

# Chudleigh says he's pushing hard for hospital expansion

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

As the town's population grows by leaps and bounds, Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh is urging the Province to get on with the planned expansion of Milton District Hospital.

That's what the local politician told those in attendance at a breakfast hosted by the Milton Chamber of Commerce Friday morning at Granite Ridge Golf Club.

Chudleigh indicated that with the development boom Milton's experiencing, the hospital is going to be in a "critical situation" in three to four years.

"I'm doing what I can to put as much pressure as I can on the government about the Milton expansion," he said. "It's an important project."

On the health care front, Chudleigh also discussed the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) the Province is implementing.

LHINs will be community-based organizations with a man-

date to plan, co-ordinate, integrate, manage and fund health care at the local level.

The MPP said while the network system has some weaknesses, it's something he can "basically support."

"I think LHINs will not be a bad thing for us, provided it's delivered without a lot of bureaucracy," he said.

Chudleigh touched on other local issues in his talk, such as infrastructure.

He said while he thinks local infrastructure is progressing along extremely well, considering the growth the town is seeing, the provincial infrastructure in the area is "not keeping pace."

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz asked Chudleigh if he sees any relief on the horizon for Halton when it comes to GTA pooling — a system, which Halton contributes to, that helps Toronto pay for social services.

He told the mayor he's hopeful that pooling will be phased out, but noted the Province's budget that was released

Thursday makes no mention of that happening.

"Personally, I think the program is unsustainable," he said. "I think it's probably seen its life."

Chudleigh, who's the provincial Conservatives' critic for economic development and trade, also gave his commentary on the budget at the breakfast.

He criticized things like the cut made to the agriculture portion of the budget and discussed the continued struggle farmers have financially.

He said in 2004, the income of all Ontario farmers was less than \$580 million.

"That is an all-time record low," he said. "To cut that (agriculture) budget by 21 per cent is really something."

He also complimented some parts of the budget, such as the increase in funding for schools.

"I think that's a very positive thing," he said. "Our future is our children."

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at [mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com](mailto:mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com).

## Police auction to be held this weekend

Need a bike? This Saturday, the Halton Regional Police Service will hold its spring auction with more than 130 bikes and numerous other items up for bid.

The auction will take place at the indoor garage

of the police service headquarters at Halton Regional Centre, 1151 Bronte Rd., in Oakville.

Viewing will start at 8:30 a.m., with the auction beginning at 9:30 a.m. Items may be purchased by cash or cheque with proper identification.

## Many groups hard hit by cancellation

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The report notes several groups are particularly hard hit by the cancellation of the agreement, such as low-income parents and families with children who have special needs.

At last Tuesday's committee meeting, Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline decried the Conservatives' plan to abandon the Best Start plan and instead give families \$1,200 per year for each child under six.

"\$1,200 will probably look after an infant for a month," Savoline said. "What \$1,200 doesn't do is fix what's wrong with the system — a shortage of good childcare spaces."

She noted that to just take the Best Start funding away is "regressive."

"We've just gone back 20 years," she said.

Urbanski pointed out that while helping parents with the subsidy is a good thing, developing the childcare system is critical as well.

"Both need to be done. The system needs to be built, and parents need to be supported," she said.

The topic will go before regional council tomorrow, along with a lengthy list of related recommendations, which the committee supported.

The recommendations include:

- Approving the expenditures for the use of the \$6.1-million grant

- Hiring staff — a program assistant and someone to support children with special needs — on three-year contracts for the Best Start program

- Writing to the federal government to request that it seek alternate sources of funding to support early learning and child development or quickly address the fiscal imbalance with the Province to allow the Best Start program to continue.

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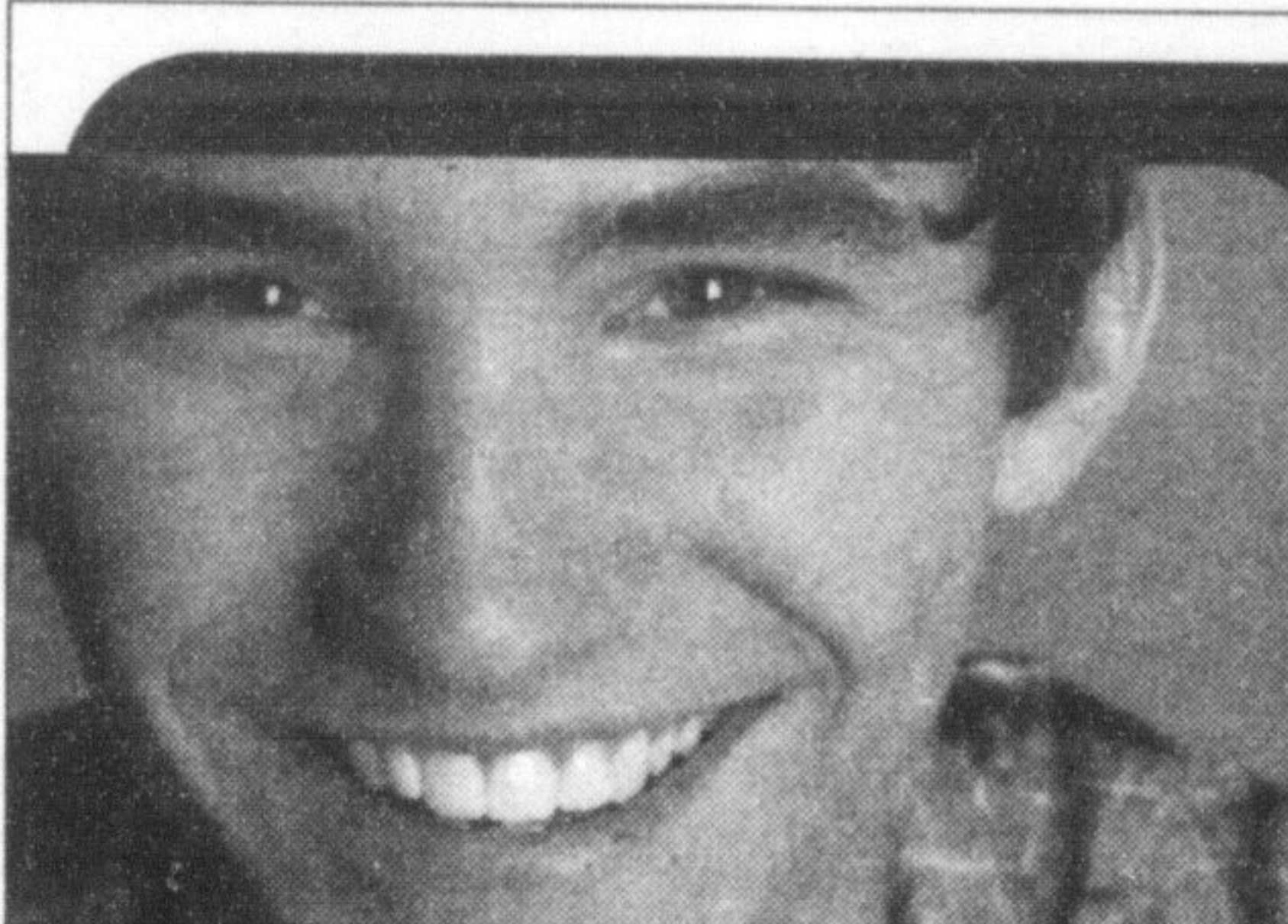




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