

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Chamber Board and staff to wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

At the beginning of a new year most of us feel a sense of renewal and a time to set new personal and business goals. If you are not a member of the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce and own a business, make Chamber membership a 2006 goal. Get involved and connected with the many business owners who enjoy the benefits and advantages of Chamber membership.

At the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce our motto is "Connecting Business and Community" and we continue to make our presence known in all levels of government that affect our Region.

Upon visiting the Statistics Canada website we can be assured that Canada continues to grow and prosper. Ontario in particular continues to move toward debt reduction. The economy is strong evidenced by the fact that our unemployment level is very low at 6.4%.

For business owners who are hiring new employees there is a need to be aware that this is an employees' market. When you have a position available people will not be knocking down your doors. You will need to have an excellent hiring process in place to hire the right individuals for the right jobs.

From the Boardroom
Wendy Hue
President



On the education front, if you are in an industry that requires apprenticeship now is the time to be involved with your community in helping to educate teachers, counselors, parents and young adults in the value of apprenticeship.

We will need a strong workforce to replace the many skilled workers who will be retiring within the next few years.

The 401/407 Gateway Industrial Park is in the process of development. As new companies build and jobs become available more people will be moving into our great community.

On January 23, 2006 we will be called upon to vote in the next government.

We need to put our votes in the ballot box if we are to bring in the government we desire. Let's get the best turnout ever at the polling stations in Halton Hills. Let us show our concern about who the leaders of this country will be on January 24th.

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce continues to build on our ability and position to provide leadership within the business community and the community at large. Our desire is to help make Halton Hills a desired place in which to live and work.

Let us, together, make 2006 the best year ever in Halton Hills.

Positively and successfully,
Wendy Hue, PCC, CSP
President

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Pandemic Flu?

continued from page 1

A recent Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce survey of its members suggests 43% were somewhat concerned; 19% were indifferent; 24% were unconcerned and think it's all media hype; and 14% were very concerned and have a plan in place.

Risk Exposure:

The Halton Region expects that if/when there is an outbreak of pandemic influenza, there will be a 35% "attack rate." Based on Halton's population of 400,000, this could mean that:

- 300,000 people become infected (75%)
- 140,000 people become clinically ill (35% "attack rate")
- 60,000 people require outpatient care (15%)
- 1,200 require hospitalization (.3%)
- 400 deaths (.1%)

In Ontario, estimates suggest 8 million people infected, up to 4 million clinically ill and 12,000 deaths. Potential problems arise if millions of people get sick at the same time. Absenteeism may impair essential services, such as power, transportation and communications.

If many doctors and nurses become ill, it will be difficult to care for the sick. If the majority of a local police force is infected, the safety of the community might be at risk. If air traffic controllers are all sick at once, air travel could grind to a halt, interrupting not only business and personal travel, but also the transport of life-saving vaccines or anti-viral drugs. Public gatherings will be banned or cancelled; schools will be shut down. Distribution of products and services will be disrupted. There could also be border closings and travel restrictions.

Preparation:

Six distinct phases have been defined to facilitate pandemic preparedness planning, with roles for governments, industry, and WHO. The present situation is categorized as phase 3 in that the virus is causing



A Thai official collects chickens in Kanchanaburi province, 120 km (74 miles) west of Bangkok October 19, 2005. Thailand, where bird flu has killed 12 people since 2004, will start human trials of an H5N1 vaccine next year, a senior Health Ministry official said on Tuesday.

REUTERS/Sukree Sukplang

human infections but does not spread easily from one person to another.

In Halton, a healthcare workshop was held to discuss issues and educate first responders; e.g., long-term care providers. Recently an information session was held for the business community. Their message to businesses: Develop plans to maintain essential and critical services.

"Essential Services" is defined as:

- A service and/or function that when not delivered creates an impact on the health and safety of individuals
- A service and/or function that may lead to the failure of a business unit if

activities are not performed in a specified time period.

- There are also some organizations that provide essential services and/or functions that must be performed to satisfy regulatory requirements, with impacts that may be immediate or may occur over a certain time period.

Business Continuity Plan "Tool Kit"

The Business Continuity "Tool Kit" will help you prepare for this possible eventuality and can form an addition to your company's Disaster Recovery planning. This planning process consists of the following steps:

1. Establish a Corporate Steering Committee or individual to oversee the planning process.
2. Establish a Business Continuity Planning Committee or Working Group
3. Identify Essential Services/Functions
4. Identify required skill sets and opportunities for staff reallocation
5. Identify any relevant issues/implications for implementation
6. Prepare a Business Continuity Plan for each essential service/function
7. Compare with the "Preparedness Checklist"
8. Review your Business Continuity Plan with the Corporate Steering Committee
9. Revise, test the plan and update as required.

This "Tool Kit" provides templates, samples, and a detailed set of questions to guide you through the entire process. For your copy, contact the Halton Region at www.region.halton.on.ca/health. Remember that it's important to plan now, before it hits. Their website offers a lot of information to assist you.

"Spread of a worldwide pandemic can possibly reach all continents in less than three months!"