

Some landfill facts

Halton Region's newly opened landfill south of Britannia Road off Highway 25 in Milton is much more than a hole in the ground for garbage. Some facts:

□ There are five cells to be used for waste over a period of 20 years. The initial cell, now in use, was dug by removing the equivalent of 75,000 tandem dump truck loads of material.

□ There are five kilometres of pipes beneath the cell to capture liquid waste formed when water mixes with the garbage — called leachate.

□ The clay liner shield forming the base of the cells, to create a barrier between the garbage and the ground below it, is approximately four feet (1.2 metres) thick. It was dug up and re-compacted to be denser. There is a layer of stone below it and another 1.5 foot gravel base atop it.

□ The site will hold 4 million tonnes of waste, and could last beyond the envisaged 20-year time frame since the volume of commercial-industrial garbage coming to the landfill is far less than expected. This is because commercial haulers are taking the waste to cheaper landfills in the United States.

□ The landfill contains almost four kilometres of paved roads, and 35,000 scrap tires were mixed with the pavement to form so-called "rubberized asphalt" in order to see how well the experimental compound works.

□ Noisemakers go off intermittently within the landfill to scare seagulls. The birds are usually a nuisance at waste sites.

□ There is a tire-cleaning station to scrape excess mud off the wheels of departing garbage trucks as they leave the landfill so as to minimize soiling on Highway 25.

□ Portable wind screens are to be set up around the dumping area each day to control windblown debris.

□ An earthen wall eight metres high was built along the western flank of the site to shield it from neighbours along First Line. The wall is approximately one kilometre long.

Garbage now pouring into new dump

Mayor Krantz officially opens controversial landfill Monday

By **ROB KELLY**
The Champion

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz did something Monday he probably had nightmares about not so long ago. He officially opened Halton's new landfill, trundling through a banner proclaiming "Open for business" in a garbage truck.

Mr. Krantz's truck, which was actually laden with garbage, was the first in a long procession of similar vehicles that will spew 4 million tonnes of waste into the landfill pits of south rural Milton over the next 20 years.

The opening marked the end of a two-decade era of uncertainty in which Halton Region had searched for a place to bury its waste. That quest culminated in a legal battle that saw Milton and Burlington, the two potential host municipalities, fight it out through 180 days of environmental hearings and last-ditch appeals by Milton once the community was chosen for the landfill.

The prolonged feud over the site left a crashing economic hangover in tandem with residual emotional bitterness. The exercise will cost Halton Region an estimated \$150 million when all is said and done.

The actual landfill tab ballooned to \$85 million with various environmental protection add-ons and generally escalating costs over time. A further \$10 million went to consultants and legal fees. On top of that, Halton residents paid roughly \$55 million to ship their garbage elsewhere while the factions fought over who had to take the waste.

So far Halton is the only municipality in Ontario to have surmounted the various bureaucratic hurdles leading to landfill approval. Across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and beyond, municipalities are rapidly running out of landfill space. They too are facing the prospect of a tangled, complex approval process and vehement resistance from constituents who don't want dumps nearby.

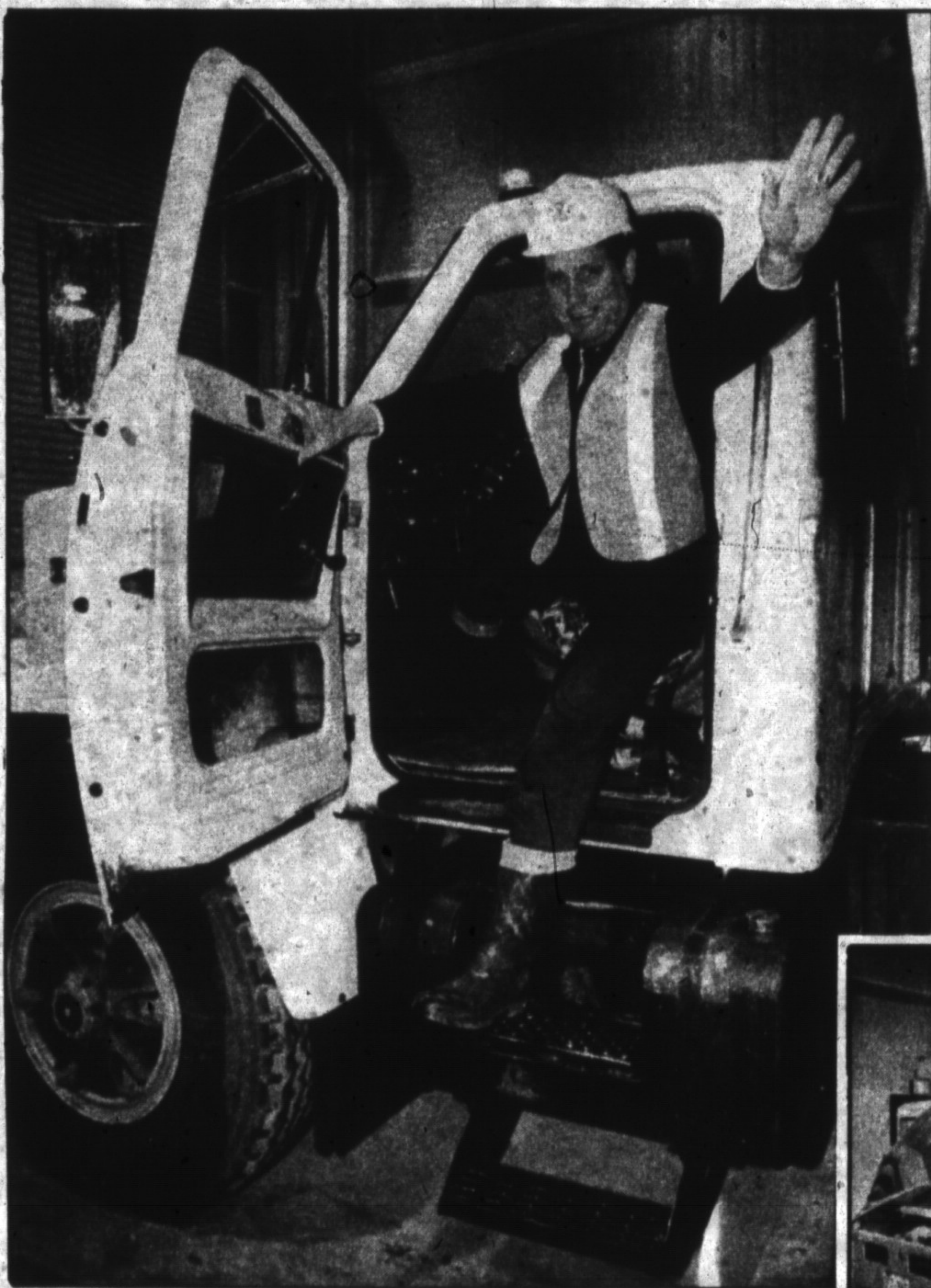
Although he has a commitment from Environment Minister Ruth Grier that Halton's landfill will not be used by others in the GTA, regional chairman Peter Pomeroy admitted there is "a lot of anxiety about protecting" Halton's site.

Under "emergency circumstances" the provincial government could commandeer Halton's landfill for use by its GTA neighbours, but "if anyone tries to invade this site it will be a long and dreary day for them," Mr. Pomeroy vowed Monday. "The people in our community paid dearly for it."

The regional chairman told the crowd of 100 that "a number of things have to change" in the way Ontario goes about approving landfills. "I don't believe we can spend the kind of money we're spending," he warned.

Particularly in smaller outlying communities, beyond the GTA, the financial challenge of getting a landfill approved the way Halton did it is probably insurmountable, Mr. Pomeroy said. Politicians from those areas told him that with "their tax bases they would never have been able to afford to do what we have done."

Mr. Krantz said he had "mixed emotions" about the landfill. "It's a reality now. We have to work with it, not against it." Still, Milton will be monitoring the site closely, he stressed. "There are a lot of neighbours in the area, we'll be looking at their well levels, watching for debris, making sure it does not affect them."



Mayor Gord Krantz waves to the crowd as he climbs down from a Town of Milton garbage truck after driving through a paper banner (right) to officially open the new dump.



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