

Chamber is going downtown, MCRC running tourist centre

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

A longtime local information delivery agency will take over the helm of the town's tourist centre after the Milton Chamber of Commerce moves to its new home next week.

The Chamber will re-locate to the old town hall building at Carriage Square Wednesday, effectively ending its operation of the Main Street and Steeles Avenue tourist centre, said the business organization's general manager Sandy Martin.

"It has a central location and it's in a historic Milton building," she said. "We hope that that will be our home for a lot of years to come."

The newly-formed Milton Community Resource Centre (MCRC) — an amalgamation of Milton Community and Information Services (MCIS) and the Milton Children and Youth Centre (MCYC) — will move into the old Chamber offices at Chris Hadfield Park and run the centre.

MCRC already operates Information Milton so taking on the project was "a natural extension of that," said Brad Clements, a member of the board of directors and spokesperson for the group.

Tourist information important

MCRC members believe the tourist centre is an important service when it comes to providing information to the public, Mr. Clements said, and decided to get involved.

"For travellers on Hwy. 401 especially, it's the last information spot before getting to the city (Toronto)," he said.

Jennifer Reynolds, head of Milton's leisure services department, said MCRC will pay rent to occupy the office space and the Town will help fund the operation of the tourist centre — the same deal previously made

with the Chamber.

Chamber members decided to end their agreement with the Town last December after funding diminished. The Town paid the Chamber \$14,981 to run the centre in 1997, but a 1994 evaluation by the group concluded operational costs annually totalled as much as \$40,000.

Ms Martin has said municipal funding gradually reduced since 1992 and the Town indicated its 1998 contribution wasn't likely to rise.

But the Town believed the service could be provided with the funding at hand and found a new group to take the lead.

More than \$14,000, which is subject to approval, has been budgeted for the centre this year, Ms Reynolds said.

Pooling resources

MCRC will pool its resources, such as computer equipment and information delivery expertise, in running the tourist centre, Information Milton and the Halton Child Care Registry from the same location, Mr. Clements said.

The scenario will likely include the addition of a part-time staff member, summer students and volunteers.

The group is planning on moving into its new home sometime within the next few weeks, so there may be a short lapse in operation of the tourist centre.

All in all it will only be a partial move for MCRC from its current Childs Drive location in the Allendale complex.

The former MCIS-run CHERISH Parent-Child Centre will remain at the Childs Drive location and the Milton Children and Youth Centre on Nipissing Road will stay put for the time being, said Donna Danielli, chair of MCRC's transition board of directors.

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

The Milton Chamber of Commerce is on the move. Here high school co-op student Debbie Johnson helps load up boxes while administrative assistant Corey Zanatta (centre) and executive director Sandy Martin (right) also pitch in.



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