

Geothermal to save Town millions in energy costs: CAO

By Tim Foran
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Geothermal technology isn't just a lot of hot air to the Town of Milton — it's going to save the municipality millions of dollars in energy costs over the life of the expanded Milton Sports Centre, according to the Town's CAO.

And the use of the renewable energy is just the first step in the municipality's goal to become a leader in green and clean technology, Mario Belvedere told attendees during a recent breakfast affair at the Nassagaweya Community Centre.

During a wide ranging overview of the corporation's current projects, Belvedere said the Town will install geothermal technology — using the earth's stable and comfortable temperature for heat in winter and to cool in summer — as part of the \$40.6 million expansion to the Milton Sports Centre.

A Town consultant has estimated geothermal technology will reduce the originally projected annual energy costs at the sports centre by more than a third, or approximately \$90,000, thanks to a drastic reduction in the amount of natural gas the facility will have to consume.

Most of the cost savings will be seen in

heating of the new eight-lane pool that will be built next year and heating and cooling rooms and corridors of the building itself. As geothermal technology has less moving parts, the Town will also save an estimated \$22,000 per year in maintenance costs, the consultant's report adds.

The combined \$111,000 in annual savings means the Town will pay off the \$970,000 investment needed to install geothermal technology in approximately nine years. Based on the consultant's estimated lifespan of 50 years for the sports centre, overall savings would be approximately \$4.5 million, money that could possibly be used

to either reduce slightly the amount of taxes needed to operate the centre or lower user fees for its pool, rinks or other facilities.

The Town is still waiting to find out if it's feasible for the municipality to install rooftop solar panels or wind turbines in the parking lots of the sports centre or the new arts centre being built at the southeast corner of Main Street and Thompson Road.

"We may not be able to do it for both buildings," said Belvedere, noting the municipality must finish the first phases of both projects by March 31, 2011 according to federal and provincial stimulus funding

• see OTHER on page A11



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