majority of Halton tourists come from the Greater Toronto Area and the surrounding U.S. border states, such as New York State, Halton Region is that much more attractive to vacationers given today's economic reality, explained Ms. Banks.

Approximately 4.5 million people visited Halton last year, said Ms. Banks. However, statistics for each municipality in the Region were unavailable. She said people are attracted to North Halton - Halton Hills and Milton - because of the unique shopping available in the area.

Aside from the more obvious shopping locations such as the Old Hide House in Acton, people travel to the Halton Hills area to visit the craft shops found in the hamlet of Glen Williams, said Ms. Banks.

To ensure Halton attracts as many visitors as possible Regional staff has developed a tourism marketing plan.

This year's plan is similar to that of last year, but there are a few changes, said Ms. Banks.

One such change is the improvement of the Halton Visitor Guide. In previous years, the Region alone has financed the publication. That meant a relatively small number of copies could be produced and distributed.

This year's edition, however, has been completed in cooperation with the private sector, allowing 100,000 copies to be printed and distributed throughout Southern Ontario and the border states.

As well, for the first time, Halton Tourism will coordinate a trade-show for seniors later this summer at the Halton Agricultural Museum in Milton. The show will provide tourist operators from outside the Region with the opportunity to learn first hand what is attractive about Halton Region, especially for seniors, said Ms. Banks.

To further sell the Region to potential tourists, Halton Tourism will have booths at the following trade shows: Attractions Ontario, the London Free Press Travel Show, Detroit Free Press Travel Show and the Ontario Motor Coach Association trade show.

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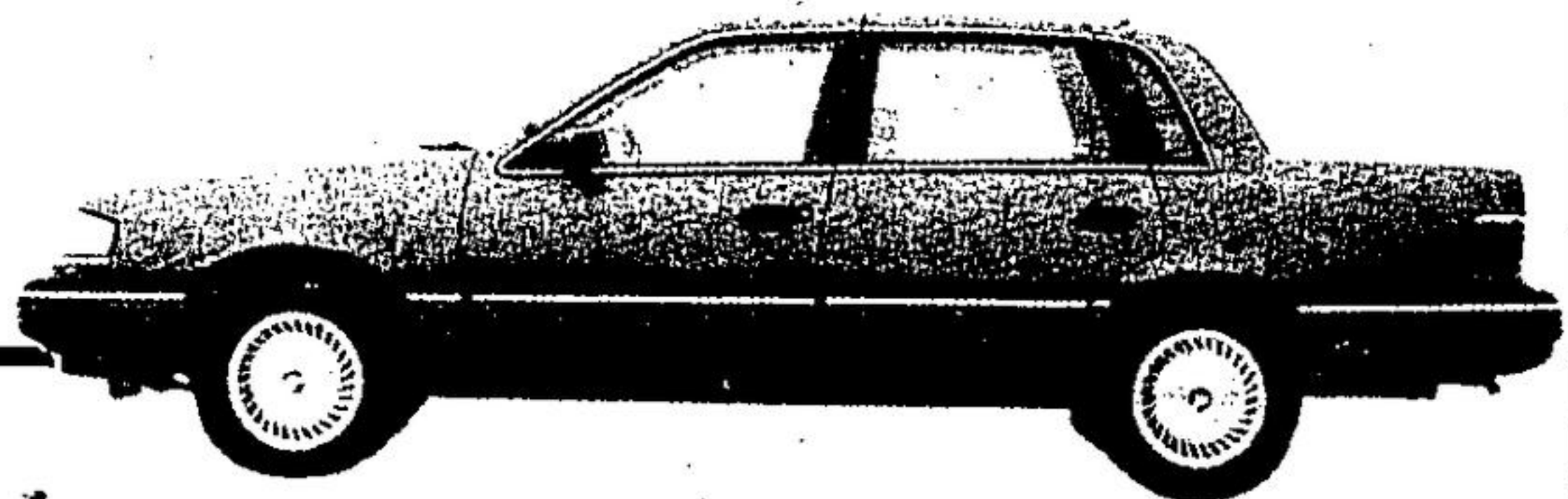
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