

Halton's accident rate is relatively low: report

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Congestion is at a peak on Halton roads, but the region is still a relatively safe area to drive.

That's the conclusion of a regional road systems report presented to Halton's planning and public works committee recently.

The report showed all continuous east-west routes in south Halton, including provincial highways, were ranked as severely-congested during six peak morning and afternoon traffic hours.

Despite that, Halton's accident rate remains relatively low with the majority of per capita accidents taking place on rural roads.

Two new constables in Milton

Halton Regional Police in Milton welcomed two new constables to its ranks recently.

Constables Mark Dienstmann and Duncan Way were sworn in during a ceremony at the Halton Regional Centre on Bronte Road. They joined 10 other new recruits assigned to either Halton Hills, Burlington or Oakville.

Constable Dienstmann was born and raised in Montreal before moving to Vancouver to work with Air Canada as a flight attendant. During that time he also obtained his pilot's licence.

A second career as an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces Army Reserves saw Constable Dienstmann command a platoon during the ice storm relief efforts in 1998. Constable Way is originally from Streetsville, but now lives in Oakville.

Before joining police, Constable Way studied business at the University of Mississippi and graduated from funeral services at Humber College. He worked as a funeral director in Toronto and Oakville.

While at the Ontario Police College, Constable Duncan enjoyed intramural sports and was a panel guest on a death notification forum.

Constable Duncan volunteers with the Halton Victorian Order of Nurses and enjoys camping.

"Our safety record is generally good," said Halton's director of long range planning and transportation services Ho Wong. "We only have a few locations that require modifications."

In terms of sheer numbers, the most accident-prone intersection involving regional roads was at Trafalgar Road and Leighland Avenue/Iroquois Shore in Oakville.

Overall, seven of the top 10 accident intersections were located on Trafalgar Road. "But," noted Mr. Wong, "those numbers don't take into account the amount of traffic going through."

To remedy that, the report also lists the top 10 troubled intersections as defined by accident rate.

On that scale, Milton had a hold on six of the

top 10 slots, including the number one spot at the Tremaine Road and Steeles Avenue intersection.

The accident rate of road segments were also looked at, with Milton represented seven times in that top 10 list.

But only two Halton sites are above what's considered to be a normal safety level, said Mr. Wong.

Currently, 1.5 accidents per one million vehicles is considered typical.

Only No. 15 Sideroad in Halton Hills and the Steeles and Tremaine intersection in Milton exceed that.

But the slice of land from Guelph Line to Regional Road 25 needs further study, said Mr.

Wong.

"That whole section seems to have a big accident rate," he said. "That's the area we want to target."

He noted the purpose behind the study is to isolate trouble spots and find out how to fix them. But accidents are caused by a slew of factors, not the least of which is human error.

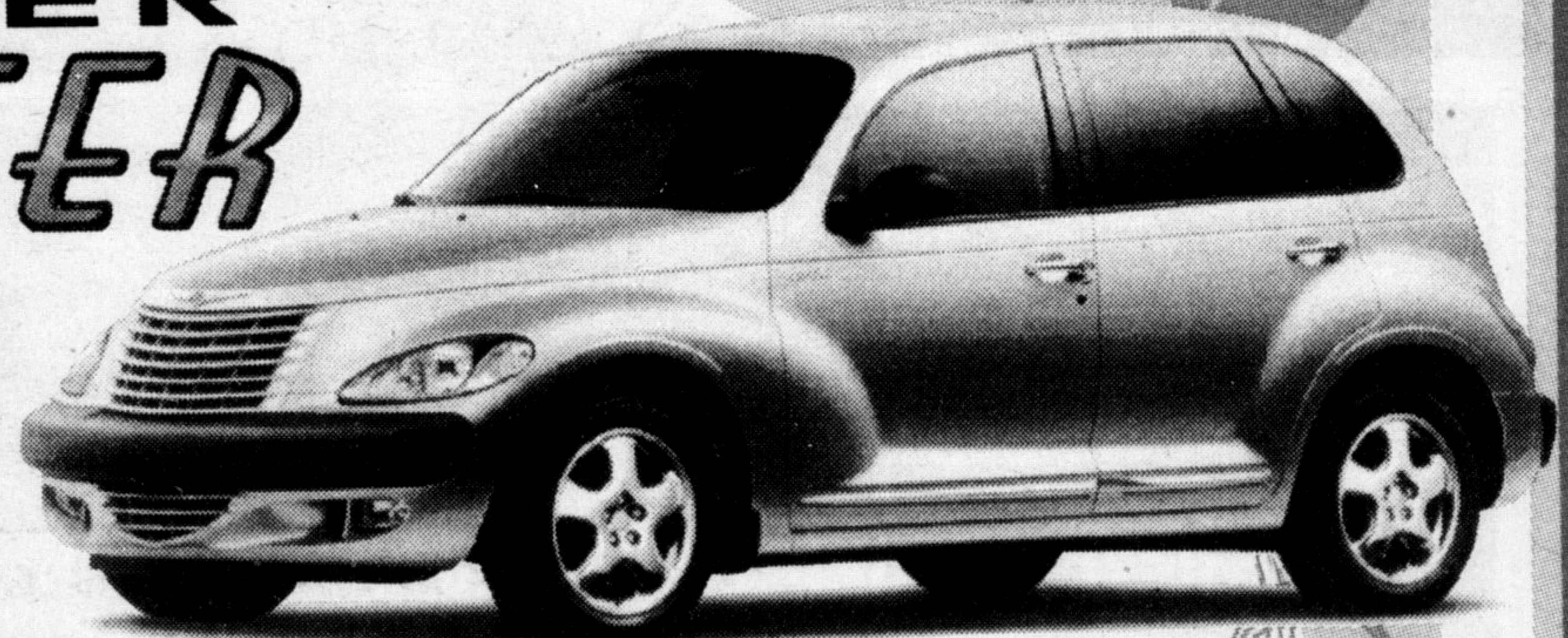
"You can't predict accidents because there are human factors," said Mr. Wong. "Driving under the influence, we can't do anything about that. That's driver education."

What the Region can do is focus on issues such as sightlines and pavement conditions.

"If the pavement is too smooth, it can become very slippery," said Mr. Wong.

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