

# Cancer Society decentralizes transportation for patients

In a classic example of "if it isn't broken, don't fix it" Canadian Cancer Society officials with the Wellington County Unit have reverted to a localized system to match volunteer drivers with cancer patients needing rides to medical appointments.

Eighteen months ago, the Society scrapped the Acton volunteer transportation conveyor, replacing the local touch with a computer system at a Hamilton phone number. That system did not work well (as predicted, locally,) and cost the Society local volunteer drivers.

Lorraine Wise, executive director of the Wellington County Cancer Society Unit (which includes the

Acton branch,) said staff at the Guelph office are matching drivers with clients and offering "the customer service that we feel we should to all of our clients and drivers."

She said centralizing the transportation was a "pilot project" that did not work, partially because of the "inflexibility of the software" that matched volunteer drivers and those needing transportation.

"The local (road) knowledge is very integral to ensuring that we can meet the needs of our clients, so having somebody with the local knowledge is very important," Wise said last Thursday, adding the same dedicated drivers are providing the service.

She said they've been able to take some of the components of their dispatch software and conform it to local needs.

Wise said they lost some drivers when they went to the centralized call system because drivers wanted to deal with a local person, but added the drivers, who receive compensation for their mileage, are "fantastic" and continue to donate their time and vehicle.

There are currently four active volunteer drivers in Acton who provide rides for 10 to 12 clients. So far this year, Acton drivers have logged 25,000 kilometres, transporting patients to appointments.

# Blitz finds unsafe vehicles

A cracked frame, beyond bald tires, no trailer brakes – those safety violations topped the long list of problems uncovered during a Halton police/MTO commercial vehicle safety inspection blitz last Thursday in the parking lot beside the Acton Seniors' Centre/arena.

The worst case of the rainy day was a building contractor hauling his tools in a trailer that did not have brakes or the required safety chains. The

trailer also had two bald tires and was carrying an insecure load. The contractor was charged and the trailer taken off the road until the required changes were made.

Halton Constable Pat Martin directed the driver of a white cube van making milk deliveries in Acton to park the truck and call his boss after two cracks were found in the left front frame/suspension – cracks Constable Martin said could have caused a steering loss or allowed the wheels to fly off. The owner was not charged, but police took the trailer

off the road until repairs could be verified.

The safety blitz also uncovered one suspended driver, several unsafe bald tires, another insecure load and several paperwork violations. Police, the MTO and officials with the Ministries of Environment, Finance and Agriculture staged a two-day commercial vehicle safety inspection blitz on Guelph Line at Mohawk today (Thursday.)

Last year, 80 per cent of the trucks inspected in Halton failed, up from a 69 per cent failure rate in 2008.

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