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Thanks Milton for Voting Us "Business of the Year" - Matt & Martin

# Town may stage Y2K drill

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

Just consider it one motherboard of a power outage. Computer glitches caused by the millennium bug — or Y2K — should be treated like every other technological hiccup, said the Town of Milton's Y2K project coordinator, Henry Psenicka.

"Don't get too sidetracked by this being extreme," he advised Milton's administration and planning committee recently.

Mr. Psenicka was before the committee to give a status update on the Town's battle for supremacy with the millennium bug.

The Y2K problem was created in the 1960s when computer programmers used only two digits to signify the year — for example, 66 instead of 1966.

When 2000 rolls around, computers may interpret the 00 to mean 1900.

"That means material that is sorted by date systems will be incorrect," explained Mr. Psenicka. "It's impossible to really isolate ourselves from this."

In order to prepare, the Town has been sorting through its own systems and communicating with suppliers and other businesses in hopes of making a peaceful transition into the next millennium.

"The goal we're setting is that our organization be

Y2K ready," said Mr. Psenicka. "We're going to be looking at what is critical to continue our normal business practices."

When it comes to hardware, software and computer applications, the Town is in pretty good shape, he reported.

To test readiness, the Town may stage a mock 2000 crisis in the summer.

That will give them a feel for the consequences if the worst comes to pass, said Mr. Psenicka.

Even without staged disasters, organizations may get a small taste of computer mayhem in September of this year.

Date-coded computers may stage a brief mutiny on September 9, when the date will read 9999.

That's because in computer language, that number is often used to mark the end of a file.

"If you're processing and come across that date, the software may interpret that as the end and close the program," said Mr. Psenicka.

Overall, financial institutes appear to be the best prepared for the millennium bug, while water, sewage, communications and utility companies are coming along, he said.

Still, only time will tell if enough work has been done to avert potential shutdowns.

## Study pushing for new action

• from BANKS on page 12

and food bank dependency.

These include:

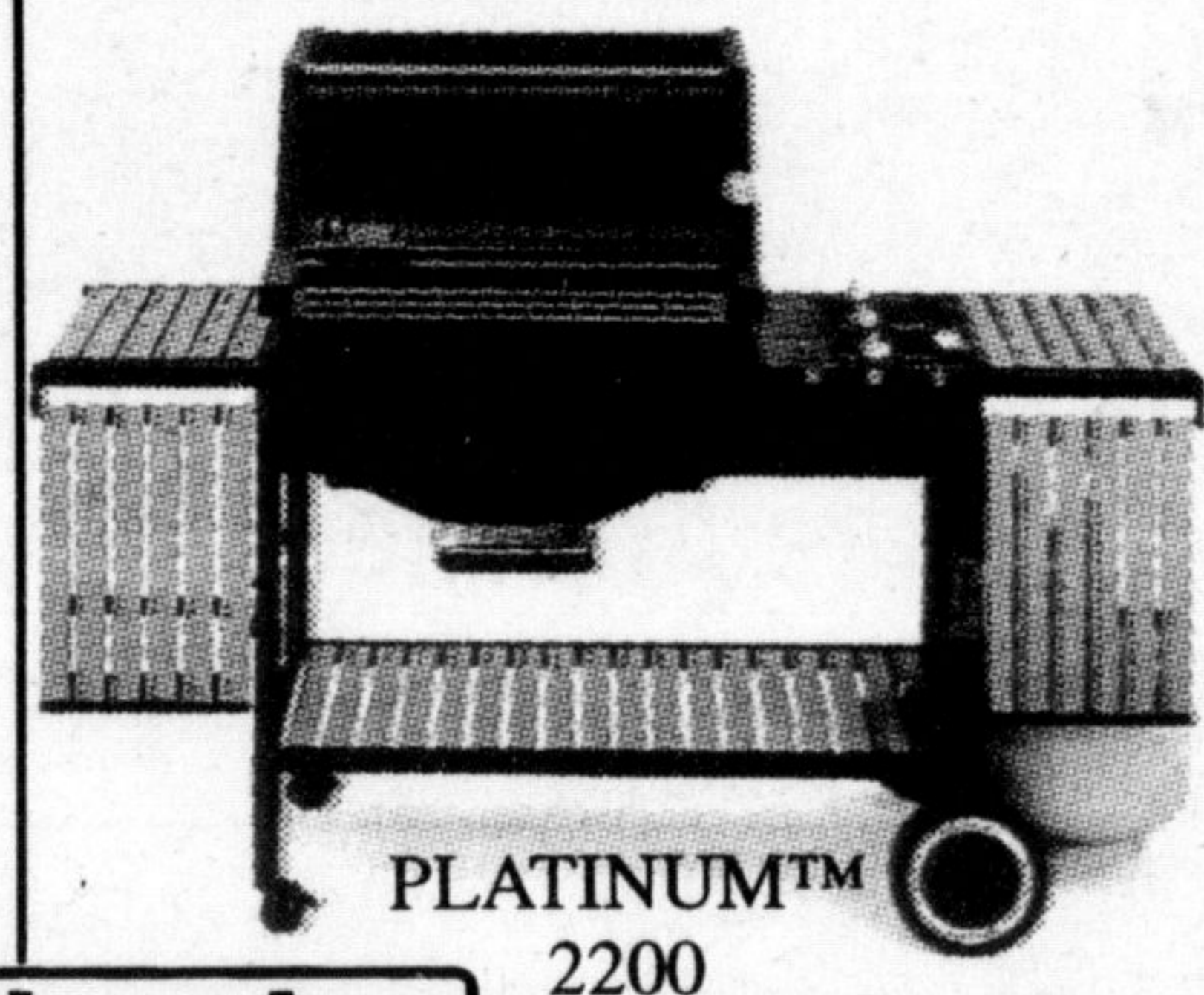
- Increase employment opportunities and develop strategies to provide more jobs that pay adequate wages.
- Increase minimum wage to reflect the basic cost of living.
- Study current labour market trends and evaluate the effectiveness of current skills training and education provisions.
- Ensure that relevant skills training and education

programs are available to those who need them.

- Make available life skills courses, including household budgeting, financial management, nutrition, basic food safety and food preparation, as part of the requirement for a high school diploma.
- Increase social assistance so that it is adequate to cover monthly expenses.
- Set the shelter allowance of social assistance in line with the average regional market rental values. Shelter and utility costs should be covered by allowance so that people do not have to use the money allocated for food and other costs to pay for housing.

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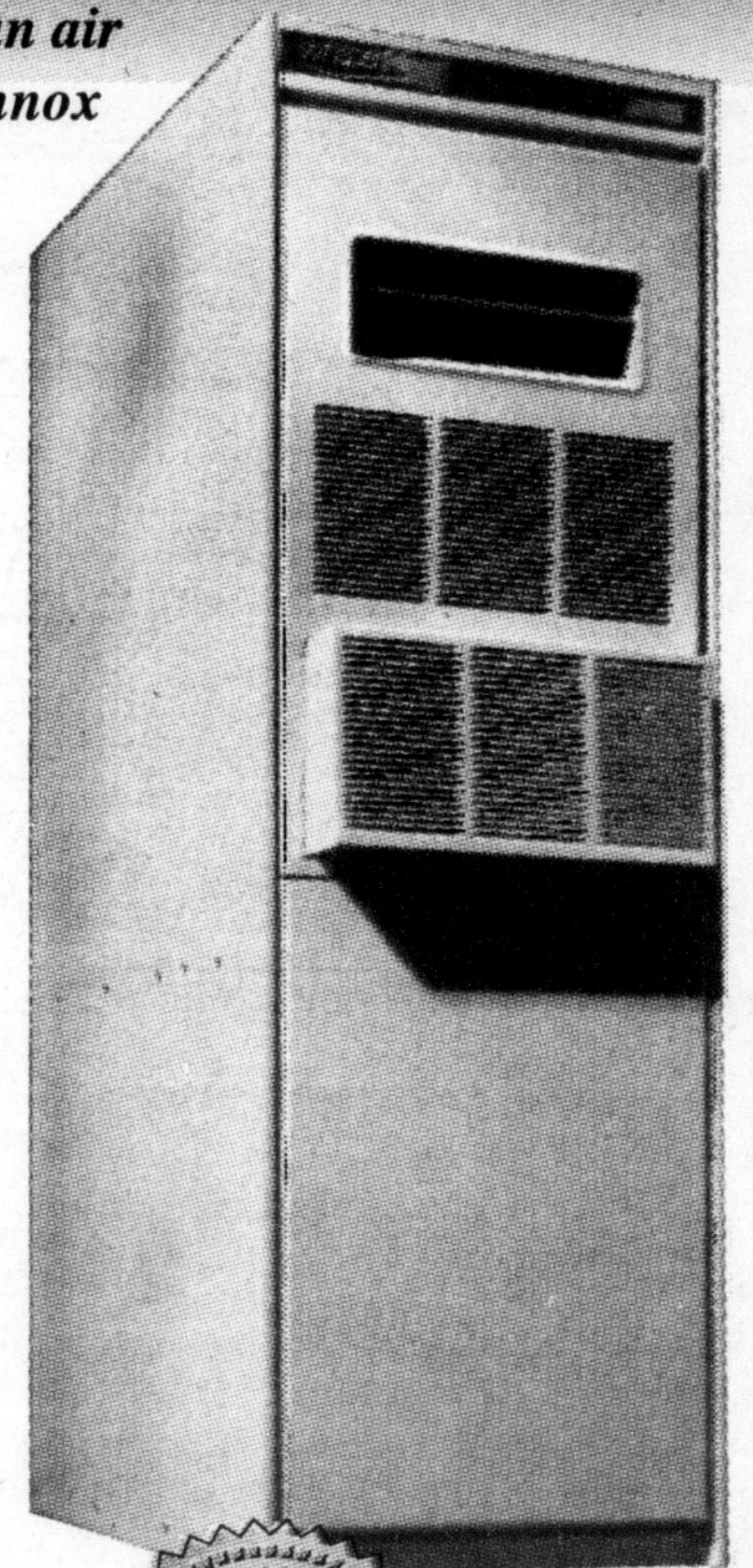
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