

CH planning ways to boost attendance at Glen Eden

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

After suffering through a winter of mild temperatures and resulting lower revenues, Glen Eden Ski and Snowboard Centre is making big plans to ensure the coming season is more successful.

Conservation Halton's (CH) executive committee looked over what the centre and its staff have in mind to boost the number of visitors at the ski hill this winter — a figure that fell during the 2005-06 season to about 137,000, which is thousands less than the previous three seasons.

Carla Marshall, CH's acting marketing services manager, presented a marketing plan to the group that she described as being proactive but also reactive to things like unpredictable weather.

She outlined a variety of marketing measures that, if approved by the CH board later this month, would include things like a direct mail campaign offering discounted sea-

son's passes, a television and radio promotion program, special events and an improved Web site with e-commerce capabilities.

"We're looking to be a lot more aggressive this season," she said.

Marshall also discussed the audience the ski hill is trying to target in its marketing — primarily teens, but also young families, seniors and children aged eight to 12 years.

She noted that there's a "completely untapped market" of local college and university students.

"We have to figure out how to attract them," she said.

CH Chair and Milton Councillor Brian Penman suggested contacting the area universities, see if they have ski teams and offer to let them practice at Glen Eden.

The ski hill's operating budget for the 2006-07 season was also presented to the committee, containing \$3.6 million in expenditures and an estimated \$4.8 million in revenues.

The numbers are based on the conservative expectation of

144,000 visits to park this winter.

"This is lower than past visitation projections based on a reduced purchase of season pass sales and related drop in visitations," Glen Eden executive manager Bob Harris reported.

Harris went on to outline the proposed ski hill rates for the upcoming season and the significant pricing changes — a seven per cent increase in the KinderSki program, six per cent for the Primary Ski program and 12 per cent for the Christmas and March Break camps. The increases are due to extended lesson times and labour costs.

The executive committee is now recommending that the CH board of directors approve Glen Eden's marketing plan, 2006-07 rates, operating budget and development and maintenance projects worth \$1 million.

The board will meet June 29 at 7:30 p.m. at Conservation Halton's administration office, 2596 Britannia Rd. W.

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