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A METROLAND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER VOL. 144 NO. 100 FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2004 \$1.00 (GST included) 36 PAGES "Using Communication to Build Better Communities"



Icy waters

Firefighter Gilbert Kuiper of the Wasaga Beach Fire Department assists in the rescue of mock victim Chris Burke of the Milton Fire Department during a training exercise at the Kelso reservoir over the weekend.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Residents to be asked about fluoridation

By JASON MISNER

The Champion

Milton's 33,000 residents on a non-fluoridated municipal well-based system will be asked later this year their thoughts about having their drinking water fluoridated – an issue that dates back some 30 years.

In response to the findings of poor dental health among Milton kids, Halton Region's health and social services committee Tuesday endorsed Halton medical officer of health Dr. Bob Nosal's request that residents be consulted before a deci-

sion is made regarding fluoridation.

Currently the 33,000 residents – who essentially form the older section of town – are the only ones in Halton who don't get their water fluoridated. Burlington, Oakville and the new areas of Milton receive fluoridated water through a lake-based system. Halton Hills operates on a municipal well-based system that's fluoridated.

The fluoridation issue doesn't relate to private wells.

In the Tuesday staff report, Dr. Nosal said he thinks municipal well-water should be fluoridated to improve oral health.

"It is my opinion that fluoridation of the existing well-based water sup-

ply system is an appropriate response to the higher levels of tooth decay in Milton." Acknowledging the issues raised from anti-fluoridation groups about the risks of bone disease, the report notes fluoride concentrations in community water supplies are low.

It would cost the Region \$250,000 to set up the fluoridation system at the two well operating sites – Kelso and Walkers Line – and \$10,000 annually in operating costs.

It's not clear yet what the format will be for the public information session.

In an interview, Dr. Nosal said regional health staff will make a presentation to Milton town council regarding water fluoridation, likely

in April.

In conjunction with Milton council, a date will be set for public consultation, probably in May or June.

Once the comments have been received, staff will decide what the recommendation about water fluoridation will be.

Regional council would have to vote on it because water delivery is a regional responsibility. Also, approval would be needed from the Ministry of the Environment.

Depending on how things proceed, water fluoridation could be established some time in the fall, Dr. Nosal said.

Over the last few months, reports • see REFERENDUM on page 4

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