

Acton resident officially named Halton's new CAO

Halton Region has a new chief administrative officer. After a nationwide search, Brent Marshall has been appointed to the position which he has filled on a temporary basis since June.

While Marshall's swift ascent through regional ranks seemed to begin with a 1997 selection as commissioner of planning and public works, it has in fact been a long journey to the top.

Actually, his overnight success has been 29 years in the making.

It began when Marshall was a wet-behind-the-ears 20 year-old, working as a laborer for the Town of Acton in 1970.

Now, the job that will have him

overseeing a staff of 1,100, is officially his.

"In the past I've learned to keep my nose to the grindstone, my ear to the ground and my back to the wall," Marshall joked in addressing Halton regional council after they approved his appointment. "This is a special day in my life. You will get my personal best."

Marshall, 48, claims he never had his eye on any main prize in terms of advancement. "Throughout my career I never focused on a position. I focused on doing my job and what is good for the community."

From his initial laborer's job he moved up to lead hand, sub-fore-



BRENT MARSHALL

He could stay and work for Halton Hills, or transfer to the newly-formed Halton Region.

Feeling there was more opportunity with Halton, he made the switch.

man, foreman and supervisor. In 1974 the direction of his life changed slightly due to an amalgamation of Acton and Georgetown into Halton Hills.

That gave him a choice.

Since then he has moved steadily up the ranks, working as director of environmental services, director of maintenance and commissioner of planning and public works.

His roots as a laborer have given him a unique perspective, said Marshall.

"I understand the needs of the community," he said. "I've never felt like I worked for an organization, per se, but for the people. That helps you stay clear on what you're doing."

Marshall has kept close to that base through his long-time efforts as a volunteer firefighter in Halton Hills. He is also past president of the area agricultural society.

He still lives in Acton, where he

was born and raised. Today he and wife Jan raise children, Bryce, Bronwyn and Eden, in the town that gave him his start.

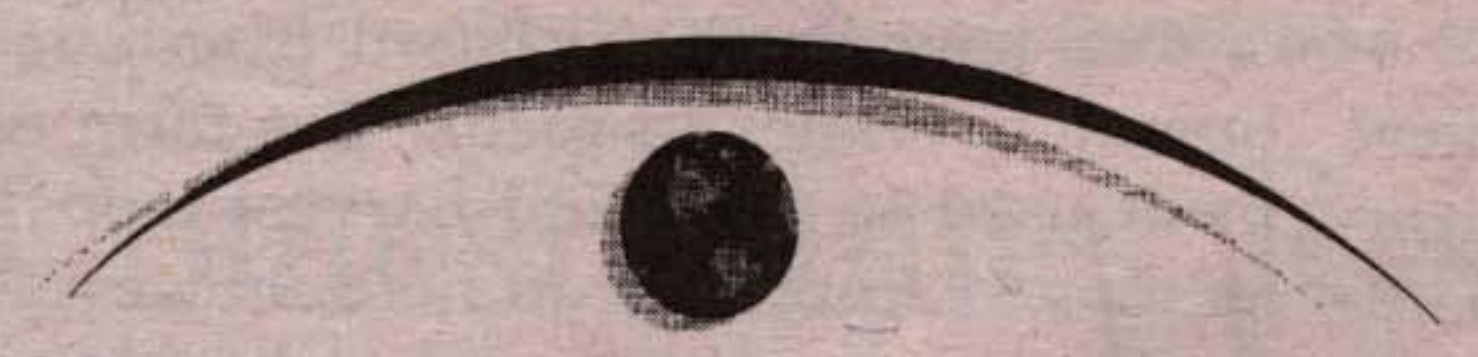
He already has some clear ideas on what do with his new job.

"Very generally, my first goal is to ensure all the resources available to me are used in the most efficient and effective manner," he said. "To make sure we're as tight as we can be."

Marshall was clearly a popular choice among councillors.

"He is well known and respected by regional council and staff both personally and professionally, as a leader with integrity," said Halton Chair Joyce Savoline.

—By Irene Gentle, special



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