

# New 57-bed nursing home planned for Bennett Centre

By JANET DUVAL

Special to the Independent/Free Press

Georgetown hospital has signed a deal with Versa-Care Limited allowing it to build and operate a 57-bed nursing home that will provide about 50 local jobs when it is finished.

Versa-Care is putting up \$3 million to renovate and expand the existing southerly wing of the Bennett Centre, with occupancy expected by mid-1994.

"Our community is the most underbedded in long-term care

facilities in all of Canada," says Connell Smith, chairman of the Hospital Board. "We will easily fill the new nursing home."

At present, the Bennett Centre offers 30 retirement home beds for people who require minimal professional care. Residents enjoy meal and laundry services, but need little medical assistance.

For people needing more nursing care, up to three hours per day, Georgetown offers nothing at present. Local residents must go to Milton Manor or elsewhere for this kind of care.

Those needing more than three hours per day of nursing care are accommodated in the Bennett Centre's chronic care wing, which is operated by the hospital.

"Now we can provide a full continuum of care here in Georgetown," says Smith, "from home care, to light care in a retirement home, to extended care in the new nursing home, to heavy long-term care" in the hospital's chronic care and acute care facilities.

Under the deal, Versa-Care will take over operation of the existing retirement home and add 10 new

beds to that facility. It will renovate and expand the lower floor of the building, now roughed-in but empty, for the nursing home.

"We feel honored to be part of this relationship," says Reg Petersen, chief executive officer of Versa-Care. "Everybody will benefit."

His company now serves close to 3,000 seniors in 19 facilities between Sarnia and Cornwall, including a similar nursing home arrangement with the Cambridge Hospital.

Versa-Care's lease with the Georgetown hospital will run for 35

years, at which time everything will revert to the hospital.

A recent study shows that even the new facility will fail to meet local needs for extended care. Halton Hills' present population of about 2,725 seniors is expected to double in 10 years.

By 2001, the study projects a shortage of 143 long-term care beds, even with the nursing home.

It recommends coordinated community care that would allow some seniors to live at home with help, putting less pressure on institutions.

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News

Digest

### No information

Police are still not releasing any details over the Caledon OPP shooting of a 24-year-old Erin Township man last Tuesday near Belfountain. As of press time Friday, a spokesperson for the Special Investigation Unit of the Ministry of the Solicitor General said, "no further details are being released at this time." The only facts released so far is that a Caledon OPP officer shot the Erin man in the head after the officer stopped the man's vehicle near Belfountain. The injured man was taken to Toronto Western Hospital, and is listed in critical condition.

### Grading plans requested

Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson suggested that developers show prospective home buyers lot grades and drainage plans before the sale is made, to better inform their customers. She asked that this be made a condition of draft approval, as has been done in other communities. Also, if any changes are made to the lots or the homes the developer must take the responsibility and inform the home buyers, she added.

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## Victory claimed in RSI battle

### 'No jurisdiction' according to hearing board

By STUART JOHNSTON  
Staff writer

History was made this week with the provincial government's announcement that Reclamation Systems Inc. (RSI) must go back and do its homework before its plans to landfill the Acton Quarry can be properly assessed.

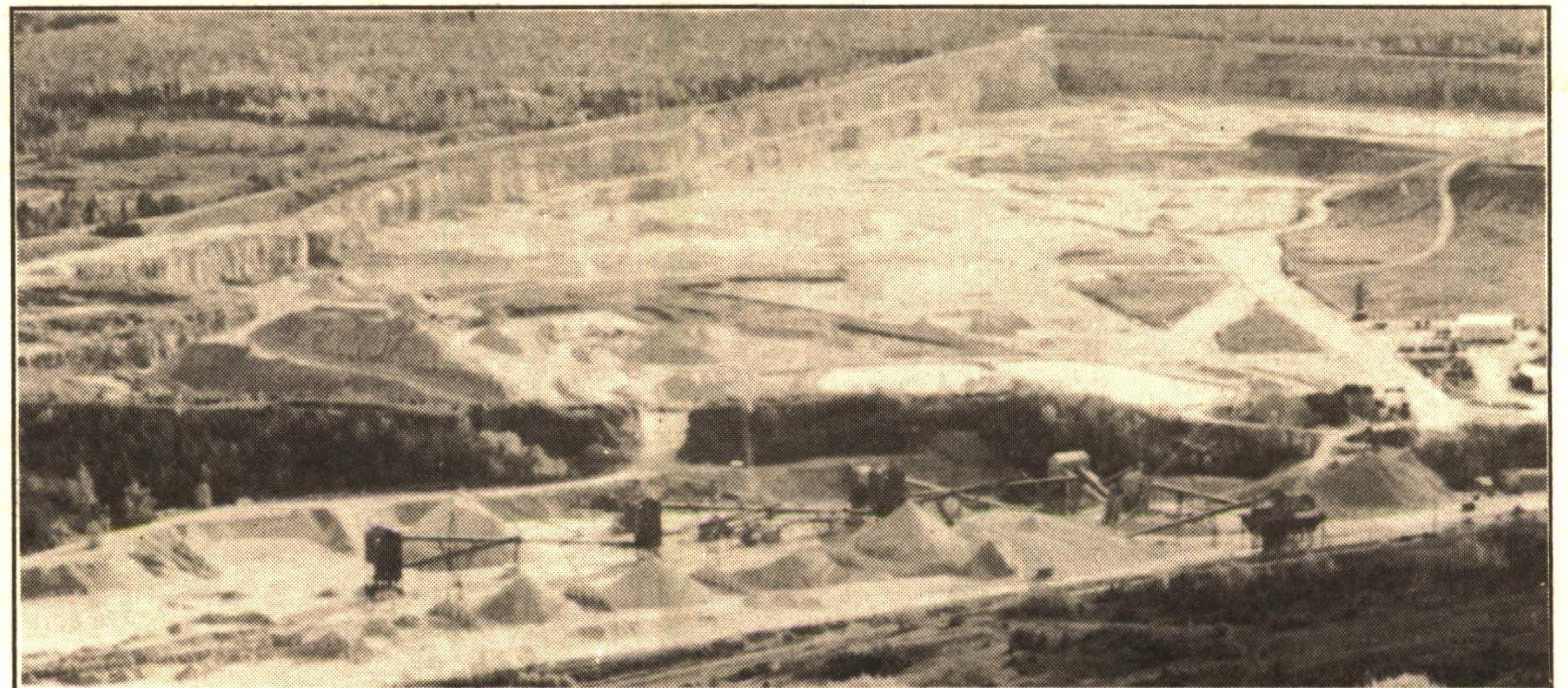
"This decision makes them (RSI) go away and follow the rules from now on," town lawyer Steve D'Agostino said in an interview Wednesday. "It is an unmitigated victory for us...It is definitely precedent-setting because this is the first decision to deal with the jurisdiction of the consolidated hearings board in this kind of matter."

"We made history today," was how a beaming mayor Russ Miller described the announcement. "We're absolutely delighted, and proves that we put up a good argument."

It took more than three months for the provincially-appointed consolidated hearings board (CHB) to decide that "this joint board...does not have the jurisdiction to hear, determine or decide" RSI's plans to dump 20 million-plus tonnes of garbage in the Acton Quarry, located at the Third Line and 22 Sideroad.

Essentially, the decision forces the private company to go back to the drawing board, to ensure that all of the "I's" are dotted and the "T's" are crossed on its applications to the numerous boards and agencies responsible for approving such an undertaking. It can be a costly and lengthy process — something that RSI was trying to avoid.

Despite several efforts to contact RSI officials for comment, they



The 260 acre Acton quarry at Third Line and 22 Sideroad.

failed to respond to the Independent/Free Press before press time.

"The board has accepted our submission that there are rules in place to protect the public interest to ensure proper details are made and disclosed, which RSI has not done," D'Agostino said. "Hopefully, we've closed the book here...In my opinion, there is no longer an RSI proposal to deal with unless it does something (substantial). I consider the matter to be closed...This is the first private proposal for a new landfill, and (the board's decision) shows the industry that detailed environmental evaluations do matter."

A two-week long preliminary hearing was held by the provincial tribunal in early June. The three board members (two from the environmental assessment board, the

other from the Ontario municipal board) were asked to decide if a full-blown, multi-million dollar environmental hearing should take place.

Approximately 38 groups, agencies and private citizens registered their opposition to the dump proposal at the outset of the preliminary hearing.

RSI had asked last December that the matter be dealt with by the consolidated hearings board (CHB). The company was hoping that it could expedite the process by cutting through all of the red tape and get one board to approve (or deny) its plans, instead of a multitude of bureaucratic agencies handling it.

In doing so, RSI's opponents argued, it disregarded proper procedure and cut corners, therefore the plans are inadequate, incomplete, lacks credibility and are

inappropriate for the area.

As D'Agostino put it during the preliminary hearing, RSI's application amounts to nothing more than "a sham."

"If there is no (proper) application, there cannot be a hearing — just the same as if there is no bullet in the gun, no one can be shot," D'Agostino argued in June. "The board only has jurisdiction to deal with the application, which does not exist."

In its 42-page decision released Wednesday, CHB members wholeheartedly agreed with the town's and region's positions.

"Simply put, the town's argument that this private proponent has to follow the rules has been vindicated by the board," D'Agostino said. "The process is now open for review so the town and citizens know what's going on."

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