

# Holly plant demolition underway

*Six jobs lost as US parent firm blames Town for plant closure*

The CFO of American company that owns the now-closed Holly Industries blames the Mayor and Town Council for closure of the plant following a fire and explosion last November. The Eastern Avenue facility employed six workers full-time and refined molten sulphur into pellets or granules, mainly for the tire industry. It did not resume production after the incident.

When asked why the company is leaving Acton – the 1.7-acre site is for sale and a demolition crew hope to flatten the site within a month – Monty Callaghan, CFO of parent firm Georgia Gulf in Marietta, Georgia said, “Speak to the Mayor and city (sic) council. It all goes to the Mayor’s action – we are doing what the mayor and city (sic) council said,” Callaghan said on Monday, refusing to elaborate.

The Holly Industries plant was built in 1978 and sulphur processing began the next year, operating as a division of Aldert Chemicals until 1988, when Georgia Gulf purchased it.

The Acton plant has a history of three explosions and fires in eight years, a history stressed by Mayor Rick Bonnette when company officials visited Halton Hills within a week of the last accident that caused an estimated \$15-million and forced evacuation of residents of three neighbouring houses.

Acting-Mayor Acton Councillor Jon Hurst said at the time, Mayor Rick Bonnette was “very blunt with the company that if it wanted to rebuild on site, it would have to meet all current safety rules.” Hurst added they had no concerns the plant was operating below certain standards, but “accidents happen... and the Town was trying to ensure the safety of employees and neighbours, and it was clear the plant didn’t belong.”



**DEMO UNDERWAY:** By the end of next month, the former Holly Industries plant on Eastern Avenue will be levelled. The sulphur manufacturing plant was closed by its American owners following an explosion and fire at the plant last November. – Frances Learment photo

Hurst said the company did not respond to offers to help it relocate, perhaps in Acton’s industrial area.

“You never say good riddance – that’s the last thing you’d want to do because it doesn’t send a good message when you lose industry because our economic development mandate is to increase the industrial tax base,” he said.

One source, who did not want to be identified as he

was not authorized to speak for the company, said a Halton Hills fire official told Georgia Gulf officials they would have to do so many safety checks if they rebuilt on Eastern Avenue, that they would not be able to have any full day runs of production.

Doug Penrice, the Town’s Economic Development Officer said while any job losses are “hard” but sometimes with growth, factories end up in the “wrong spot.”

## First West Nile virus positive mosquitoes found in Halton Region

A batch of mosquitoes trapped last week in Oakville has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) – the first batch of WNV positive mosquitoes in Halton this year.

“Halton Region has been testing mosquitoes for 12 years now. This relatively early positive batch could

indicate a busy year in terms of West Nile virus activity,” said Dr. Monir Taha, Halton Region Associate Medical Officer of Health, in a press release issued on Monday.

She said the recent very hot weather was perfect for mosquito and West Nile virus reproduction.

“Halton residents need to protect themselves against mosquito bites and get rid of mosquito breeding sites now and until the West Nile virus season winds down in the fall.”

Urban areas are more likely to have mosquitoes that carry WNV. The types of mosquitoes that transmit WNV to humans most commonly breed in urban areas where man-made items that hold water such as bird baths, plant pots, old toys, and tires are abundant.

The following steps will protect residents and their families from mosquitoes:

- Cover up with light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants with tightly-woven fabric.
- Avoid the outdoors from early evening to morning when mosquitoes are most active and likely to bite, as well as at any time

in shady, wooded areas.

- Reduce mosquito breeding sites around your home by getting rid of all water-filled containers and objects. Change the water in bird baths at least once per week.

- Use an approved insect repellent, such as one containing DEET.

- Make sure your window and door screens are tight and without holes, cuts or other openings.

A map showing the locations of standing water sites that have had larvicide applied is available on the Health Department’s website at [www.halton.ca/wnv](http://www.halton.ca/wnv)

To report standing water or for more information about West Nile virus, please dial 311 or call Halton Region at 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-442-5866, or e-mail [wnv@halton.ca](mailto:wnv@halton.ca)

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