



**HELPING SPREAD THE CHEER:** Acton Seniors Centre members Betty Green and Donna Rowley thanking the volunteer Tyler bus drivers Wayne Stewart and Pat Graham after a very successful Tour of the Lights with two buses of seniors and caregivers from Acton. – Julie Conroy photo

# Regional tax bill increases by \$48.51

By Frances Niblock

The 2009 Regional operating budget approved unanimously by Halton Council last Wednesday means a taxpayer with an average assessment of \$300,000 the will pay \$28.61 or 2.2 per cent more than last year for Regional services and policing.

When the cost of water and wastewater services – a 6.7 per cent or \$48.51 increase are factored in, the average taxpayers faces a \$77.12 increase for a total Regional tax bill of \$1,303. That includes \$860 for regional services and \$443 for policing.

The increase for Regional services – roads, social services and public health – is 1.7 per cent, one of the lowest increases in Ontario according to Halton officials. It results in \$14.15 more on the average tax bill and the 3.4 per cent increase for policing equals a \$14.46 increase.

The budget approved by Council includes a \$310.6-million tax levy, which includes \$204.8-million for Regional services and

\$105.9-million for policing. When assessment and revenue are added in, the result is a 2.2 per cent increase over last year.


Regional officials said the budget maintains service levels and balances community needs with the current economic slowdown.

In a press release, Regional Chair Gary Carr said they were “proud” to come in with such a low increase after rigorous deliberations that responded to service needs while balancing the economic uncertainty.

“... Council and staff worked

to come up with responsible solutions to prepare for the economic challenges and the anticipated demands on social and community services, and infrastructure,” Carr said.

Staff said the key drivers for the budget included maintaining service levels, responding to the community and investing in capital infrastructure. The budget allows for new programming, including creation of a youth psychiatric service, 150 new subsidized child car spaces, enhanced waste diversion programs and servicing of new employment lands to help with job creation.



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**Ted Arnott, MPP**  
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# Turkey leftovers enjoyable

Turkey leftovers are often as anticipated as Christmas dinner itself. In fact, many of us intentionally purchase turkeys that are just a little too hefty for our gathering so that we can enjoy the leftovers for days to come. Sandwiches are among the favourites, and so are the traditional soups and pot pies, but you don't have to limit yourself to these classics.

“Turkey is extremely versatile and can be substituted for virtually any meat in any recipe,” says Heather Nahatchewitz of Turkey Farmers of Ontario. “It's great in stir fries, salads, pastas, casseroles, chili – the list goes on and on.”

Health Canada recommends storing cooked turkey in a covered con-

tainer, plastic bag or aluminum foil for up to 4 days in the refrigerator or up to 3 months in the freezer. Nahatchewitz suggests freezing cooked, boned turkey in portions, then thawing and chopping what

you need for a recipe. “Just remember,” she continues, “don't leave your turkey at room temperature for more than 2 hours after cooking; keep it hot, or get it into the fridge or freezer as soon as possible.”

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