

# Colin Best pushing for zero tax increase in '93

By ROB KELLY  
The Champion

Ward 2 councillor Colin Best said he will be taking a hard look at getting the municipal tax increase down to zero in 1993, once town council begins making operating budget decisions in two weeks.

"Everyone's economising and people are looking at government to economise as well," Mr. Best said in an interview Thursday.

"If the government starts doing that, we're going to be further ahead."

Earlier in the week Mr. Best circulated council and the media with copies of news stories detailing how, through sound financial planning, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion has orchestrated a one per cent discount in city taxes for 1993.

Mississauga has been debt-free for 14 years, according to profiles in *The Toronto Star*, having adopted a pay-as-you-go philosophy. The city has also contracted out services such as garbage collection, and amalgamated city departments to promote efficiencies.

## No layoffs

Despite the biting recession, Mississauga has maintained its enviable financial position without laying off municipal workers, *The Star* said.

"People are totally fed up with tax increases," Mr. Best warned. "The public mood is that they're sick to death of them. We're one of the highest taxed countries in the world. It's time to start turning that around. It doesn't have to mean a cut in services. It means getting more efficient."

Milton is "definitely" already well run from a fiscal standpoint, Mr. Best added. "We have the lowest (municipal) employee to population ratio in the whole region." But he feels more could probably be done to promote efficiency, through the use of technology like computers, and possibly additional contracting out of work.

## Asking 1%

Council has already told municipal treasurer Jim McQueen to prepare the 1993 operating budget with a one per cent tax increase as a

## Cites Mississauga example of property tax discount

guideline.

"On an annual expenditure of approximately \$15 million, Mr. Best will be closely scrutinizing ways of eliminating a further \$150,000.

"On a budget of \$15 million, one

per cent is probably not going to be all that hard to find," Mr. Best said.

Mr. Best expects some good economic news, at least from a purchaser's perspective, with regard to tenders for municipal projects this

spring.

The councillor was a delegate at the recent Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) annual meeting in Toronto.

It's considered the most important

provincial conference regarding road projects, which make up a significant portion of municipal government budgets.

At the OGRA meetings, Mr. Best heard that tenders were expected to come in at 10 to 15 per cent less than last year, meaning substantial savings for municipal governments.

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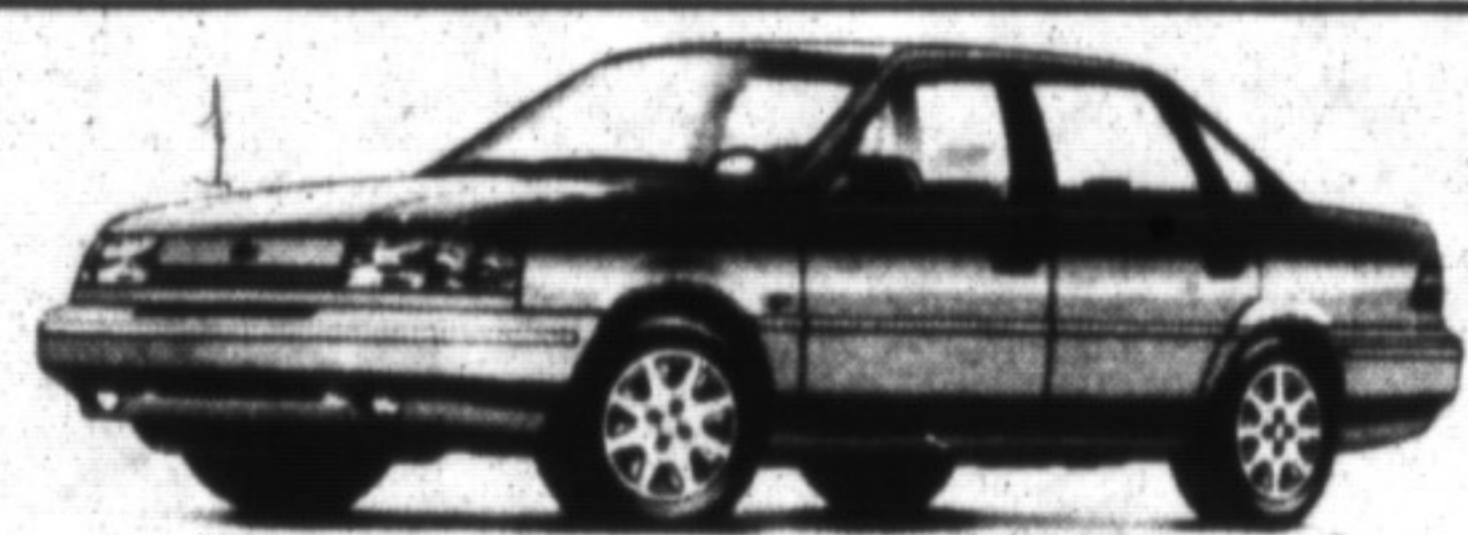
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