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# North Halton youth more negative about police: report

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Young people in north Halton hold a more negative perception of police than their counterparts in the south, accord-

ing to a study on local youth-police relations.

The recently-released document — prepared by a consultant for the youth-police relations working committee — sheds some light on how Halton youth aged 12 to 24 years feel about officers

and what needs to be done to improve the relationship between the two groups.

It identifies that one of the challenges is youth perception of police behaviour, particularly in north Halton. "Youth in the north are more nega-

tive about the Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS), as compared to other police services, than are youth in the south," the study reveals. "They stated that they also were more likely to behave disrespectfully to the police."

It goes on to say, "These differences — whether resulting from inconsistencies in service availability or from behaviours and attitudes of police and youth — should be further examined."

Other key findings in the study include:

- Police and youth generally believe they need to have respect for each other and they should treat each other politely.

- There's a willingness on the part of both youth and police to learn more about appropriate behaviour, the role of police and the legal rights and obligations of youth.

- Police typically believe their relationship with youth is reasonable and respectful, while youth don't see the relationship as positively.

- Relationships with youth division officers and most high school liaison officers are excellent, while the relationships with patrol officers in cars are tenuous.

- Youth who took part in the study process made few comments about racial issues and racial profiling, but said some "kids feel judged based on their name or culture."

Youth-police relations committee chair Jennifer Speers pointed out the study enables the community to be informed of opportunities to improve upon the existing relationship between youth and police.

"This review must be ongoing, and we are confident the Halton Regional Police Service will embrace the recommendations of the committee," she said.

In addition to identifying areas for improvement, the study highlights the positive aspects of youth-police relations in Halton, such as the programs for young people that've been developed by police and the community participation by officers that facilitates positive interaction with youth.

"The Halton Regional Police Service has always promoted open communication with the citizens of Halton," said Chief Ean Algar.

"Community-based policing is the cornerstone of our service delivery

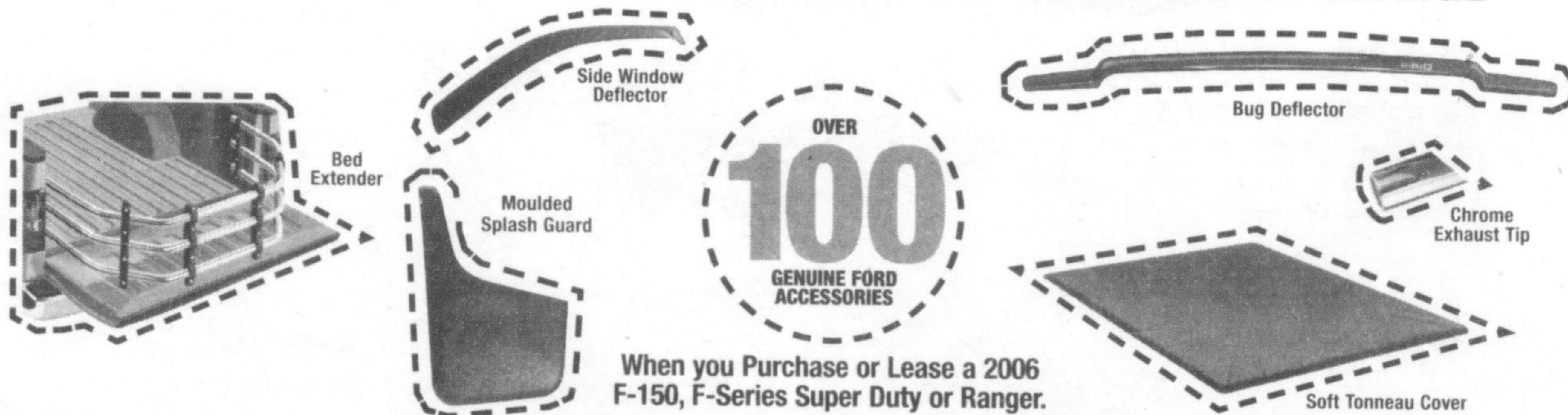
• see 650 on page A15

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