

Halton ranks 3rd for sustainability

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

When it comes to sustainable communities, Halton is among the top in Ontario.

A study released recently by the Pembina Institute ranked the region as third out of 27 municipalities in the province on its sustainability index.

The institute looked at 33 indicators of sustainability in three broad categories — smart growth, livability and economic vitality — to come up with its conclusions.

The news of Halton's high ranking was welcomed by Regional Chair Gary Carr.

"We definitely are working toward ensuring Halton continues to be a sustainable place to live," he remarked. "That's what the Sustainable Halton (planning) process is all about."

While Halton placed third overall, the study gave the municipality individual rankings in each of the three

mentioned categories.

It placed second in economic vitality and third in the livability section. The document noted low crime rates, good population health and affordable housing contributed to Halton's good marks for livability.

But the region did place quite low — 24th — in the smart growth category. The study explained this kind of ranking can be due to poor land use mixes, low levels of development intensification and long commuting distances for residents.

Carr explained Halton does have more of a challenge when it comes to commuting due to the large size of the region.

"We're also so newly developed compared to places like Toronto and York Region," he said. "When it comes to smart growth, we want to learn from other jurisdictions."

He added, "We certainly believe we can do a better job in this next round with Sustainable Halton."

The Region is developing the Sustainable Halton plan to help guide the extensive population growth called for in the Province's Places to Grow plan while preserving and protecting things like greenspace.

And judging from comments made by those who helped prepare the Pembina Institute study, Halton could be averting potential disaster by planning in advance.

"Unsustainable development patterns in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, particularly the 905 region, threaten to undermine the economic vitality of these communities in the long term," said Ray Tomalty, the report's lead author. "Long commuting distances, the lack of commuting options, traffic congestion, low housing diversity and affordability could strangle the long-term prosperity of these regions."

To view the full report visit www.pembina.org.

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Abandoned rural house burns to ground

The cause of a blaze that destroyed an abandoned house early Sunday morning in rural Milton is under investigation.

Police and fire crews from the Milton Fire Department and Halton

Hills Fire Department responded to a fire at Nassagaweya/Esquesing Townline at about 1 a.m.

Emergency crews had some difficulties getting to the house due to the narrow roadway, said Halton Regional

Police Det. Sgt. Murray Drinkwater.

Drinkwater said the house, located on quarry property, was "completely destroyed."

It had been scheduled for demolition.

Has Adoption Touched Your Life?

visit www.ontario.ca/adoptioninfo

On September 17, 2007 adoption information laws in Ontario are changing.

If you were involved in an adoption that is registered in Ontario, you should know that access to identifying information for adopted adults and birth parents is changing.

Changes to adoption information laws in Ontario will allow most adopted adults and birth parents to receive identifying information from original birth registrations and adoption orders.

Since January 31, 2007, birth parents and adopted adults have been able to register a no-contact notice and apply for an order prohibiting the disclosure of identifying information in order to prevent harm.

Non-identifying information will continue to be disclosed to adopted adults and birth relatives upon request.

To learn more about these changes and how they might affect you or someone you know, please visit www.ontario.ca/adoptioninfo or call ServiceOntario at 1-800-461-2156.

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