

**Police
Blotter**

Car totalled

A 1983 Dodge was totalled in an accident on Eighth Line and Five Sideroad May 5 at 10:41 a.m. and the driver was charged with making an unsafe turn. The Dodge was heading south on the Eighth Line and turning into a driveway when it collided with another car, police said. That car was moderately damaged.

Door damaged

The door of Scotia Bank on Guelph St. was damaged sometime between Sunday and Monday. The bank wasn't entered, but damage is estimated to be \$500.

Fireplace crime spree

Three more fireplace inserts were taken from homes under construction in Georgetown south around Argyll Rd., police said. The value of the inserts is estimated to be \$2,700. Another was reported missing earlier this month and several went missing last fall.

Briefcase taken

A briefcase was taken from a car parked at a Delrex Blvd. residence overnight Thursday, May 5. The passenger side window was broken in order to gain access, police said. Damage and the stolen property had a value of \$350.

Hubcaps missing

Four hubcaps and two insignia of a Camero parked at 60 Park Ave. were taken overnight Friday, May 6, police said. They estimate the value to be about \$140.

Cellular phone stolen

A cellular phone was taken from a Mazda van parked at Calvert Dr. overnight Thursday. There was no forced entry, police said. Value was estimated to be about \$400.

Halton Hills unemployment at 9 per cent

Halton striving to keep jobs here

By **LISA TALLYN**
Staff writer

In the 1980s Halton Region's business development department focused on attracting new businesses to the region, but today the department is concentrating on retaining the businesses that are already here.

Brent Kearsse, Halton's director of business development, told council members prior to Monday night's council meeting, the recession is responsible for that shift in focus.

"What we saw in the 1980s is not going to return for a while. Now we are trying to grow business rather than attract it. Of the 12,000 companies in Halton 80 per cent have fewer than 10 employees," said Kearsse. "We want to help them grow, get out of the way, and be flexible."

Although the economy is gaining strength, mirrored in Halton by an increase in building permits and land transactions and a decline in bankruptcies and the number of people on the welfare rolls, Kearsse said like most regions in Ontario Halton was hard hit by the recession.

"Today we have 20,000 unemployed people in Halton, and 20,000 who are underemployed," Kearsse added that unemployment in Halton, and Halton Hills, stands at around 9 per cent.

"We are traditionally about two to three per cent lower than the Ontario average. Halton is diversified, not controlled by one sector of the economy."

Kearsse said while the recession took its toll on the town "other parts

of the region were hit harder and earlier than Halton Hills."

On the job creation front Kearsse said the jobsOntario program has been a success in Halton. In the past 18 months the program created 850 jobs regionwide. In Halton Hills, 36 companies participated resulting in 75 jobs. He added 86 per cent of the people hired through jobsOntario have been retained after the one year program.

Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson asked Kearsse what the region was doing for unemployed recent college and university graduates.

Kearsse explained they can tap into the jobsOntario program and added a new federal program targeted to that group should be officially announced soon.

Councillor Rick Bonnette asked Kearsse if the region's development charges had a negative effect on attracting new business to the region.

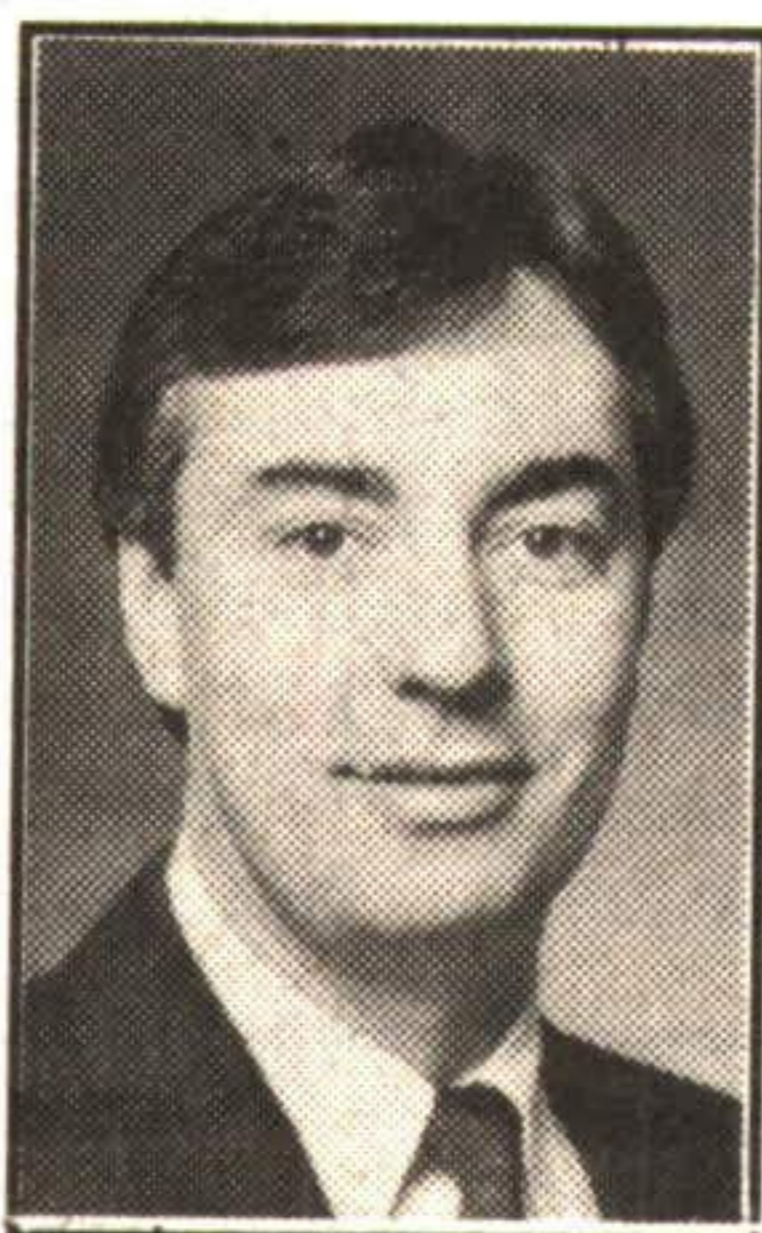
"It is another cost of doing business. Yes it has had an effect. I receive about three calls a week from people complaining

about our development charges. The good news for Halton Hills is that your charges are lowest for all of Halton."

The number of inquiries the region receives regarding possible new plant locations in the region has dropped from about 1,000 a year before the recession to 250.

"There is much more competition than ever before. Peel region has a heck of a lot of cheap space on the market," said Kearsse.

Kearsse said as Peel fills up, Halton should be next in line. Currently there are about 1,000 acres of serviced land in Halton.



BRENT KEARSE

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