

Cash from province slashes town tax hike— by \$4

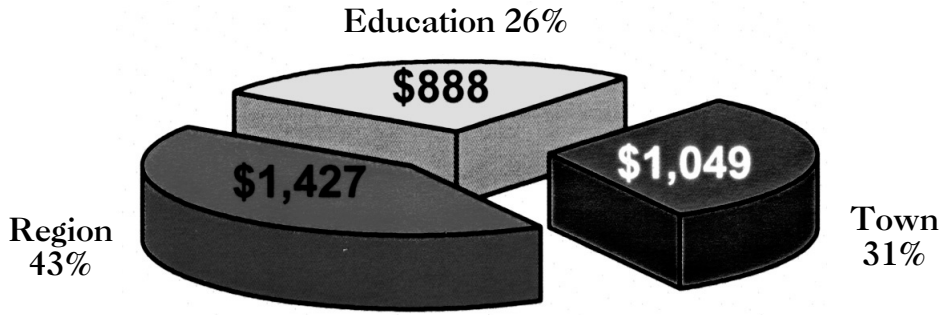
A last-minute windfall from the provincial government has dropped the 2006 tax hike from 5.1 per cent to 4.7 per cent.

Halton Hills council approved the 2006 operating and capital budget and capital forecast at Monday's meeting.

Late last week, the Town received word from the provincial government, it would get \$82,000 under the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund.

The cash drops the proposed tax hike of \$51 for a home assessed at \$300,000 to \$47—a 4.7 per cent increase over last year's budget.

The total Town, Region and



Education tax increase is \$97—a 3 per cent hike.

A homeowner with a home assessed at \$300,000 will be paying \$3,364 in

taxes (\$1,049 in Town taxes, \$1,427 in Region taxes and \$888 in Education).

Instead of lowering the tax hike, Ward 3 Councillor Mike Davis attempt-

ed to spend the \$82,000 on a new program— Monday openings at the Georgetown branch library.

But he was forced to withdraw his motion after not even getting a second willing to support his cause.

"The library (Monday) opening issue should come back when the new library opens (in 2010)," said Councillor Ron Chatten.

"Five point one to 4.7 (per cent) isn't huge but it's a pretty strong statement that we're below five and I think the community will appreciate that," he added.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

Local MP Chong joins Harper's inner circle

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As Minister of Sport, Chong will have responsibilities for Sport Canada which supports the development of the Canadian sport system to strengthen the unique contribution that sport makes to Canadian identity, culture and society.

Intergovernmental Affairs is part of the Privy Council Office and deals with policy in such areas as federal-provincial territorial relations, aboriginal affairs and the evolution of federation.

Garth Turner was the last MP serving the area (Halton-Peel) to hold a cabinet post. Turner, currently the MP for Halton, served a short stint as Revenue Minister under Prime Minister Kim Campbell from June to November 1993.

Prior to Turner, former Brampton-Georgetown MP John McDermid held junior cabinet positions from 1988-93 under former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Halton Hills council offered its congratulations to Chong at its meeting Monday night.

"This speaks volumes of this young man and his endeavours. It doesn't matter which political stripes you belong to, I think it's quite a feat at his age to be a rising star that is being recognized," said Mayor Rick Bonnette.

—By Lisa Tallyn and Cynthia Gamble, staff writers



Top milk man

At the annual general meeting of the Halton Milk Producers Association, Limehouse dairy farmer Rob Linham was recognized for his farm's outstanding milk quality with the presentation of the Certificate of Excellence and a gift certificate for having the top quality milk in Halton. Ida Khalife of CIBC Milton (sponsors of the award) presented the award to Linham, who has won it three years in a row.

Photo by Ted Brown

Volunteer parent treasurer charged after \$30,000 stolen from three schools

A former volunteer treasurer of three north Halton school councils, including one at Stewarttown School, is facing charges after \$30,000 went missing from the accounts of the three schools.

Halton Police report they began an investigation following a complaint by the Halton District School Board that irregularities had been discovered in the accounting practices of a parent

serving as the volunteer treasurer from Nov. 2002 to March 2005 of school councils at Stewarttown Public School in Georgetown and J.M. Denyes and W.I. Dick Schools in Milton.

Charged with three counts of theft over \$5,000 and utter a forged document is Brenda Darlene Pickering, 43, of Fourth Line, Halton Hills.

She is to appear in Burlington Provincial Court on February 22.

Council wants report on light synchronization

Halton Hills council requested a presentation on the synchronization of Guelph St. traffic lights by the Town's traffic co-ordinator Bob Butrym at a future council meeting.

Wards 3 and 4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal brought the matter to a recent council meeting after being prompted by a constituent's e-mail. The resident complained that the number of traffic lights on Guelph St. seems to be impeding the flow of vehicles.

With the recent activation of the Real Canadian Super Store light at Windsor Rd. and the soon-to-be-activated light in front of Price Chopper and Georgetown Chrysler, there will be a total of 11 traffic lights on Guelph St. from Mill St. to Delrex Blvd.— a 3.7 kilometre stretch.

The Town installed synchronization software— traffic signal interconnection— managed from a computer in the Engineering Department at the Civic Centre, in 2004, said Director of Engineering and Public Works Rick Henry. In December 2005 a new time-and-delay software was added to the program. This will adjust the signals if there are excessive delays. The timing will be "tweaked" as each new light is added, he said.

"Even when they were sort of synchronized on Guelph St., I never really noticed that they were. I never had that feeling I could drive through town without getting stopped," said Fogal.

"There are a number of factors that enter into that (driving through all green lights); even if you set perfectly with turning movements, you'd be very lucky if you got through them all green," said Henry.

Ward 4 Councillor Bob Inglis also requested that Butrym address the synchronization of lights on Mountainview Rd.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

Teen charged in vandalism spree

Halton Police have charged a 15-year-old Georgetown boy with three counts of mischief in connection with three vandalism incidents at Sacre Coeur School over the past week.


Police report at 3 a.m. Saturday a uniformed officer was patrolling the school when he saw a youth writing graffiti on the wall of the school with black marker.

The youth was arrested and charged with mischief under \$5,000. Police say the youth later admitted to being responsible for two previous incidents of graffiti at the school earlier in the week.



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