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Reformers meet with support, frustration

BRUCE STAPLEY
 Correspondent

The frustration was matched only by the high energy level as the Reform Party brought its message to the Stouffville Legion Hall Wednesday night.

Approximately 100 people came out to voice their anger with the current political situation, both federally and provincially, while asking the fledgling party's Markham/Whitchurch-Stouffville riding association how it planned to succeed where others had failed.

The audience was shown a video in which the party's national leader, Preston Manning, outlined Reform policy.

After local association spokesman Ged Stonehouse explained the task ahead for party members in the Markham/Whitchurch-Stouffville area, the floor was opened up to questions.

The audience was both skeptical and supportive. One man said he liked what the Reform Party was saying but asked if things would be any different if it was elected.

Stonehouse, who served two terms as president of the

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Welfare 'poor option' despite mounting caseloads

TRACY KIBBLE
 Staff Reporter

Collecting welfare remains a "poor option" compared to working, despite a rising need for assistance in York Region.

York Region Social Services Commissioner Peter Crichton said employment benefits outweigh welfare payments

despite reports to the contrary.

He was referring to an Apr. 10 article in the Financial Post, which stated welfare payouts "beat work in Ontario," Crichton said bits of information in the article are untrue, highly subjective and without foundation.

He said financial figures used in the article are high and mislead the public into believing welfare is better than

employment. A couple with two kids can get as much as \$1,542 a month; a family of four could get a total annual amount of cash and in-kind benefits of \$23,000.

This indicates that if earnings exceed \$25,000 a year a single earner in a family of four is better off working," Crichton said.

There have been several changes and

initiatives developed since May 1 to help people on welfare get back on track.

Those include four main objectives:

- ◆ to help people enter or re-enter the labor force - continued welfare for persons working full time but still in financial need.

- ◆ to provide benefits to those in greatest need - battered women, forced to leave the family home, to get automatic

welfare for three months.

- ◆ to increase fairness and accessibility and create a council made up of welfare recipients to provide advice to provincial government.

- ◆ to assist municipalities with their funding responsibilities - a 90 per cent subsidy (up from 80 per cent) to municipalities where more than 3.5 per cent of the population collects welfare.

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