

# Firefighters protest as one is fired

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any large-scale morale problem. He acknowledged one involving "one or two people" in the department and wouldn't discuss the firing of Mr. Rivett.

Mr. Hipgrave said he and Chief Penson will "look into what's going on," adding that it's hard to deal with the issue through the media.

## Krantz hadn't heard

Mayor Gord Krantz said Wednesday The Champion's call was the first he had heard of the ad and didn't want to be critical of the firefighters for taking such action.

"It's something they felt they had to do for whatever reason."

Mr. Rivett was fired recently following a decision by town council, Mr. Craven said.

He had received notice of termination, but decided to challenge the issue and took it as far as a hearing before council — the final step in the appeal process.

Because the issue was a personnel matter, it was handled in-camera — behind closed doors.

Mr. Rivett, who doesn't feel he was fired for just cause and believes there's more involved, said he's looking into legal action.

"I don't know why I was terminated. I feel I was unjustly dealt with."

The ad states that the firing of Mr. Rivett was unexpected, unexplained and devastating to him and his family.

## Craven says morale low

It was also demoralizing to other part-time firefighters, according to the ad.

Mr. Craven said morale among firefighters has been low for years and is calling on the Town to get to the bottom of it by ordering an investigation through an independent and impartial body.

Fearing his own job is in jeopardy after granting an interview to The Champion, Mr. Craven declined comment on specific problems in the department.

However, he said tensions exist between volunteer and full-time firefighters as well with management.

Mr. Craven said volunteer firefighters, who respond to calls from home and are paid, feel powerless to fight back in situations they feel are unjust.

Although volunteer firefighters are also known as part-time firefighters, they aren't considered part-time workers under the law and don't have the right to form a union, Mr. Craven said.

However, under the proposed Bill 84 — currently before the provincial legislature — that situation may change. Among many amendments to the Fire Departments Act, the bill calls for new status for volunteer firefighters, Mr. Craven said.

## Want support

He added that the association, which helps run food drives and provides fire protection at community events such as the Milton Fall Fair and Canada Day celebrations, is hoping to gain public support by placing the ad.

"We have no other way of expressing our concerns. All we're asking is for the community to get involved and ask, 'why is this happening?'"

Mr. Craven said the protest won't affect the firefighting duties of the volunteers, who respond to 90 per cent of calls.

# New plan for disabled from the province

The Ontario government has announced a plan to move people with disabilities off the welfare system.

Legislation was introduced by Community and Social Services

Minister Janet Ecker to create the Ontario Disability Support Program.

The program would ensure benefits would be protected if job attempts fail, modify eligibility testing, increase the amount of personal

assets which can be held by those getting benefits, and enable the disabled to benefit more from family gifts and inheritances, according to the government.

"We expect the new direction will

improve opportunities for people with disabilities who want to work," said Jim Dreiling, president of Goodwill Toronto, which provides employment for those with disabilities.

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