

Christmas Tree Safety

The track record shows, that at this time of year, accidental house fires and the number of fire deaths are often at their highest. With the holiday season upon us there are many opportunities for everyone to reduce the incidents of preventable fires to ensure a safe holiday season.

"While there are a number of contributing factors leading to these often preventable fires," said Fire Chief Brent Marshall, adding, "the Christmas tree has unfortunately been named as being one of the leading causes of fires at this time of year."

Mayor Rick Bonnette noted that the main focal point during the Christmas celebration can be the cause of tragedy, if the following tips are not followed:

1. When looking for the perfect tree, check for brown, dry and brittle needles.

The needles should be green, moist and pliable.

2. Lift and drop the tree two or three times on a hard surface and listen for a solid knock rather than a dull thud. Numerous needles falling off are a sign of a dry tree.

3. Before placing in the stand, cut two to three inches off the base diagonally to allow the tree to absorb lots of water.

4. Check and add water daily.

5. Use only CSA/ULC approved and labelled indoor Christmas lights.

6. Unplug the lights before going out or going to bed.

7. Where possible avoid the use of extension cords. When necessary, only use CSA/ULC approved and labelled cords.

8. Ensure you have working smoke alarms on each floor or your residence.



TREMENDOUS TREES: In the first three days of sales over the weekend, the Men of Heritage Acton sold half of the 240 Christmas trees at their Mill Street lot. The first customer this season was Acton's Marilyn Murak who picked out a Fraser Fir with help from Men of Heritage (formerly Kinsman) member Tom Cooper. — Ted Tyler photo

16-lot subdivision in ready in Acton South

Finoro Homes will begin construction next month on 16 single-family homes on a thin strip of land on the west side of Churchill Road South, north of Rachlin Drive.

Acton developer Fred Dawkins confirmed the construction schedule, but had no other details, including prices, on Monday night after Halton Hills Council, without discussion, approved a staff recommendation to remove a Hold on a required rezoning application. Next comes a Subdivision

Agreement and then issuance of building permits.

Outside of the council chambers, Dawkins hinted he and his Acton East Housing Corporation partner Fred Heller have development plans for more of their land in Acton South. "We're not very far into it, and not sure if whether we'll have any real chance of doing anything or not, but we still have some residual land we have some ideas for," Dawkins said, glad that the Hold was lifted for the 16 homes.

Library hours issue goes to budget debate

A proposal with three options to extend hours at the new Georgetown library was referred to the Town's budget committee in a unanimous vote of Town Council on Monday night; a move that Jane Diamanti, the Director of Library Services, said would allow the opportunity for more in depth discussion.

Budget constraints last year meant Monday openings were not approved and staff was instructed to survey library users about their

preferred hours of operation. Opening the library year-round on Sundays ranked first in the survey, following closely by full Monday openings and then extended hours of Friday evenings.

Diamanti presented Council with the Library Board's proposed three options developed from the surveys. They include:

- \$10,400 to add 37.5 open hours each year to reinstate opening on Saturdays of long weekend.
- \$11,200 to add 56 open

hours per year to extend Sunday openings to 10 months of the year instead of only from Thanksgiving to Victoria Day

• \$18,100 to add 88 open hours to provide for year-round Sunday openings – the most popular option in both the Georgetown and Acton surveys

Diamanti said longer opening on Mondays ranked first and longer Friday evening's hours ranked second among Acton survey responders, and while this debate centre on hours at the

Georgetown branch, Diamanti said they will see if they can "adjust" the existing schedule at the Acton branch without impacting the budget.

"We might reduce at one time and add to another time when we know there is pressure to open – a really good example is Friday evening. People are saying, 'can you not be open at least until 6 (p.m.) on Friday?'" Diamanti said, attributing that request to the number of commuters who live in the Acton area.

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MPP Arnott launches small business survey

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott will get advice from small business owners through a survey launched this week.

"I want to listen to small business owners and take their ideas and concerns back with me to Queen's Park," Arnott said in a press release, stressing the importance of small business to the local economy.

"Small business is the back-bone of our

economy. It is the most dynamic and flexible job creator that we have," Arnott said. "If a small business is thriving and making money, profits mean that pay raises for employees are possible," he said, leading to job creation.

While the Legislature remains on hold, Arnott plans to visit many small businesses throughout Wellington-Halton Hills. The survey is at www.tedarnottmpp.com