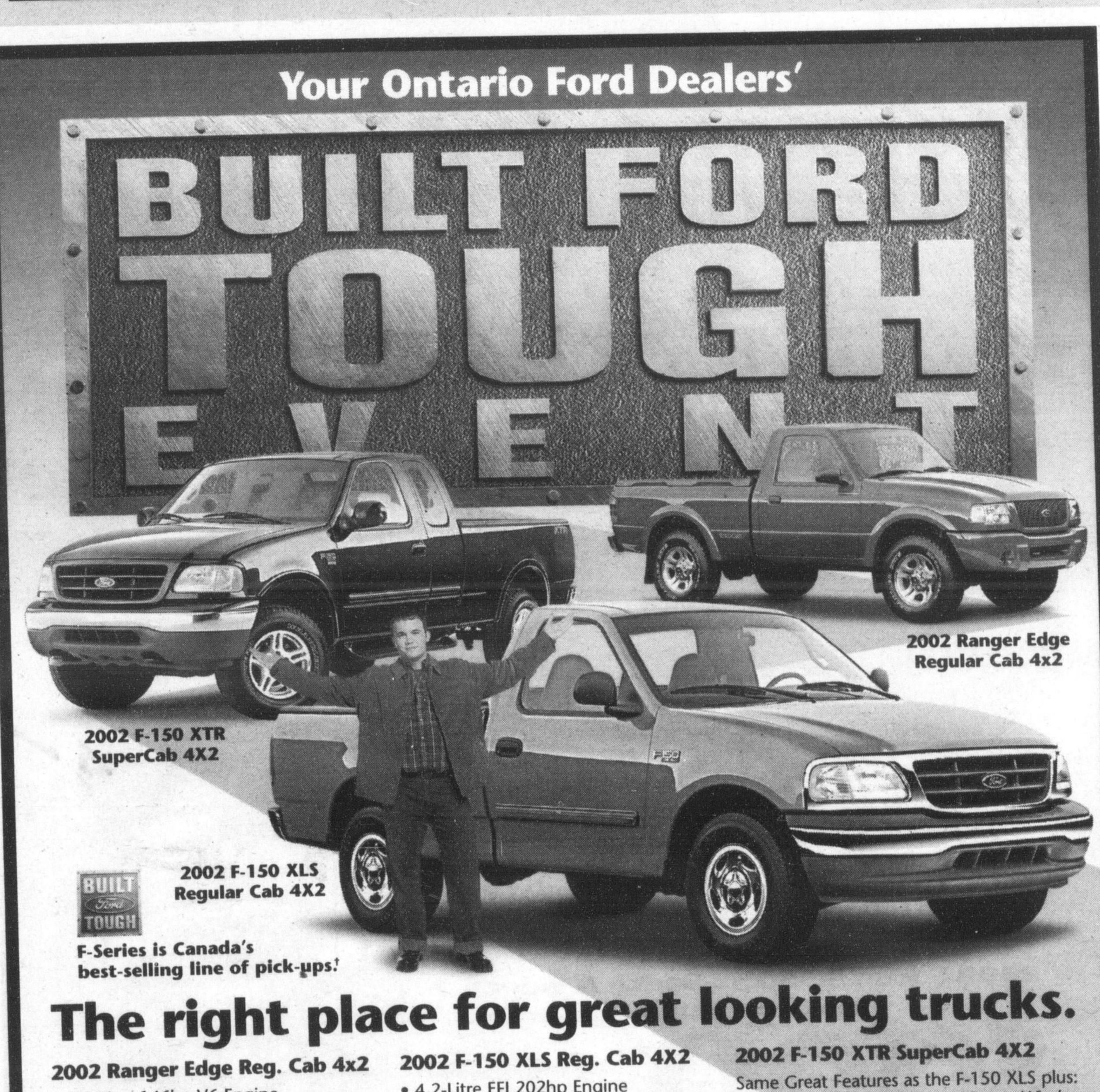


New program gets a boost

The Milton Risk Watch Coalition received its first contribution recently from the Leslie Wells SloPitch Tournament - \$4,000. Presenting the funds to coalition members Don Stewart (far left) and Karin Roskam (far right) were (from left) Lions Club member Ed Meloche, Gordon Food Service's Mark Dunlop and tournament organizer Mark Ollerenshaw. The Risk Watch program aims to reduce and eliminate preventable traumatic injuries at local schools and throughout the community.

> Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



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Needle exchange program is likely to be permanent

By RICHARD VIVIAN

The Champion

The Halton Region Needle Exchange Program is set to move beyond the pilot project stage.

The Region's health and services committee social members passed a motion last Tuesday that will see the program — named Exchange Works — become a permanent health department program subject to the approval of the 2002 operating budget.

The annual Exchange Works budget is estimated at \$81,000.

Regional council is expected to formally address the matter tomorrow.

"Based on the information we have right now, we feel the program needs to continue," Halton's Medical Health Officer Dr. Bob Nosal told the committee. "So much of this depends on the contacts and networking that takes place and that's what has been the focus so far."

Exchange Works began operation in May, developing partnerships with service agencies, creating educational material for injection drug users and conducting outreach work. Needle exchanges have also been organized at the Sexual Health Clinics in Milton,

Burlington, Georgetown, though to date, none have been used.

"It's very slow gaining the trust of users because of the illegal nature of injection drug Denise explained Mousseau, Hamilton community outreach worker and representative on the Halton Needle Advisory Exchange Committee. "The key to outreach is that it's client driven."

The mobile exchange service has seen substantially more success, said Halton outreach worker Cecil McDougall. To date, 78 individuals have used the needle exchange.

"We've made a conscious effort here in Halton to ensure we also include those who inject steroids. The concern being that young people might be exposed to the sharing of needles," Mr. McDougall said.

While the program received the support of the committee, a pair of councillors expressed disappointment in the need to spend taxpayer dollars for a needle exchange. "I'm going to support it, but I have to tell you I definitely have difficulty with it," said Oakville Councillor Jack Dennison.

Added Milton Councillor Richard Malboeuf, "You're not alone."

Volunteer groups to get help at workshop

Halton Region wants to provide non-profit organizations and volunteers with the skills needed keep their efforts alive.

On November 12, the Region's social and community services department will host 'Raising Your Profile: Building Your Brand' - a workshop designed to help volunteer organizations develop their brand and raise their profile.

"The workshop will take place at the Halton Regional Centre, 1151 Bronte Rd. The cost is \$35. For more information or to register, call Ann Harvie at (905) 825-6000, ext. 7135.