

# Halton's economy has both good side and bad side, says speaker

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The strengths and weaknesses of Halton's economy were laid out on the table last week during the Region's third roundtable breakfast on economic development.

The session, held at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club, came as part of the Region's process in developing a strategy that'll establish a set of prioritized economic development objectives and recommended actions.

The meeting involved a presentation from John Hughes of Hemson Consulting Ltd. that detailed the state of Halton's current economy.

"The diversity of our economy is extremely good," he said. "We are the home of some very dynamic small and medium-sized companies."

He highlighted the fact Halton is one of the fastest-growing regions in North America and also has a well-educated labour force. "But obviously not everything is perfect. We don't have enough national or multinational organizations."

He noted the region also has a lot of competition for skilled labour.

On the real estate front, Hughes

pointed out that Halton has a good supply of land.

"We've got reasonably-priced land in relation to the GTA," he said.

He went on to say Halton has a comprehensive transportation network and competitive commercial tax rate.

But on the negative side, Hughes said the Region has a relatively high industrial tax rate, road congestion and high land prices compared to other places in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, such as Cambridge.

He also noted that Oakville and Burlington are beginning to run toward the end of their land supplies.

The pros and cons of the quality of life in Halton were also detailed.

On the plus side, Hughes said the region has great access to health and education facilities, high-quality housing and strong volunteerism.

But he acknowledged Halton's weaknesses include its limited post-secondary facilities, housing mix and volume of commuters.

"It's (commuting) really wasted time," he said. "It's something we'd certainly like to address."

Hughes summed up by outlining the proposed themes for the economic development strategy, such as quality of

life, business and industry development and financial resources and cost competitiveness.

## Entrepreneurship discussed

Those in attendance at the breakfast also heard a presentation on entrepreneurship from Eugene Luczkiw, director of the Institute for Enterprise Education.

"I say entrepreneurship is the practice of disruptive innovation," he said. "Entrepreneurs disrupt what is."

He went on to detail the seven determinants of a successful enterprise, such as having:

- An emphasis on the distinct uniqueness of each individual as a member of the team.

- Core beliefs and values and a clear and compelling vision of the future.

- Integrated thinking throughout the enterprise whereby the connected whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Those who didn't make it to last week's event will be able to attend public meetings on the economic development strategy May 25 in Milton and May 29 in Burlington. Details on both will be announced soon.

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