

Rural recycling depots now thing of the past

By **JASON MISNER**
The Champion

A dented metal mail box, a bald tire and a plastic container full of used oil aren't supposed to be dropped off at rural recycling depots in Halton.

But these were the kinds of things spotted at the Campbellville depot located on No. 5 Sideroad Wednesday afternoon.

And this blatant abuse, coupled with the high costs to manage the depots, is why the Region has decided to get rid of them altogether.

Region council officially approved Wednesday that the half-dozen rural recycling depots in Milton, Burlington and Halton Hills be removed and replaced with a more cost-effective, bi-weekly curbside pick-up system.

Curbside recycling collection will begin in early February and the depots will be phased out by early March.

The costs to pay for the blue-box system will be based on area-wide assessment.

Based on 2003 residential assessment numbers, the annual cost for blue box recycling per \$100,000 of assessed value will be \$7.94. For example, a home assessed at \$300,000 would pay \$23.82.

Urban users in Milton who are currently paying for curbside recycling pick-up will see their bills rise slightly, by an average of 82 cents per year under the agreement.

The depots, around for 15 years, allow residents to drop off recyclable materials that are picked up by a contractor hired by the Region.

The depot recycling system isn't offered anywhere else in the GTA. The costs for the program have grown substantially since 1998, jumping from \$190,000 annually to \$400,000 this year. Curbside collection would cost \$370,000.

Also, the depots aren't generating the proper amount of recyclable materials. About 30 per cent of the 1,400 tonnes of material collected at the depots are contaminated and can't be recycled, and are shipped to the landfill site on Regional Road 25.

Curbside collection would collect 2,000 tonnes of clean material.

Halton Hills Regional Councillor Rick Bonnette said it was a no-brainer to do away with the depots. He said they've grown too costly and are actually contributing more waste to the landfill and "that goes against (Halton's) strategic plan."

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz, also a regional councillor, said many in the community favour the curbside collection system.

"We were left with little or no option to having (the depots) removed," he said. "They'll be missed by some individuals."

He noted he's concerned that those who use the depot to rid of their hazardous material and non-recyclable materials might use the rural countryside as a dumping ground.

Meanwhile, the Region has provided the costs to provide both garbage and recycling pick-up in the rural areas.

In Milton's case, based on 2003 residential assessment numbers, the cost for garbage and blue box pick-up per \$100,000 of assessed value would be \$33.33. For example, a home assessed at \$300,000 would pay \$99.99.

David Miles, Halton's supervisor of waste management, said the pricing quoted from the contractor is effective until December 18.

He said the date was chosen to allow the Region to set its budget to incorporate the recycling depot costs.

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