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Milton's growth tops in Canada

Stats Can shows town's
population boom biggest
over past five years

By **Melanie Hennessey**
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

While some people may have already thought it was true, it's now official — Milton is the fastest growing community in the country.

Statistics Canada released information gathered during its 2006 Census Tuesday that reveals Milton's population jumped by a staggering 71.4 per cent over the last five years, putting it at the top of Canada's list when it comes to growth.

In fact, no other community with a population of 10,000 or more even came close to that kind of increase, with the next in line — Okotoks, Alberta — sitting at 46.7 per cent.

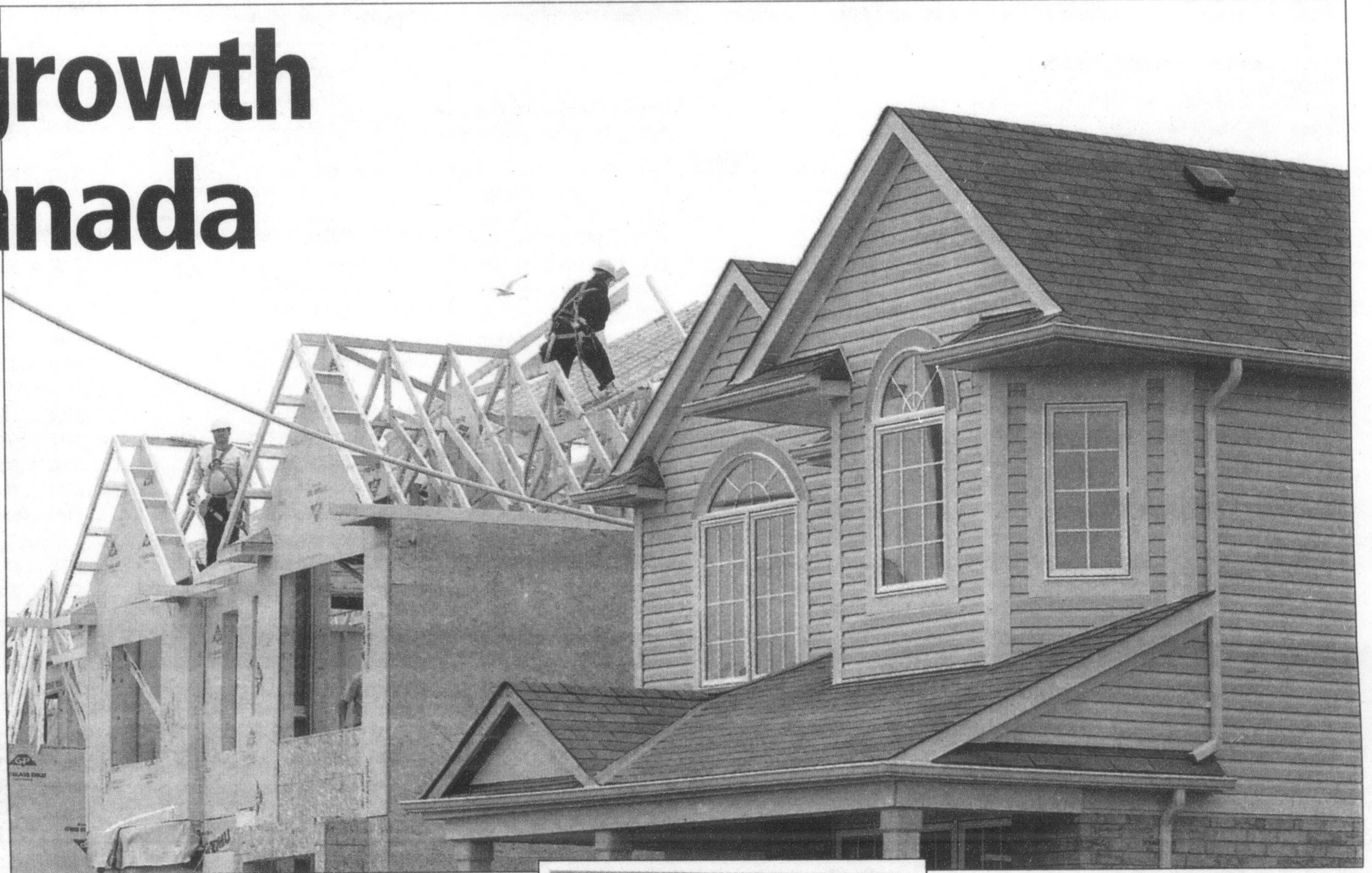
But for Milton Mayor Gord Krantz, the Census information on the town's growth confirmed what the municipality already knew.

"This news comes as no surprise to us," he said. "Plans for growth in our community have been in place for more than 15 years, and we've been consistently tracking the growth since the last Census was completed in 2001."

Town CAO Mario Belvedere emphasized that staff and council have been working hard to manage the growth and ensure it's balanced.

Top 10 Canadian communities (population 10,000 or more) with the highest growth rates between 2001-06

Milton	71.4%
Okotoks, Alta.	46.7%
Airdrie, Alta.	41.8%
Brampton, Ont.	33.3%
Saint-Lazare, Que.	32%
Vaughan, Ont.	31.2%
Vaudreuil-Dorion, Que.	29.5%
Blainville, Que.	29%
Grande Prairie, Alta.	27.3%
Whitby, Ont.	27.3%



HERE WE GROW AGAIN: Above, construction continues along Thompson Road, south of Derry Road. At right, this population sign on Steeles Avenue can't keep up with the ever-increasing population in town — so much so that the Town is converting signs to simply say 'Welcome' rather than display population figures.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

"Balanced growth means that industrial development needs to keep pace with residential growth, and so far we've been successful in making this happen," he said.

While the Town has estimated Milton's population to be around 60,000, the Census says it's actually only at 53,939.

Town Economic Development Officer Robbie Grewal explained the discrepancy results from the fact the Census was completed 10 months ago and that the Town calculates its population estimates based on the number of dwelling units in Milton, meaning it's not an exact head count.

For example, it would multiply the number of single or semi-detached homes in a subdivi-

sion by 3.28 to come up with the approximate number of residents living there, while for townhouses it would use 2.75 and apartments, 1.2.

Each year in Milton, between 1,500 and 1,800 homes are built.

The Census also showed that Oakville grew by 14.4 per cent between 2001 and 2006, Halton Hills by 14.7 per cent and Burlington by nine per cent, resulting in a Halton-wide population increase of 17.1 per cent.

For Regional Chairman Gary Carr, the statistics and the fact Milton topped the country's growth list reinforce the importance of the Fairness for Halton campaign — the Halton-

• see FIGURES on page A12




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