

2006 Property Assessment Notices delivered to property owners in Halton

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) has released assessment notices that will be used to determine Halton property taxes for 2006. The assessment reflects an updated appraisal of properties over the 18-month period from June 30, 2003 to January 1, 2005.

The average increase for properties in Halton is 13.43 per cent. Halton residential properties increased by 14.08 per cent, compared to a provincial average increase of 12.68 per cent. Commercial and industrial property increases in Halton increased an average of 11.70 per cent and 10.76 per cent, respectively, compared to average provincial increases of 9.92 per cent and 9.28 per cent.

"Residents often conclude that an increase in their assessment translates into a corresponding increase to their taxes, however, this is not always the case," said Halton Region's Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Treasurer Jane MacCaskill. "As a general guideline, those properties that have increased at a level below or at the municipal average will not experience assessment related increases. However, the final amount by which a specific property experiences a tax increase

will not be known until tax rates are set in the spring of 2006."

Receipt of the assessment will trigger the beginning of a detailed analysis of taxes by a team consisting of Finance staff from the Region and Halton's four local municipalities: Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. The team will measure the impact of tax increases resulting from all approved 2006 budgets, and test the impact of how these taxes are distributed. The Province requires that assessment-related property tax increases for non-residential properties be capped at 10.0 per cent, which results in a shifting of costs onto other properties in Halton. In addition, the Province has given municipalities discretionary tools to adjust the impact of taxation on certain properties or property classes.

Halton Regional Council will review recommendations from the tax team in the spring of 2006, and establish final tax rates for bills issued to property owners in the second half of 2006.

Property owners who believe that the assessed value of their property is incorrect should contact MPAC at 1-866-296-MPAC (6722), or go to www.mpac.ca.

Country Heritage Park threatened with financial devastation

Continued from page 1

He pointed out that the park pulls in about 45 percent of its winter revenue through the auto deal and that without it, the park may fall back into the hands of the Province who according to Cressman, is not interested in owning or operating it.

Although the 80-acre park is still currently owned by the provincial government, CHP operates a public attraction that preserves the agricultural and rural history of the area managing 30 exhibit buildings and 20,000 agricultural artifacts dating back to 1830.

CHP has adapted an operation strategy that sets it apart from many museums. Not only is it a working and interactive museum, but it is partnered with a num-

ber of collector clubs who service and maintain the exhibits to the tune of over 600 person days in volunteer work.

As well, the museum is only open to the public on a walk-in basis for a small part of the year. The rest of the time is spent hosting weddings, tour groups, trade shows and educational programs.

"We don't do anything that doesn't have a customer attached to it," said Cressman.

This allows CHP to keep operating costs down. When they first took over the operation after it was decommissioned by the province in 1997, they were receiving \$1.5 million in grants which has been pared down to \$100,000 for this year.

The NEC however, has some concerns about land use and about agreeing

to a deferral. "It seems that what they want to do is buy time so that they can park cars," said Whitbread.

Although NEC has taken the stand that the cars are visually unappealing - Whitbread says that the museum has been mistaken for an auto park by visitors, and there is always the possibility of oil leaks causing environmental damage, it's also about consistency for all. "This could open the door to others wanting to do something similar," said Whitbread.

In the end, it is the NEC who will decide and currently it doesn't look good for CHP. "It should be refused, it's incompatible with the NEC plan," said Whitbread. "They shouldn't be operating an industrial use on escarpment land."



Top trends seem to be growing popularity for natural stone materials with quality. Innovative products like natural stone granite vanity tops offers you the chance to increase the look and value to your home at a low price.

Milton Home Hardware can special order in your new granite vanity top in standard sizes and designer colours listed below. Worried about installing your new granite vanity top? Have Home Installs do it for you, ask for details in the store.

Natural Stone Granite Vanity Tops in the following sizes and colours.

37" x 23" \$369.99
49" x 23" \$459.99

AVAILABLE IN: MANHATTAN BLACK, PLATINUM GREY, SEA GREEN, MECCA YELLOW (on display in store)

Standard 4" centers or 8" centers.
Allow 2 weeks for delivery.

Milton Home Hardware Building Centre
385 Steeles Ave., E., Milton
Tel (905) 878-9222



BICK FINANCIAL SECURITY CORPORATION

Join us for a free panel discussion with the experts

Take advantage of this opportunity to ask the experts and have your questions answered.

Panel experts from ClaringtonFunds Inc., Mackenzie Financial and Northwest Mutual Funds to discuss how to:

- ⇒ Take advantage of current market conditions
- ⇒ Economic outlook
- ⇒ Investing responsibly
- ⇒ Tax impact of your investment choices
- ⇒ Mutual fund investment strategies

Thursday November 17th, 2005
At Hugh Foster Hall, 53 Brown St. Milton
Registration at 7:10, Starts at 7:25 p.m

Contact Jackie to reserve your seats at 905-875-1000



Melissa DeBrouwer
Certified Financial Planner



Cassandra Thompson
Certified Financial Planner

Sponsored in part by:

ClaringtonFunds

Mackenzie INVESTMENTS



NORTHWEST Mutual Funds Inc.