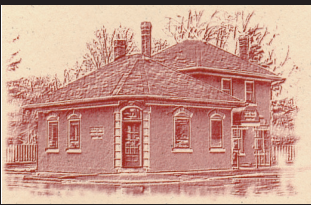


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Hike in hydro rates blamed on searing summer of 2005

Continued from pg. 1

In the winter— between November and April— the threshold is 1,000 kilowatt-hours, largely because homes dependent on electric heating have less flexibility in reducing their power consumption.

The OEB blamed a record-hot summer last year for the hikes.

Lower water levels for hydro-electric generation and more frequent use of air conditioners forced the province to import premium power and use electricity generated by natural-gas plants, for which the cost rose far higher than forecast.

The result was that Ontario households paid \$60 less than the actual cost of supplying the electricity, amounting to a \$384 million shortfall that will be made up by the new rates.

The Ontario government says help for low-income families hurt most by hydro rate hikes is on the way in the form of a one-time rebate of up to \$120 per family and \$60 per individual based on a sliding scale according to income.

Art Skidmore, Chief Financial Officer for Halton Hills Hydro, said area residents can take steps to keep their hydro costs down, such as turning the temperature up on their air conditioner.

"By upping their air conditioners by a couple of degrees saves a tremendous amount of energy," said Skidmore.

He said Halton Hills Hydro is implementing conservation programs including one that allows the company to adjust by remote control the temperatures on water heaters

leased through them, resulting in savings for the customer.

HHH is also participating in a coupon program that provides hydro customers with savings on energy efficient products such as fluorescent bulbs and timers, and one that provides rebates to customers who undergo an energy audit, said Skidmore.

—With files from Torstar News Service
(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

Man facing several charges after bad cheques passed

Halton Police charged a man last week in connection with several forged cheques that had been passed at various locations around Georgetown and Brampton.

Police report between March 10 and March 16 cheques that had been stolen and forged were passed at several financial institutions.

The owner of the cheques became aware of the fraudulent transactions and contacted police, who launched an investigation.

Charged with four counts of utter forged document, four counts of possession of property obtained by crime, extortion (unrelated to the cheques) and six counts of breach of probation is Mark Anthony Wellington Martyn, 36, currently of no fixed address, but formerly of Main St. S., Georgetown.

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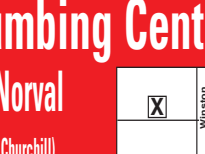
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