

Health

Short-term stays help hospital serve more

JULIE CASPERSEN
Staff Reporter

Redevelopment at Markham Stouffville Hospital will allow more patients to be served without being admitted.

The hospital opened in the spring of 1990 and is already feeling the need to change some services and expand others as funding is cut and the population grows.

More birth rooms are in the blueprints along with an expansion of the ambulatory care unit where patients are treated at day clinics but not admitted to hospital.

John Barker, director of planning and corporate services, explained that the hospital is allowed to open 245 beds, but by admitting patients on the day of surgery instead of the night before and focusing on short-term stays instead of long-term care, the facility can operate with just over 200 beds.

"We'd be serving more people with the same amount of money," Barker said.

Long-term care patients, who would normally stay at the hospital full time, will be provided with support services and rehabilitation on an out-patient basis to release beds and allow the patients to live at home.

Plastic surgery, fractures, chemotherapy and diabetic treatment are some of the clinics offered at the local hospital on an out-patient basis, but Dr. Stephen McMahon, manager for ambulatory care, said last year his unit treated 16,000 people and the estimate for the coming year could reach 24,000.

With the redevelopment plans, McMahon hopes to add a chronic pain control clinic as well as a woman's gynecological unit where abnormal pap tests can be analyzed on site instead of sending the samples to a Scarborough facility.

And moving certain procedures from the operating room into ambulatory care would cut costs at the same time as cutting a person's time spent at the hospital.

But this change calls for a \$100,000

outlay toward laparoscopic surgery equipment which can be used for gall bladder removal, hernia repair and hysterectomies.

Other items on the Markham Stouffville Hospital shopping list are:

- ↳ a Holter scanner for the early detection of heart disease: \$75,000;

- ↳ a remote controlled patient lifter for the smooth and safe moving of chronic care patients: \$6,500;

- ↳ a temporary pacemaker that is connected with wires leading to a person's heart to regulate the beat: \$2,500;

- ↳ an ultrasonic sensor for easier detection of a fetal heart: \$1,500.

Director of the Mother Child Program Joanne MacLean said her area is in need of two more birthing rooms so women in labor won't have to share rooms.

None of these changes can be made without the help of the community. Wishing Wellness to the Neighborhood is a door-to-door campaign aimed at raising half the \$1 million price-tag attached to the entire renovation and

equipment-buying proposal.

Community and hospital volunteers will canvass Markham and Stouffville neighborhoods between September 25 and October 4 asking for donations while providing information about the hospital and its services and how the economic environment is affecting health care.

They also want to hear back from residents. "Good or bad, we want to hear it all," said Lisa McKeen, vice-president of the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation.

Service groups and local businesses can get involved in the fundraiser. Remax agents have already pledged support through a donation of a portion of their commissions, and are looking to host a fundraiser dance in the fall, McKeen said.

Residents can look for wishing well donation bins at the hospital and the fair with smaller versions scattered in shops throughout the towns.

Anyone wanting to volunteer can call the foundation office at 472-7059.

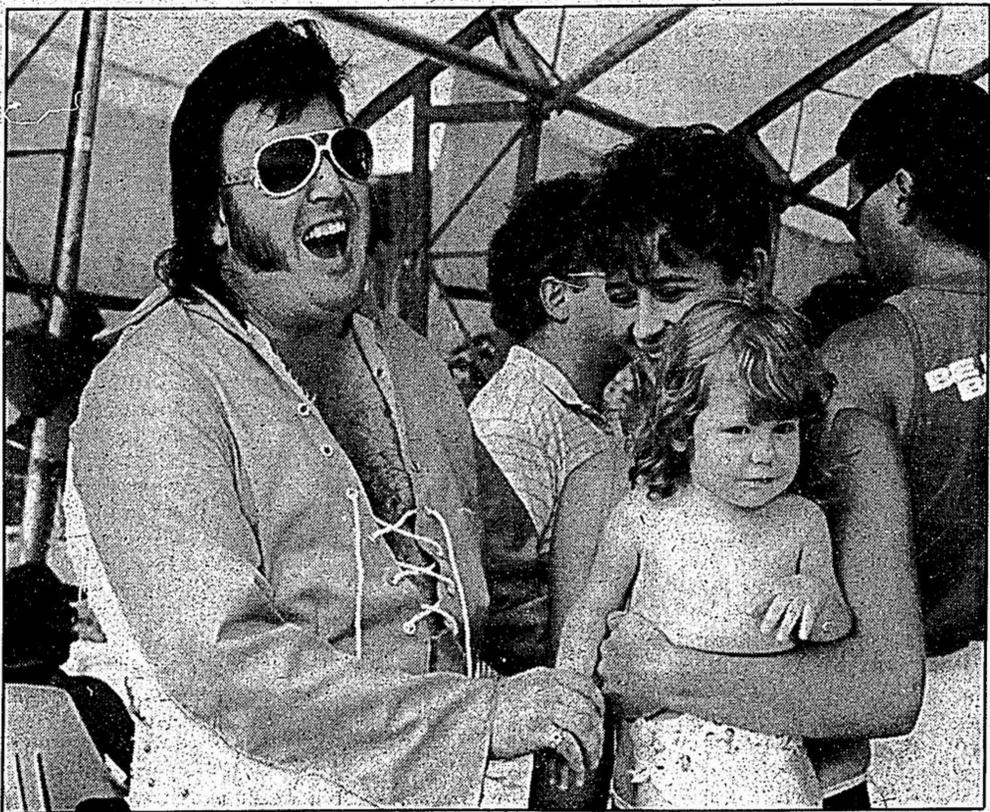


Photo: LORI EMMERSON

Kiss from the King

Deke Rivers (aka Elvis) meets Darlene O'Blends at the Stouffville Sales Barn. Uxbridge and Stouffville Elvis fans flocked to the all-day event.

Garbage collection not open for talks

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even though negotiations have already taken place with Miller Waste.

However, following the close of last Tuesday's meeting, officials had not publicly scheduled talks regarding the issue.

Ward 6 councillor Ken Prentice — who said he was hushed regarding the issue since the March decision to waive the contract — called the decision an "outrage."

Prentice said council had robbed the taxpayers of receiving the best possible price when it waived a competitive job-bidding policy.

"You just can't waive a tender policy worth millions of dollars. This whole thing council did flies in the face of its policy which requires business to be handled in a formal, open and business-like manner," Prentice told The Tribune last week.

Dewing said officials may still decide to call for tenders but will likely discuss the issue in private.

Tennis courts upgraded

Local officials approved spending about \$48,000 to resurface and upgrade two public tennis courts, it was decided recently.

Funds to repair both the Stouffville Memorial Park and Ballantrae Park courts will come out of the 1993 parks and recreation capital budget.

The in-town courts require \$30,465 worth of major resurfacing, replacing of fencing and gates and new net posts, while Ballantrae courts require \$11,235 worth of resurfacing.

Both courts will also receive a fibreglass membrane substance to seal the cracks in the court

surface. Two different contractors, from Mississauga and Richmond Hill were awarded the jobs.

Money saved

An article in the Aug. 11 *Tribune* entitled 'Taxpayers spend \$7,500 to fight \$3,200 tax bill' may have been unclear to some readers. It noted that the town's tax appeal will save more than \$60,000 in a five-year period through a successful battle with Revenue Canada.

The Tribune regrets any confusion.

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