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A & E

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

SAFETY FIRST: Fire chief Brian Ellsworth reminds all home owners to replace the batteries in all their smoke and CO2 detectors this weekend when the clocks spring forward. The official time change is 2 a.m. Sunday. Lending his support is fire safety mascot 'Beeper' the smoke detector.

SKD slated to shut down

Expected to be bought out by Vaughan-based company

By Tim Foran
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

One of Milton's largest employers is on the verge of shutting its plant down for good, according to the union representing employees of SKD Automotive.

The insolvent auto parts manufacturer, which received creditor protection from an Ontario court in January, is close to selling its assets and customer accounts to Vaughan-based Martinrea, which plans to close the SKD-owned plant on Wheelabrator Way following completion of the purchase, said Fil Falbo, a spokesperson for United Steelworkers of Canada, which represents the hourly unionized employees at SKD's Milton plant.

There are currently 220 employees of SKD, with 150 still working at the plant, said Falbo.

"They're uncertain," Falbo said of the Milton employees. "There's a lot of anxiety when a plant shuts down. It's not a good feeling, especially for guys working there (for SKD) for 25 years."

SKD's customers — Chrysler, Ford and Honda — are currently paying the plant employees under an accommodation agreement. A former customer of SKD, General Motors, pulled its tooling from the Milton plant about two months ago.

As of December 1, 2008, SKD employed 661 people, including 469 unionized employees at its Milton, Brampton and two Mississauga facilities, according to a report from the monitor overseeing SKD's restructuring process. The company also has operations in Michigan and Mexico.

The monitor recently reported the company has received two offers for portions of SKD's business, but no "going concern" offers in which a buyer would commit to continuing operations as normal and not

• see DEED on page 14

No tax dough to GO funding, says Region

By Tim Foran
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

You can send us the bills, but we're only going to pay you what we can.

That's the message to GO Transit from Halton Region and its municipal neighbours, which have stopped paying their total expected share for new lines and tracks being built for the rapidly growing transit system, a shortfall close to \$60

million in the 905 municipalities alone.

Halton Region will become the latest and last GTAH municipality to stop paying its full share of GO Transit's growth capital budget according to a formula originally outlined by the defunct Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB) in 2000.

In so doing, Halton will follow the precedent set by its neighbours in Hamilton, Peel, York, Durham and Toronto.

GO recently invoiced Halton for \$11.7 million for its share of the \$393 million 2008-09 growth capital budget, but Halton has only \$6.7 million in GO transit-specific development charges to spend.

The remaining \$5 million simply won't be paid to GO Transit, in accordance with a 2006 council resolution to not use property tax dollars to make up

• see GROWTH on page 4

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