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Economy

No go for Home Show: Arrigo

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce has been forced to cancel its annual Home Show this year - another victim of the long-standing recession, organizers say.

Chamber president Tony Arrigo said the executive met Wednesday night and decided to cancel the show because the "interest just isn't out there this year."

Arrigo said the sagging economy is being blamed for the lack of interest, but admitted the planned Easter weekend time slot could have been a factor.

"Easter weekend works well in Toronto (for Metro's annual home show) - it's a busy day for them - but this is Stouffville, who knows," Arrigo said.

It costs the chamber \$17,000 to run the annual event, or a

rental of 75 of the available 130 booths.

But the chamber had rented only 36 booths by this week, and that just wasn't good enough, he said.

"It's very discouraging. We contacted 500 businesses this year, more than any other year, but the money just isn't out there."

"There wasn't any choice," he said.

Stouffville can't afford any more taxis, council told

Whitchurch-Stouffville doesn't need another taxi service in the community when "business is down tremendously" with the few it already has, officials heard this week.

Pat O'Brien, who has owned and operated the town's most visible service, Stouffville Vet's Taxi since June 1992, pleaded with council Tuesday night not to grant any additional taxi licences when he is attempting to get his company off the ground.

"There is not a lot of business out there; people are only using taxis when they absolutely have to," O'Brien said.

But owner of the newly-founded Econo Limo Service, Glen McNeill, begs to differ.

McNeill insists the town "desperately needs a good, clean reliable taxi service."

McNeill, who is applying for a taxi licence, said he has 500 signatures to back up his claim - names of people who, he said, want better taxi service in the

community. "I've had numerous requests for taxi service, mostly off-hours," McNeill told officials.

He said he started a limousine service last December to answer the public's need for transportation, but added the bylaws which control limo services are too restrictive.

However, O'Brien urged officials not to issue McNeill a licence because it would hamper his chances of success in hard economic times.

"There's a recession out there, I'm sure you know. I have spent a great deal of money and time on this and putting more licences on the road would put a hardship on my existing business," O'Brien said.

"I don't want my money going down the drain - it's not a big business in Stouffville," O'Brien added.

A staff report to council states the town could feasibly increase its taxi licence number from 12 to 15 according

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Massive upgrade to bring Stouffville into 21st Century

□ New \$250,000 Hydro transformer sub-station to be built this summer

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Stouffville's Hydro commission will begin construction on a \$250,000 transformer "sub-station" this summer to overhaul and upgrade local power lines, *The Tribune* has learned.

The massive voltage conversion project - expected to span over the next eight to nine years - will replace and re-build out-of-date poles on Stouffville's older streets that have been erect since the 50s, said commission engineer Walter Metcalfe.

The project will also enable the commission to supply additional power to the community and steer it into the 21st century, Metcalfe said. "Some of these poles are 40 years old, and we really need to modernize them and upgrade the voltage to a more economical level," Metcalfe said.

The commission will build the high-tech transformer at its existing 10th Conc. location, just north of Main St. on the east side.

Metcalfe insisted the expansion plans will not hike local hydro rates next year because the commission is borrowing the money over a 10-year period.

"This won't impact rates - it won't affect the taxpayers at all because we've spread this over several years," Metcalfe said.

The commission has already received approval from Ontario Hydro to proceed with the project, but still needs a green light from the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, expected this week, he added. Under the Power Corporation Act of Ontario, municipalities must approve major spending of their local hydro commissions, Metcalfe said.

"We're very heavily regulated," he added.

The electrical engineer said last January that the commission's approved seven per cent hike for '93 was necessary to maintain regular maintenance programs, and that a cash flow problem left them no alternative but to borrow the money for the necessary upgrade project.

Metcalfe said this week that Ontario Hydro plans to build a new transformer station in "an undetermined location" in the Stouffville-Uxbridge area by the end of the decade to serve both communities, but until then the local commission must provide its own power. "We want to be ready and modernize our poles when this eventually happens," he concluded.

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