



So long, Phyllis

Halton agricultural representative Phyllis MacMaster, who is based out of Milton, is moving on to Dundas County, near Ottawa, after many years of service to this area. Her contributions were recognized by Halton regional councillors recently. Above, Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy says goodbye.

Photo by JOHN WARREN

GST is a crapshoot — Region

By NORMAN NELSON

Despite the spectre of the controversial Goods and Services Tax (GST) coming into effect at the beginning of next year, it's business as usual for Halton Region.

Like their colleagues in private business, regional finance department staff were scratching their heads looking for schemes to lessen the impact of the new tax, but couldn't come up with anything.

"It's a crapshoot," Halton finance director Joe Rinaldo told *The Chronicle* Wednesday, following a meeting of the finance and administration committee.

With the GST replacing the current Federal Sales Tax (FST), he said, it's expected that the price of goods or services with a relatively high FST content will come down and the price of goods and services with little or no FST content will go up.

Therefore, he said, the finance department is looking at future expenditures to see if money could be saved by spending up some purchases and delaying others.

Basically, the only purchase he's recommending the Region push ahead with is \$250,000 worth of supplies and repair work for a sewage plant.

By doing it this year instead of next, he said the Region will escape the GST and save about \$7,500.

On the other hand, he said a few items — such as vehicle and telecommunication equipment purchases — have been put off until next year because the prices for these items are

expected to come down.

Overall, however, he said he's surprised the Region hasn't been able to do "a lot more of this kind of thing."

But especially with a downturn in the economy, he said, it's extremely tough to be assured of a cost saving.

"We're not going to be making significant changes. We'll just be nibbling at the edges."

With subsidies promised by the federal government, Mr. Rinaldo said the net effect of the seven per cent GST on municipalities is actually 3 per cent.

The dump squabble is over

The last piece of red tape has been removed for the 5-million tonne garbage dump Halton Region is putting in Milton.

Halton had been squabbling with the provincial environment ministry over conditions it had slapped on the original approval document.

Regional public works director Bob Moore, however, told the Region's planning and public works committee Wednesday that the differences have been ironed out and urged council, which meets this Wednesday, to withdraw an appeal it had launched.

The centre of the dispute involved a liner for the landfill. A liner is a protective sheet covering the bottom of the landfill.

Regional staff felt site tests should determine whether this liner — which Mr. Moore estimated could add "hundreds of thousands of dollars" to the already inflated \$36-

million cost — is needed.

The ministry wanted it "up front."

"We felt this was not good business management — that it was wasting money," said Mr. Moore. "We have no objection to a liner — if it's needed."

With the new wording, he said there's "a much more exact definition with respect to what data would trigger the need for a liner."

Halton appealed four other conditions attached by the ministry, but Mr. Moore said they were all "settled quickly."

Meanwhile, the 300-acre site, near Britannia Road and Highway 25, is now all in the Region's hands. Halton Chief Administrative Officer John Fleming said about a quarter of the property owners had their lands expropriated.

Comprehensive site testing and design work are proceeding on the landfill, slated to open in early 1992.

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