

Prepared-not scared - Town says maintains ready for any emergency

"Prepared, but not scared," is the credo of Halton Hills officials as they "tweak" their Y2K readiness and emergency plans.

Councillors were briefed on the both plans at a special orientation meeting last week, designed to make sure they can respond properly to either a planned event - like the Y2K issue - or to a natural or technological disaster.

Fire Chief Bill Cunningham,

who dismisses the Y2K issue as a "non-event" repeated assurances it will be business as usual in Halton Hills, come January 2,000.

"We continue to be in a position to give you absolute comfort that from our point of view, from everything we have investigated, that there aren't going to be any major incidences connected with Y2K," Chief Cunningham reported.

The so-called Y2K or millennium bug is a computer programming glitch that could wreck havoc non-compliant date-sensitive computer hardware and software. Earlier this week, some Toronto residents received notices instructing them to report for jury duty in January 1900, instead of 2,000.

Fire and Life Safety Educator Brian Ellsworth said the Y2K issue and ice storms in

Eastern Ontario and Quebec last winter prompted many municipalities to dust off their emergency plans. The Town's details the plan of action for deployment of services, agencies and personnel required to operate in an emergency situation.

In the event of a large-scale emergency in Halton Hills, the mayor is responsible for activating the emergency plan, in consultation with police, fire and other officials.

If the mayor were away, the councillor designated as acting mayor that month would have to step in. Ward 4 Councillor Ron Chatten suggested the acting mayor should let officials know, and set up back-ups, if they are going to be away at the same time as the mayor.

Ellsworth said the Y2K theme in Halton Region is to be prepared, not scared and stressed they are "ready, willing and able" with Y2K contingencies in place.

"It's very important for us to understand that there's emergency preparedness for physical-type emergencies and then there's Y2K readiness for a planned event," Ellsworth said, calling emergency preparedness "the real deal," and adding annual review and commitment is the key to the plan.

"We need to keep asking, what is our biggest fear?"



JUST A BIG KID: Debbie McKnight made and sold costumed dolls during the Parents' Council fundraising craft sale at Robert Little Public school. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo



HEY SANTA, STOP TICKLING: 4-year-old Nathaniel Hopkins joked around with Santa during the Parent and Child Resource Centre breakfast on Saturday morning. - Angela Tyler photo

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