

Well-users urged by Region to test their water regularly

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Private well owners are also recommended to test their water three times per year to ensure it's safe for drinking.

But it appears fewer residents are taking this important step too. The Region reports that the number of water samples taken by homeowners in Halton has decreased from 7,000 samples in 2004 to about 4,000 samples last year.

Of those who took part in the study in 2007, 40 per cent indicated they test their water less than once per year, while 17 per cent sample three or more times a year, 12 per cent test twice a year and 29 per cent sample once per year.

"(Many people) truly don't feel it's a significant enough health issue," said Dr. Nosal.

He noted some homeowners think they don't need to test their water because they've never had a health problem resulting from their water quality. Even if that's the case, he said it's still important for them to test their water.

Sample bottles are available free of charge and can be picked up locally at the health department's Georgetown office (93 Main St. S.) Monday-Thursday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The bottles can also be mailed out to residents at their request.

While no dramatic improvements were seen in the numbers between the 2006 and 2007 well water studies, Dr. Nosal is confident the health department will ultimately help bring about some changes.

"If there's one thing we know about health

promotion it's that one-shot efforts don't work," he said. "We will continue with a variety of strategies."

The health department has many activities planned for the year as part of its Safe Water Program. They include:

- Conducting promotional events such as well water information sessions
- Increasing public access to water sampling bottles by supplying them through other convenient locations throughout Halton
- Having water sample bottles available for mail delivery via the Internet
- Investigating the feasibility of partnering with the school boards to promote rural drinking water quality in rural parts of the region.

The committee endorsed the 2008 activities and a motion to have staff review and report on the feasibility of a mandatory well water testing program, with the possibility of imposing fees for non-compliance.

The resolution also directed staff to identify additional locations where residents could pick up sample bottles.

Trooper's pals misnamed

A caption accompanying a photo on page 1 of the Feb. 27 *Independent & Free Press* incorrectly identified two people.

Emily Winson was pictured with Trooper, a dog rescued by Winson's mother and Upper Credit Humane Society officer Diane McFarlane, last year.

The *Independent & Free Press* regrets the errors.

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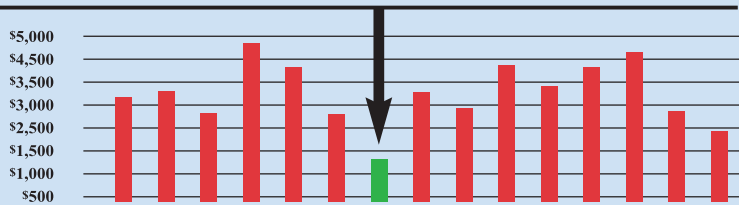
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