

# Halton Hills to use gas-tax revenue to repair roads

BY BERNADETTE WARD

Rural residents in Halton Hills will be enjoying a better ride in the near future since council voted on September 19 to use \$1 million of the much anticipated gas tax revenues to repair a number of local roads.

"We know that there are a lot of problems with rural roads," said Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette. "This will reduce our rural roads (needing hardtop) from 38 to 24 kilometres."

Roads such as Sixth Line, 22nd Sideroad, Third Line and Ninth Line, all between 5th Sideroad, 10th Sideroad and 15th Sideroad are ones that have not been identified in the town's capital forecast and will likely benefit from the windfall.

The Federal New Deal Gas Tax money will allow for gravel and surface treatment as well as repairs to the ditches.

The process will begin in 2006, with \$333,000 allotted for the work that year and in 2007 and \$334,000 to be spent in 2008. There will be \$565,000 left over and staff has been instructed to make recommendations on how it might be spent.

Council has attempted to find the money to make the needed repairs before, most notably by applying for assistance through

the Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COM-RIF), but was unsuccessful despite the tri-governmental partnership's mandate to improve and renew public infrastructure.

With the exception of Councillor Mike Davis, Ward 3, members of council approved the motion.

"I would much rather see staff direction on this. I understand rural concerns on this but I think from a town level we should not be earmarking this for hard topping," Davis said.

Councillor Joan Robson, Ward 2, who seconded the motion, noted that roads are a large issue in the rural areas and in fact they are sometimes not even passable.

"Rural residents have waited patiently. Now with Mayor Bonnette's resolution we will have \$1 million over three years to deal with roads," she said.

An interesting comparison was drawn by Councillor Jane Fogel, Ward's 3 and 4, who noted that it costs \$846 to maintain 1 kilometre of paved road versus \$3,195 for unpaved road.

"This is an opportunity to move us ahead and serve the residents as well," she said.

## Arnott in bid for Speaker's job

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currently Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Cabinet Committee on Education Policy.

He too will begin seeking support from his colleagues in the house.

"The Speaker has important responsibilities to our traditions and to the people of Ontario," said Brown.

Although Arnott is aware that his place with the opposition makes his bid more difficult, still he believes he has what it takes to be a good Speaker.

He also has experience in the Legislature to draw on having been First Deputy of the Committee of the Whole House and then Deputy Speaker for the last two years.

Inclined to give credit where it's due, Arnott acknowledges that Brown is also a good candidate given his experience.

## New hospital for Oakville

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many young families, the project will allow more space for family-centred care.

"I'm especially proud of not only the announcement, but the way it's been phased," said Kevin Flynn, Oakville MPP.

The project is a part of the provincial

government's ReNew Ontario infrastructure investment plan that will see \$5 billion invested over the next five years to improve health care facilities.

"This project will ensure people in this community have access to the modern, effective health care they need and deserve," said Smitherman.

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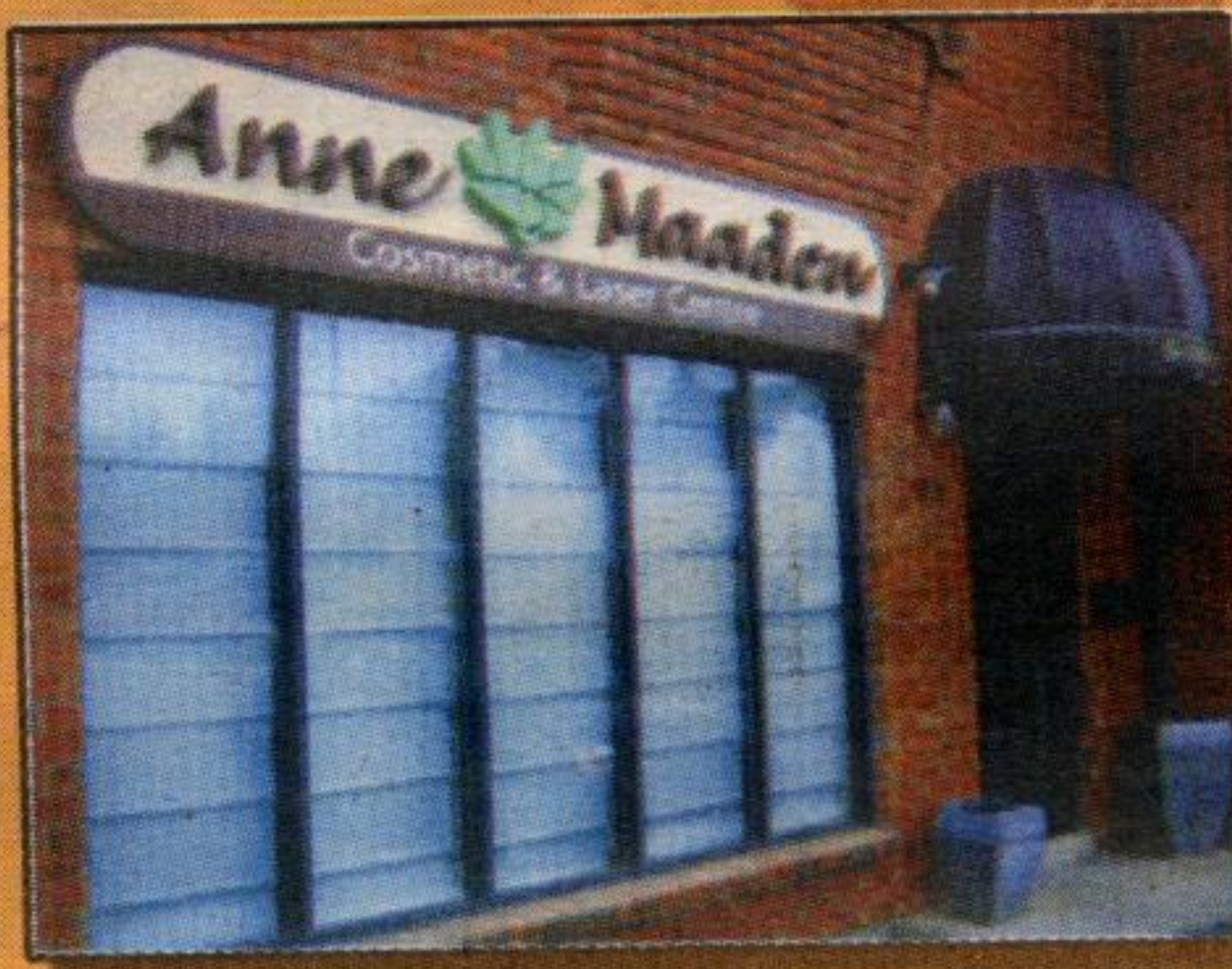
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