

# Police warn residents to beware of mystery shopper scam

By David Lea  
Metroland Media Group

Halton police are issuing a warning after several residents recently lost thousands of dollars after falling victim to a fraud known as the mystery shopper scam.

Det. Derek DiFelice said that while this particular con is not new it has been making a comeback in the Halton area.

Late last month three Oakville residents, one Milton resident and one Burlington resident were tricked by ads promising them cash to serve as mystery shoppers.

DiFelice said the scam usually starts with someone receiving an unsolicited text message on their phone containing these mystery shopper ads.

If the recipient of this message follows up they are sent a survey detailing what to look for to evaluate the store they will be sent to as a mystery shopper.

They are also sent a cheque, in one of the recent cases for \$3,000.

The victim is told to deposit the cheque into their account, keep a certain amount for their salary and withdraw a certain amount to purchase items at the store they will be

sent to.

They are also directed to withdraw the bulk of the money and send it back through a money transfer.

In some cases the victims are told they are doing this to test a company's money transfer services.

It is only after this money is sent away that the victim discovers the cheque they were originally sent was bogus.

The bank is going to come back at you and say, That cheque you cashed wasn't real, said DiFelice.

So you took money out from the bank that you didn't have and spent it and sent it away to someone.

While some of these mystery shopper scams originate overseas some are carried out locally.

In some instances the scammers get people who may be unaware of what they are doing to help them carry out their crimes.

Police said the fraudster befriends these people and tells them they are about to receive some money, but have no bank account and need to use their newfound friend's account.

If that person agrees the scammer arranges for the victims of their mystery shopper scam to send their money to that account.

The scammer then has the person

withdraw the money for them and they disappear.

DiFelice said people who get tied up in this sort of scam and don't really understand where the money being directed into their account is coming from have a responsibility to contact police.

When it comes to avoiding these scams DiFelice is reminding residents that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Money doesn't come for free. Someone is not going to send you a whole whack of cash and then have you send it back to them at some point. That doesn't happen, he said.

# Regional council could see more Oakville and Milton representation

By Julie Le  
Metroland Media Group

Oakville and Milton are one step closer to having more representation at the regional level in 2018.

A public meeting held in Regional Council Chambers last Wednesday saw no objection to changing the size and composition of Halton Regional council to allow two more seats for Milton and one more for Oakville.

A bylaw to make the changes will now go before Regional council Sept. 14 for approval.

Residents who would like to have their say on the matter can register to speak as a delegate by contacting the Regional clerk through email at regionalclerk@halton.ca

If the plan goes ahead, regional council will be comprised of 24 members the regional chair, eight councillors from Oakville,

seven from Burlington, five from Milton and three from Halton Hills.

The last time the size and composition of Regional council was reviewed was in 1996 when Halton had a population of 340,000, according to a related regional report.

The current population is 530,900.

According to the best planning estimates for the Region, adopted by Regional Council on July 13, 2011, the population of the Region is estimated to grow to 556,200 inhabitants in 2016 and to 624,000 inhabitants in 2021, the report stated.

The majority of this growth in the Region has occurred and will continue to occur in the Town of Milton and the Town of Oakville. The current size and composition of Regional council does not account for the past or expected growth in these municipalities.

I think the large majority of the commu-

nity is supportive of what is evolving here, said Milton mayor Gord Krantz.

However not all councillors were in favour of changing the size and composition of Halton Regional council.

In November of last year, it was heavily discussed with a number of Burlington opposed to Oakville getting an additional seat based on the best planning estimates.

Burlington Mayor Rick Goldring argued the best planning estimates don't reflect where Burlington is headed, especially when it shows Burlington won't be growing.

He suggested that real data from the upcoming 2017 census should be considered.

Council voted 14-4 in favour of changing regional council to allow more representation for Oakville and Milton.

In June, council was notified Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing enacted a regulation to allow it to proceed



and make the changes to happen.

A bylaw to change the size and composition of Halton Regional council must be supported by a majority of Regional council on Sept. 14. It also must be supported by a majority at least three of the four local municipal councils in Halton and a majority of the total number of councillors from all four municipalities must also support it.

Meneray said if and when the matter is being discussed at each of the local councils, the public will have an opportunity to provide input as well, if they wish to.

**EMPLOYEE PRICING**  
ENDS SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>

**YOU PAY WHAT WE PAY.**

Michael,  
Ford of Canada,  
Marketing



OWN THE 2016  
**F-150 LARIAT 502A  
SUPERCREW 4X4 5.0L**

EMPLOYEE PRICE ADJUSTMENT **\$7,530**

DELIVERY ALLOWANCE **\$4,750**

TOTAL PRICE ADJUSTMENTS **\$12,280\*\***

YOUR EMPLOYEE PRICE **\$51,019**

OFFER INCLUDES [\$1,800] IN FREIGHT AND AIR TAX

F-SERIES  
BEST-SELLING IN CANADA FOR  
**50**  
YEARS

PLUS, ELIGIBLE COSTCO MEMBERS  
RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL

**\$1,000<sup>^</sup>**

ON MOST 2016 AND  
2017 FORD MODELS



GET YOUR EMPLOYEE PRICE AT [FINDYOURFORD.CA](http://FINDYOURFORD.CA)  
OR VISIT YOUR ONTARIO FORD STORE.



Our advertised prices include Freight, Air Tax, and PPSA (if financed or leased). Add dealer administration and registration fees of up to \$799, fuel fill charge of up to \$120 and applicable taxes, then drive away.