

West Nile program wraps up for 2006 with decrease in number of cases

The Region has finished its West Nile virus surveillance program for the season.

The health department reports it wrapped up monitoring last month and is already focusing on surveillance plans for 2007.

Lisa Fortuna, Halton's acting supervisor of environmental health, said 2006 saw one human case of West Nile in a Burlington woman. This is down from last year, when four Burlington residents and one Oakville citizen contracted the virus.

A major part of the Region's surveillance program comes through dead birds the public reports, with 1,383 being called in this year. This is up from last year's 1,277.

Of those found this season, four crows— three found in Burlington and one in Halton Hills— tested positive for West Nile, along with two blue jays discovered in Oakville.

And last year, nine crows— five in Burlington, two in Oakville and one each in Halton Hills and Milton— were found to have the virus and 11 blue jays, with five of them from Burlington, four in Oakville and two in Halton Hills.

Seventeen mosquito pools also tested positive for West Nile this year. Three of those were in Burlington, nine in Oakville, two in Halton Hills and three in Milton.

This is slightly down from last year, when 24 pools positive pools were found— nine in Burlington and 15 in Oakville.

In addition to dead bird surveillance, the Region's West Nile program includes monitoring human cases and standing water sites, setting up mosquito traps, larviciding catch basins and educating the public.

For more information visit www.halton.ca.

Province urged to amend legislation

The Region is urging the Province to amend a piece of its legislation so that GO Transit growth-related projects are fully funded by development charges.

A motion calling for the Development Charges Act to be changed was passed by regional council recently in an effort to make one more statement to Queen's Park.

Outgoing Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline, who brought the matter forward, said she thought it's appropriate to tell the Province that taxes shouldn't be collected for GO's growth projects, but rather the money should strictly come from development charges.

The motion also said that should the legislation not be amended, Halton's contribution to the GO Transit Growth Capital Plan will be limited to development charges it collects, starting next year. Peel and York regions recently took similar positions.

Outgoing regional politicians say farewell

MELANIE HENNESSEY
Special to The IFP

It was an emotional goodbye for outgoing Region chair Joyce Savoline last Wednesday as she chaired the last regional council meeting of her career.

The long-time politician— whose announcement last year that she wouldn't be seeking re-election shocked everyone around the council table— fought back tears as she bid farewell to the colleagues that have become her second family.

"I never looked at this as a job. It's more of a calling," she said. "It was a pleasure to come into the office every day."

Savoline described her time as chairman as "such a pleasure, privilege and absolute dream."

She also said if she's done any-

thing right in her tenure, it's due to the people around her.

"It's our successes," she said. "It's never about me— it's about we."

And even on her way out of office, she continued to sing Halton's praises like she always has, adding, "I'm still a very proud resident of Halton and always will be."

Savoline went on to thank everyone who has voted for her over the years, along with past and present Region staff members and councillors.

"I will miss you all very much, and carry on the good work," she said, pulling out a tissue to dab her eyes.

Savoline began serving at the Region in 1982, when she started as a local and regional councillor for the City of Burlington. She then took over the chairman post in 1994.

Several other members of council

who won't be returning for the next term also said goodbye, including Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac, who said he's had an amazing time over the past 15 years at the Region.

He also thanked staff, describing its members as "models of professionalism," and his council colleagues.

Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale had four simple words to sum up her time on council— "It's been a blast."

She said she's taking away many memories with her and is grateful for having had the opportunity to serve the community.

Outgoing Oakville councillors Janice Wright and Mike Lansdown also bid their fond farewells.

And Milton Wards 2 and 4 Councillor Ron Furik simply extended his thanks to all councillors, staff and the people of Milton.

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