

Treatment centre looks to move to Tremaine Rd.

By GILLIAN CORMIER
Special to The Champion

A local addiction treatment centre for women is applying to increase the number of residents it can accommodate at a proposed new site from 10 to 12.

Hope Place, currently located on Regional Road 25, is in the process of acquiring 4091 and 4093 Tremaine Rd. for its new location.

After 15 years of operation, it has outgrown its current facility.

A meeting of the Committee of Adjustment and Consent (COA) will take place Thursday at 7 p.m. to discuss an application by Hope Place to allow a minor variance to zoning bylaw 144-2003, which would allow them to house 12 residents in a recovery home for substance abusers.

The proposed site is currently zoned as rural, which allows a maximum of 10 residents in a group home, as long as the home is licensed, supervised, approved or funded by the province for temporary care of homeless persons or those in rehabilitation for drug or alcohol abuse.

Ian Simpson, who sits on the board of directors for Hope Place, said that the centre receives funding from the Ministry of Health for 12 beds, and that's why it has applied for an increase.

Mr. Simpson said the house on

the Tremaine Road property meets the size requirements of Hope Place, and is all one level, which saves them the cost of installing elevators to meet accessibility needs.

If the application to increase to 12 beds isn't approved, whether or not to proceed with the purchase of the property will be a Hope Place board decision. But it would be a setback, said Mr. Simpson.

"It's rather critical for us to get approval, so we're hoping for the best," he said.

In order for the application to be approved, the five-person COA must be satisfied that it's only a minor change in zoning requirements, it's appropriate to the development of the land and in general respects the intent of the Official Plan and zoning bylaw.

The Hope Place proposal will be accompanied by a Planning Staff Report, prepared by Town Senior Planner Barbara Koopmans, which supports Hope Place's application to increase the number of residents. The report will be presented to the committee, which will also take into consideration any citizen support or rejection of the proposal, and then there will be a vote.

But aside from the issue of whether or not to allow the increase, one resident feels the issue of how to properly inform

local residents when a group home moves into their neighbourhood also needs attention.

Penny Boxall said that local residents weren't given adequate notice that a group home was potentially moving into their area.

Ms. Boxall rents 200 acres on Tremaine Road, across from the site. She said she understands that the Town is obligated to inform only those within 125 m of the site, but still feels the tiny posting on the property, where she first learned of the group home, was inadequate.

"For all you know it could be a garage sale sign if you don't stop and physically get out to look at it," she said.

It just seemed sneaky, she said, and she was uneasy simply because she didn't know who would be moving in across the street from her. She would have been grateful for a more comprehensive effort on the part of the Town to let residents know what was happening.

"Not one of the people in my neighbourhood knew," she said.

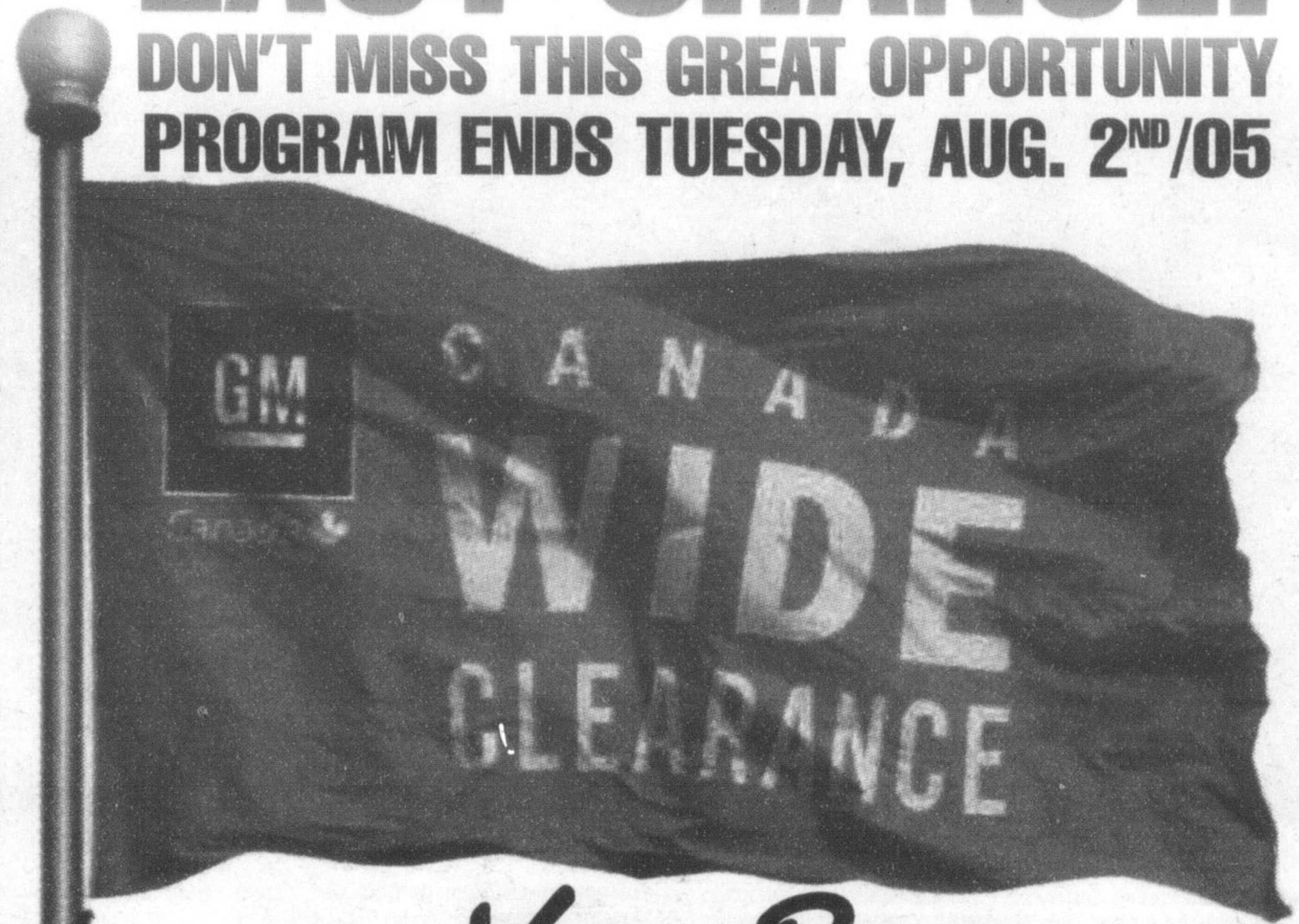
Ms. Boxall plans to attend the COA meeting Thursday to voice her concerns.

"I think we all need more information," she said.

The COA meeting will take place in Council Chambers.

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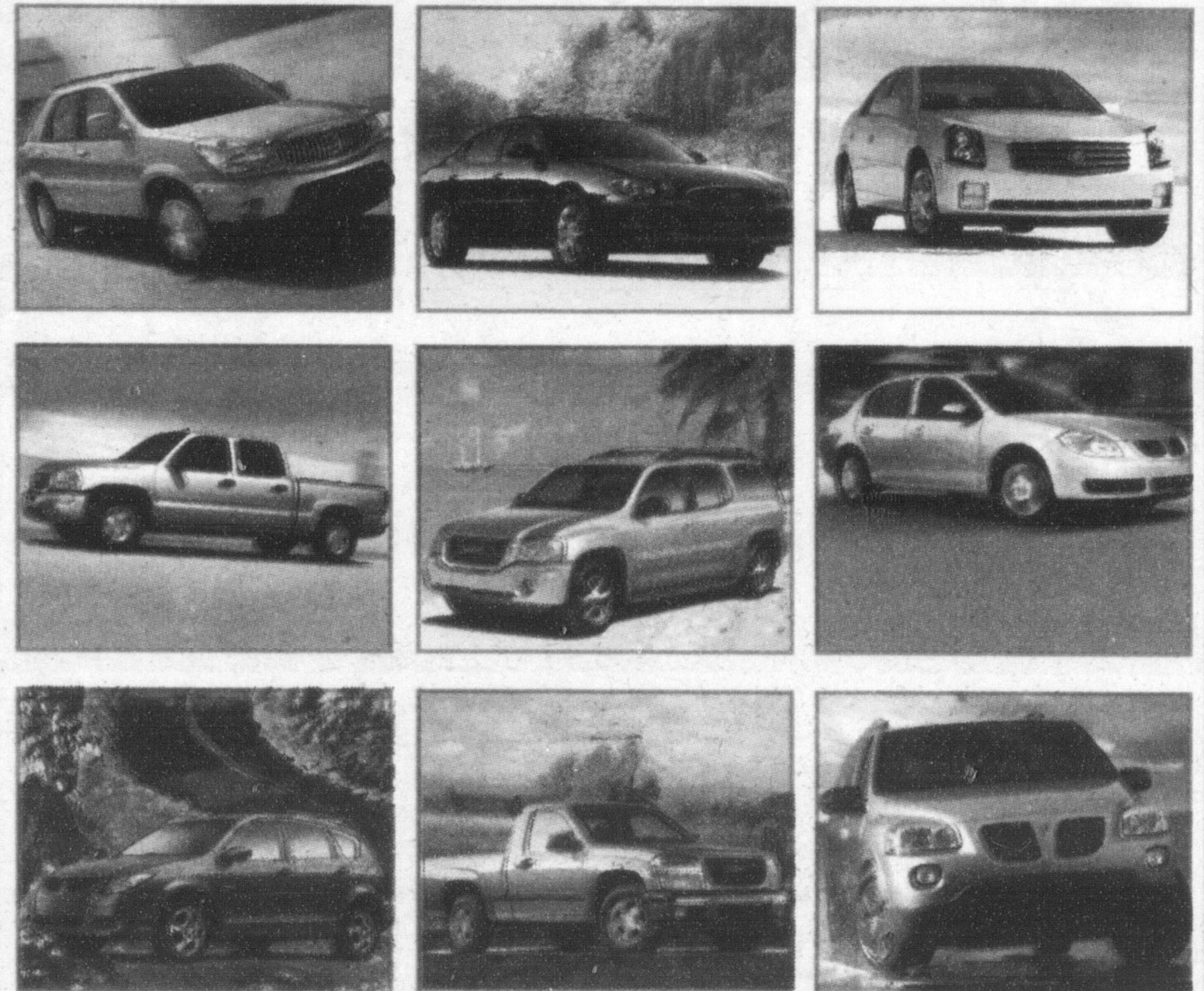


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