## Keeping you in the loop

Independent & Free Press, I focused on one topic in order to bring awareness and understanding about a particular issue. This month's column will be different because I don't have just one, but three important items to tell you about.

First is Halton's reaffirmation of the triple A credit rating with Moody's Investor Service of New York. Achieving and retaining a triple A credit rating allows Halton Region and the area municipalities to borrow funds at the lowest possible interest rates.

In its annual rating review, Moody's recognizes the region's ability to control debt servicing costs even when faced with challenges posed by growth demands and the shifting of several services from the province. Our low debt level is because of our extensive reliance on pay-as-you-go financing. In the last five years, ending in 1998, over two-thirds of the region's capital financing was derived from reserve funds and current revenues, and less than 10 percent came from long-term debt proceeds.

Second is the Halton Region Health Department's 2000-2001 Universal Influenza Immunization Program.

To help launch this program, I recently rolled up my sleeve and got my annual flu shot. Getting a flu shot is the best protection against the flu, and it's easier now more than ever because flu shots are free for everyone living in Ontario. The Health Department's flu clinics for people at higher risk of complications from flu are planned for October, with clinics for everyone else in November and December. The clinics will be held

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throughout Halton including Georgetown and Acton.

For more information call the Flu Info Line at (905) 825-6158. For local calls from Acton dial (519) 853-0501, and from Georgetown dial (905) 878-8113.

Third is council's recent approval of the final Aquifer Management Plan, which has, as its long-term goal, the security of the groundwater and surface water resources in Halton. This final plan includes a new component involving discussions with rural landowners on such things as options for management and manure storage, for keeping livestock away from watercourses and for planning vegetation along riverbanks to stop erosion. This new rural water quality program will provide funding to landowners to assist with implementing good management practices to minimize agricultural contamination threats to rural water resources.

As you can see, we've accomplished a lot lately. While the three topics I wrote about may appear to have no common link, they do reaffirm Halton Region's effective financial management and our dedication to offering you top quality programs and services.

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