

Students back in RC portables

Seven Halton Catholic schools had mould in some of their portable classrooms. However, those affected have been cleaned and repaired and students are now back inside, said a separate board spokesperson.

While slow and tedious work at times, inspection — and repair if necessary — of the board's 86 portables is more than half complete, said communications official Chris Jewell.

"Of the 48 that have been inspected, 17 required remedial work," he said. Remediation includes steps like disinfecting areas where mould was found, plus adjoining surfaces, and replacement of affected materials such as wood and wall-board.

The Stachybotrys strain of mould is toxic to some children, inducing allergic or asthmatic reactions or causing flu-like symptoms.

Some Catholic schools only needed a visual inspection, but Mr. Jewell said all schools eventually will have had a detailed examination involving the peeling back of exterior metal cladding and an inspection of the portables' inner structure.

Mr. Jewell said cleansing and repair has been done to affected various portables, including Holy Rosary in Milton.

Students at those schools who found themselves transferred to temporary classes in libraries, gyms and computer labs in the main school building have since returned to their portables.

Among the 38 portables on Catholic board sites that still require inspection and possible repairs are those at Our Lady of Victory in Milton.

Unlike Halton's public board, Mr. Jewell said the Catholic board has not been told by regional health officials to remove students from portables even if those structures have been cleaned.

Some parents of public board pupils in Oakville have complained that portables with mould were not cleaned thoroughly.

"Any work we do has been done in consultation with staff representing the (regional) Medical Officer of Health. We meet about every seven-10 days and have not been given any such directive," said Mr. Jewell.

Three-way amalgamation possible

• from BURLINGTON on page 4

review of the province's legislation to create a new Greater Toronto Area Services Board.

Mr. Tonks told council the board will initially be responsible for transit and transportation issues, and economic development. He also expected to recommend that Burlington be part of the board, without an option to back out.

Mr. MacIsaac said in an interview that he's convinced the province intends to make the GTA a new level of government, and that likely spells the eventual end of either the City of Burlington or Halton Region.

In his report to Burlington council, Mr. MacIsaac said discussions with Milton and Flamborough would be held with a view to determining how all participants could continue growing, while protecting the rural and natural environments of each community.

If discussions seem productive, Mr. MacIsaac said he would "bring back a formal process for council's review and approval."

Mr. MacIsaac said that with the province turning regions into mega-cities, as it did with Toronto, "the status-quo in governance

is probably not sustainable ... we must consider whether we are, as currently constituted, a viable size given emerging trends throughout the GTA and the golden horseshoe."

After Mr. MacIsaac got the go-ahead from council to open up talks with Flamborough and Milton about the possibility of a common future, he said in an interview he's already made certain the talks are being welcomed by officials in both towns.

Mr. McMeekin said in a later interview that he still hasn't seen anything official. "But that said, Burlington and Flamborough are very similar communities. At one point, many years ago, Aldershot was part of East Flamborough."

If Burlington, Flamborough and Milton joined together as one large community, it could be considered just one level of government and could later buy services from the GTSB if necessary.

"When we're talking about the GTSB, there's a predictable fear that it will become a level of government and that would lead to the question; do we need three levels of government?" said Mr. McMeekin.

With files from Paul Mitchison and Don Redmond

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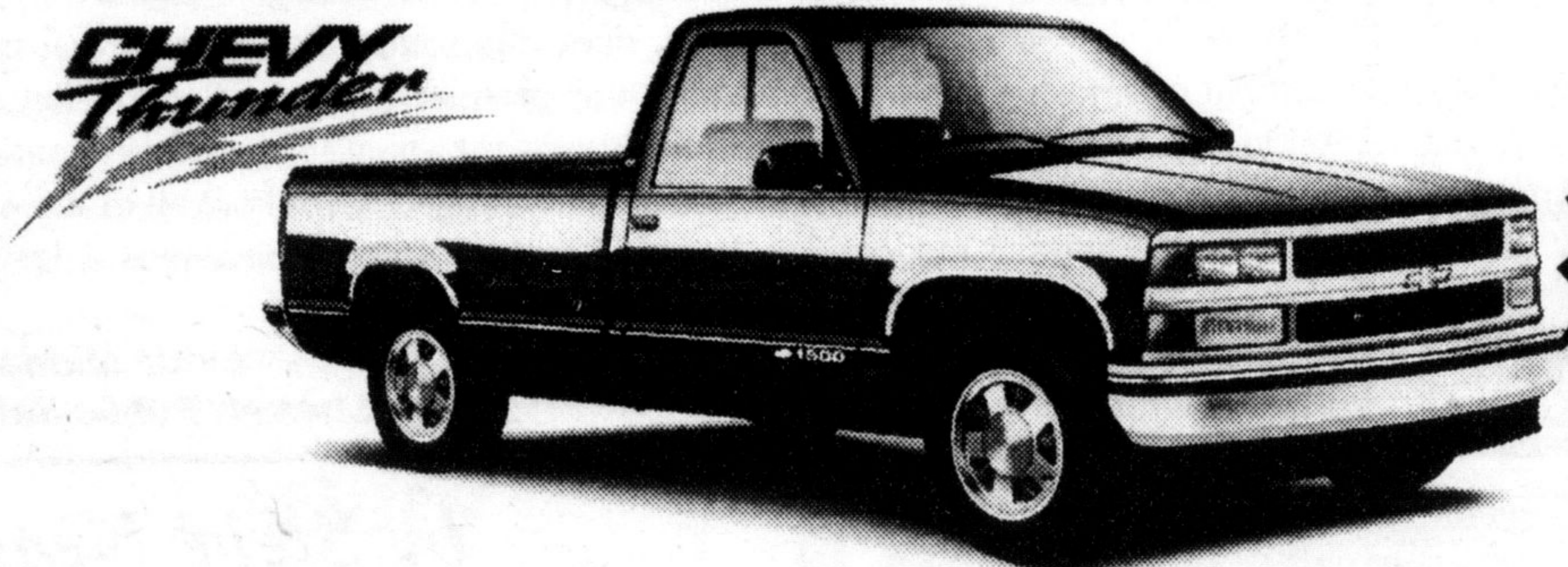
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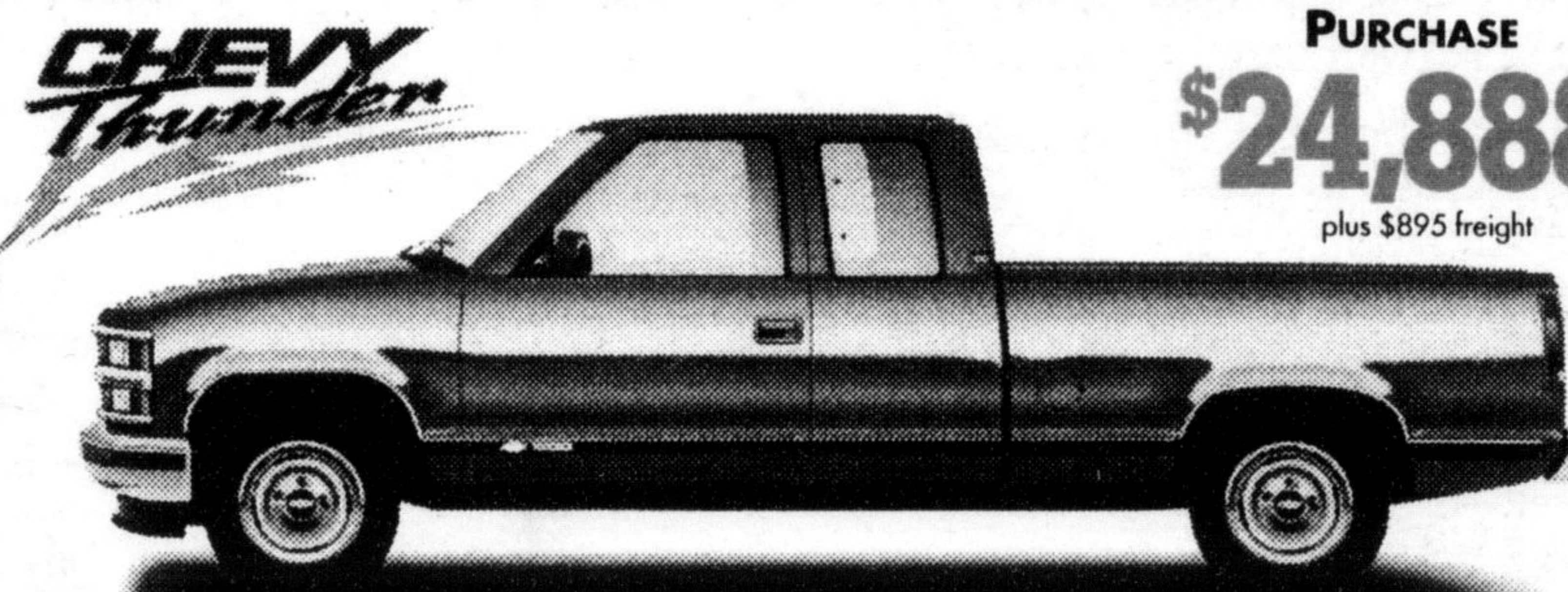
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