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OF HALTON

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Fighter's shot at ultimate title put on hold

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WEDNESDAY...

The reconstruction of Main Street in Georgetown will cost more than originally anticipated. Find out how much more Wednesday.

For breaking news go to: www.independentfreepress.com



Coming through

Spencer Troop of the host Georgetown Rebels breaks through the defence to score a couple of his game-high 21 points in a senior boys' high school basketball exhibition contest last weekend at GDHS against a team from Indiana. The game went into overtime after a thrilling last minute of the fourth quarter, with the Rebels prevailing 54-50 over the Mishawaka Cavemen in the annual hoops exchange visit between the schools. For details see page 1 of the Sports and Leisure section. Photo by Amber Richmond

Region hits homeowners with \$30 tax increase

MELANIE HENNESSEY
Special to The IFP

Local residents will be digging a little deeper in their pockets this year now that regional council has approved its 2007 budget with a \$30 tax increase.

The budget and business plan— which also includes a four per cent water and wastewater rate increase, or an extra \$26.17 for the typical household— was endorsed by council at its meeting Wednesday.

The approval brings into effect a 2.5 per cent tax increase, which equates to \$29.76 based on a \$300,000 assessment. It's comprised of \$22.32 extra for police services and \$7.44 for regional services.

The hike is up slightly from the initially proposed 2.4 per cent increase due to the addition of \$200,000 to the budget for local domiciliary hostel funding, which was recommended by the health and social services committee. The extra money added less than \$1 to the tax increase.

At the council meeting, discussions focused around one part of the budget motion that calls for Halton to freeze its upcoming payment for GTA pooling (a system the Province introduced to help Toronto pay for its social service costs) at the 2006 level, which staff estimates will total around \$41 million.

Halton Director of Legal Services Mark Meneray told councillors that the Region could be subject to interest payments and penalties if it doesn't pay in full. It's not known how much Halton will actually be asked to pay for 2007.

While Burlington Councillor Rick Craven voiced his opposition to pooling, he also spoke out against the motion.

"I can not support what I consider to be an illegal act," he said. "It's not up to us to take the law into our own hands."

But, Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette countered all the Region is trying to do is make a strong statement to the Province that an exit strategy has to be developed for pooling.

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