

# Town encourages residents, groups to join in Earth Hour

The Town of Halton Hills will once again join other communities in Canada and around the world in participating in Earth Hour by turning off any unnecessary lights, reducing energy consumption and addressing climate change.

Earth Hour 2012 will be celebrated on Saturday, March 31, between 8:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Earth Hour participation is voluntary, fun and informative.

The objective of Earth Hour is to bring awareness to global warming and environmental protection. Importantly, Earth Hour is no longer just

about turning the lights off for an hour. Instead, it is a high-profile opportunity to promote year-round conservation and the taking of long-lasting actions that benefit the health of our planet.

Since first participating in Earth Hour in 2008, this community has saved enough electricity to power a total of about 15,500 homes for one hour.

"In 2012, our practical actions will again demonstrate that it is possible to take meaningful local action against climate change," said Mayor Rick Bonnette. "Building on our past successes, it is important that we take actions throughout the year to benefit the environment. I once again encourage the participation of our residents, busi-

nesses and community organizations. Participation in Earth Hour will help implement the Town's Green Plan and continue to move all of us towards a more prosperous future with an even higher quality of life."

This year, in support of Earth Hour, the Town will:

- Conserve energy by turning off all non-essential lights at all Town facilities during Earth Hour, without jeopardizing public safety and security, and interrupting regular service.

- Engage the business community to participate

by promoting Earth Hour to their employees and customers and by offering special Earth Hour menu items at restaurants. Watch for Town staff as they visit your business to explore Earth Hour participation opportunities.

- Encouraging Earth Hour participation by drawing for an 'Earth Hour Energy Conservation Package'. The conservation package will include items to help make year-round conservation easier and more convenient such as a programmable thermostat, energy meter, CFL bulbs and other energy conservation items.

Individuals, businesses, and organizations can register to participate in this worldwide event at: [www.Earth-Hour.org](http://www.Earth-Hour.org)



## WEEKEND FORECAST...

Halton Hills	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.
HIGH	0°	6°	11°
LOW	-5°	-5°	1°
SNOW	less than 2 cm	-	-

## DON'T FORGET

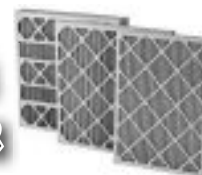


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# Council keeps tax break for farmers

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**  
*Staff Writer*

Halton Hills Council went against a staff recommendation and will continue with the farm deferral tax program.

This program, started in 2006, allows farmers to defer payment of the farm portion of their property tax until September. The farmers still have to pay the house portion of their bill in quarterly payments.

Town staff had recommended the program be discontinued to save \$4,000 in staff time, paper and postage. As well, the Town collects about \$400,000 in farm taxes annually, and it must still forward the Region and school board portions at the usual payment dates. This requires the Town to cash flow about three-quarters of the taxes, which impacts the Town's investment earnings.

A Town survey of the 551 farmers came back with a 60 per cent response. Of those who responded only 52 per

cent requested the extension of the program, while 48 per cent either didn't care or did not want it.

But one of those who did want it was Tim Canedra who attended the Feb. 21 council meeting. He called the staff report a one-sided decision, adding that while small, the majority of farmers still wanted the program.

He noted it was farmers who built this community, but now farmers are taking the brunt of the Town's fiscal spending.

Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis said he sees value in the program, even if only one farmer wanted it. He called it a cheap service that was brought in to ease farmers in tough times, and "I don't see that has changed one bit."

Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson wondered if farmers could opt out.

But Treasurer Ed DeSousa said it would be cost prohibitive to create a software program to provide farmers an opt-in/opt-out choice.



## Stag & Doe for Colin Brown & Elisa Tarnate

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for info contact Tammy 905-702-9219

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