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Residents still divided on Guelph Line work

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

Residents remain divided on a controversial construction project aimed at making a 3.2 km stretch of a rural road safer.

The project increased sightlines and eliminated blind spots with the hope of lowering the risk of accidents on Guelph Line between No. 10 and 15 Sideroads.

Almost four metres has been shaved off a contentious knoll, drastically opening up sight lines, said Halton's Construction Manager Doug Inouye.

"If you were to drive up there now, you'd see well ahead," he said. "The knolls that have been cut down have improved sightlines tremendously."

Shoulders and guard rails have been added to help cars remain on the road.

But a member of the vocal citi-

zen's group the Guelph Line Preservation Committee (GULP) said the changes won't change much.

"There are still sight problems," said Tami Anne Dams. "We don't like to say I told you so, but if the shoe fits."

She claimed the expensive project hasn't achieved its goals.

"All that money that they spent, and still," said Ms Dams. "It's still two lanes and the hill is still dangerous."

Though the project was in the discussion phase for years, local opposition broke out largely at the 11th hour.

The work was eventually approved in late March and its budget set at \$4.5 million.

"As far as we can see, we're close to the construction costs," said Mr. Inouye.

Guelph Line resident Lynn Vanstone said the restricted sight-

lines that once prevented her from safely accessing her driveway have opened up.

"There has been a phenomenal effect. It's 100 per cent safer," she said. "I have no problem getting in and out. What they're doing has dramatically improved the safety."

But GULP maintains that speed, not road design, is the real threat.

To combat it, GULP members have vowed to call police daily asking for traffic enforcement in the area.

"We're going to bug them and drive them nuts until they get someone out here," said Ms Dams. "We have the casino (Mohawk Raceway). We have a big influx of traffic."

She said the road improvements will likely make the area more dangerous than it was.

"I have a feeling people are going to have a false sense of security about this road," she said. "I'm afraid people will have the attitude that this is completely safe."

Currently, Guelph Line has been closed to all but local traffic during the construction phase. It should

reopen in the next two weeks.

Final stages of work, including landscaping, will take place in 2001.

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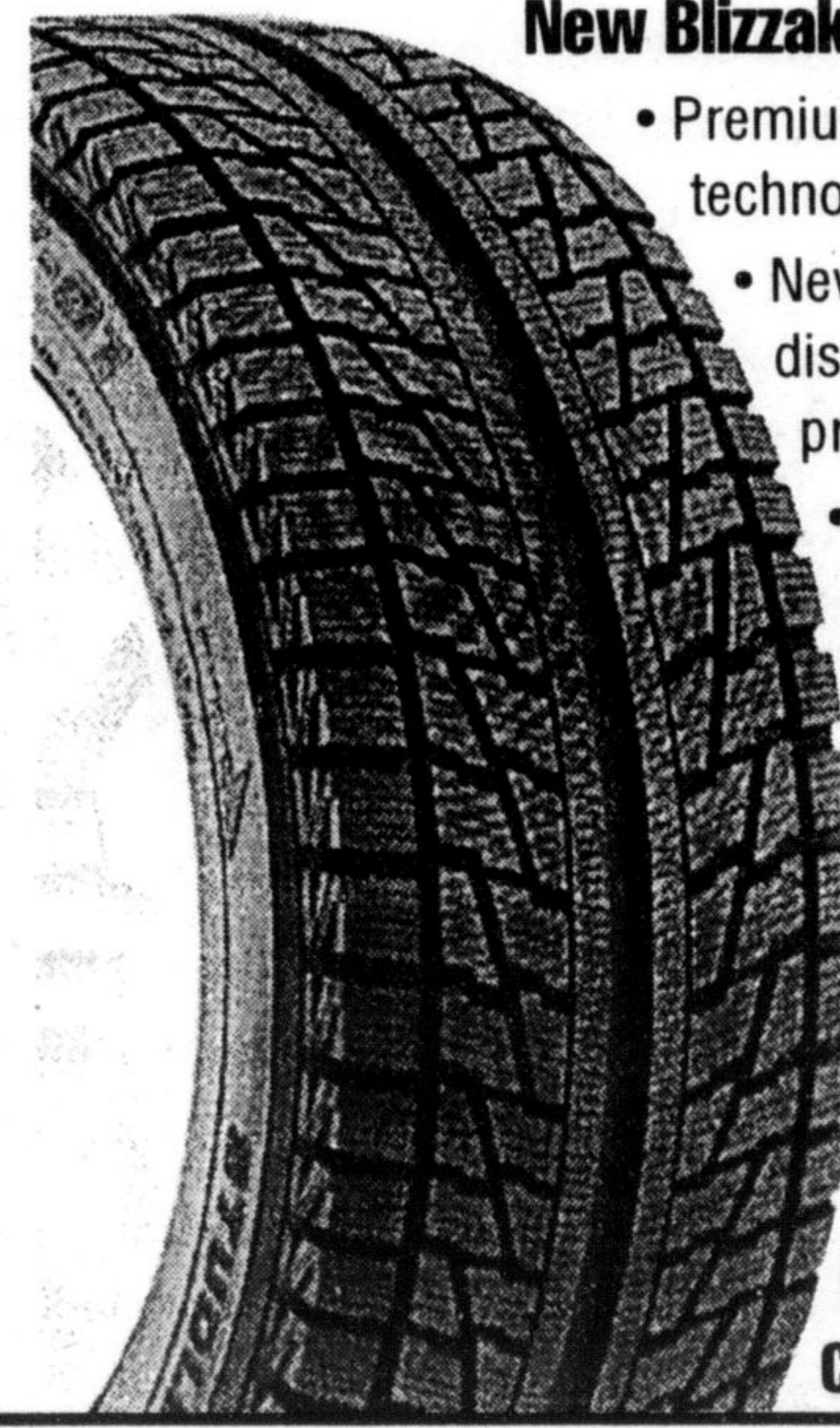


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