

Mayor Wayne Emmerson sends New Year's greetings

The year 1996 marked the town's 25th anniversary with many special events being held to recognize the many changes which have occurred over the past 25 years and focussing on our achievements. My personal thanks to all who volunteered their time and efforts to make these events so successful.

As 1996 draws to a close, council can look back with a feeling of satisfaction. Council and staff worked hard to maintain a 0-per-cent tax increase in 1996, and at the same time maintain the same level of services to our

residents. In addition, our hydro rates have been substantially lowered. However, many difficult decisions had to be made, least of which was the downsizing of staff. This was accomplished after many hours of deliberation and although it was a difficult time for those concerned, we feel we made the right decisions.

The Ballantrae/Musselman Lake Water Project was a major achievement with the roads structure now nearing completion. In addition, Consumers Gas is being installed in the Ballantrae/Musselman Lake area.

And 1997 will see the following projects come to fruition:

- the second ice pad should open

in February.

- the Stouffville Secondary Plan will be completed in the spring at no cost to the taxpayer,
- a new fire hall in Ballantrae,
- York-Durham Heritage Railway will be in full swing,
- new train station,
- new public school.

And I also intend to set up a committee consisting of a representative from each ward to investigate the possibility of an indoor pool. Council in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce is happy to announce the hiring of an economic development officer, whose salary will be divided 50/50 between the town and existing businesses - this enterprise is the first of its kind in Ontario. The economic development officer's main function will be to encourage new businesses to locate in Whitchurch-Stouffville and also to help existing businesses wherever possible.

We have had our share of disappointments. Over the past few months much controversy has taken place with regard to the library/municipal office project, and to date council, together with the library board, is still trying to reach a satisfactory conclusion. We were also disappointed that the Youth Centre at the Recreation



EMMERSON

Complex, in spite of the hard work by all involved, has not been as successful as anticipated but we will continue to consider other programs for our youth.

Major development is taking place in town and council is looking forward to negotiating hook-up to the "big pipe" and a new well to supply our east end. However, industrial development is still very slow in the Gormley area but the economic forecast for 1997 looks promising so hopefully we will see an improvement in that area.

The Mayor's Youth Committee has proven to be very successful, having raised over \$20,000 through the Mayor's Annual Golf Tournament and generous donations.

Many residents have voiced their concerns over the possibility of amalgamation. Let me reassure you, I am working hard to ensure that Whitchurch-Stouffville will not lose its identity and will remain a municipality in its own right for many more years.

On Dec. 31, I will once again host the second annual Mayor's New Year's Eve Celebrations with sleigh rides and fireworks in the Town Park.

This proved to be a great success last year, and we are hoping for a bigger turnout this year with lots of fun for the whole family.

Let me assure you that council will continue to work together as a team on behalf of you, our residents.

I wish each and every one, good health, prosperity and much joy for 1997. Happy New Year!

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

ED HAKONSON



Ed has proven himself to be one of the best sports in town in 1996, sticking with his Spirit of Stouffville Junior A hockey team through a trying second season. Hopefully, he will be rewarded with even better fan support in 1997.

Way to hang in there Ed!

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