

Compost company has to stand in line with others: Pomeroy

By **ROB KELLY**
The Champion

Halton regional chairman Peter Pomeroy says a private composting firm that wants Halton as its biggest customer will have to pitch its product with everybody else.

Last week Equity Environmental Services Corp. chief operating officer Larry Hurley sketched a bold plan to build a "flagship" composting centre. The plan calls for a facility the size of a football field on 48 acres of land his company owns off First Line, adjacent to the Halton regional landfill site in south rural Milton.

Mr. Hurley said he hopes to be open for business by mid-1993, with a view to composting as much as 40,000 tonnes of organic waste and wood a year — all the compost Halton is expected to generate annually.

But Mr. Pomeroy said Halton Region plans to review a number of competing composting processes late this summer, with an emphasis on the environmental safety of each one. And no one is likely to be treating Halton waste for compost without regional permission, he stressed.

Mr. Hurley has said he's prepared

to go it alone if Halton balks at his proposal, by merely soliciting other clients to use his composting site. But Mr. Pomeroy cautioned that it won't be that simple.

"They have to be able to sell the public, and public safety, to our satisfaction," Mr. Pomeroy said. Any firm must "satisfy the onerous criteria" Halton imposes for waste management standards. Mr. Pomeroy noted. When it comes to composting, that means extremely clean "feed" stock and strict plant health and odour controls.

If Mr. Hurley is as confident in his process as he appears to be, "he should not have any worries. I would assume he will put his technology on the table," when the time comes to bid for Halton's compost, Mr. Pomeroy said.

"This process is going to be done fairly and openly," the regional chairman added, and Mr. Hurley's company "will have to measure up in certain areas. There are lots of good technologies out there."

Mr. Pomeroy said Mr. Hurley's plan to forge ahead with or without Halton as a customer "sounds almost like a threat."

Halton has already commissioned an \$80,000 study to determine the

shape and scope of a plant geared to handling area compost. Once that's done in August, the Region will seek bids from firms interested in building such a complex within the regional landfill site — the first complication with Mr. Hurley's proposal. Equity Environmental Systems plans to set up shop across the street.

Although the Ontario government is pushing composting as a major means of diverting waste from landfills, Mr. Pomeroy said people who have studied such facilities worldwide have seen "tremendous odour problems" despite the insistence of various plant builders that their systems dramatically curb them. Also, filters designed to prevent such gas releases have proven prone to breakdown in cold climates, the regional chairman noted.

While Halton awaits the outcome of its engineering study, Equity Environmental Services is pressing ahead. The company has scheduled an open house to unveil its plans to the public. The meeting will take place at the Boyne Community Centre on Britannia Road on Monday, July 20, from 6-9 p.m., Equity technical services manager Dennis L'Ami said Tuesday.

Day camp gets kids back to nature

Openings in the Ways of the Woods summer day camp could make for some happy campers. The camp running from July 27 to 31 still has spots available to children ages 8 to 12 who enjoy the outdoors.

The camp is sponsored by the Halton Region Conservation Authority with the base camp at Mountsberg Wildlife Centre. Campers also visit Mount Nemo Con-

servation Area for a caving experience, Kelso Conservation Area for swimming, canoeing and stream exploration and Mountsberg for bird, insect and pond studies.

The cost is \$85 for the first child and \$80 for the second child in the same family. For information, call the Halton Region Conservation Authority at 336-1158.

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