

Elvis set to shake town at Country Market

JORDAN H. GREEN
Staff Writer

I'm all shook up, uh uh — only in Stouffville. The annual Elvis festival is set for this weekend at Stouffville Country Market, so break out your blue suede shoes.

"We started it five years ago," said Rob Shannon, the market's manager. "It was to bring Elvis fans to the market, it was something different."

There will be performances from the various Elvis. "Last year we had the Graceliners," said Shannon. "(They) are four to five women that dress up as Elvis."

Fans of the late king will be rocking and rolling around the market dressed as their idol and there is a contest for the best Elvis.

"We give away cash," said Shannon. "We have four categories — best vocal, best appearance, best overall act and a lucky draw."

First prize in all categories is \$50, while second place winners take home \$25. "Wil Chambers won last year, he also won a thing in Collingwood," said Shannon, referring to the huge Elvis convention in Collingwood last month that attracted hundreds of Elvis fans.

"We have people that will sell different Elvis coms and memorabilia," he added.

The fifth annual Memories of Elvis weekend runs Aug. 16 to 17.

Customers rewarded by Hydro

JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

It's official: Stouffville has the lowest hydro rates in Ontario.

The province's Municipal Electric Association has just published its annual comparative monthly rate report, listing Stouffville as the leader in delivering low hydro rates.

The average Stouffville customer gets a \$76.63-monthly (average) rate, compared to \$81.02 in Newmarket, \$81.15 in Markham, \$82.12 in Uxbridge and \$92.30 in Toronto.

In terms of electricity, Stouffville "out shone" 306 utilities across Ontario, said local electric utility manager Nick Tatone.

Eighteen months ago, Whitchurch-Stouffville Hydro Electric Commission introduced a radical change, including a restructuring program. It involved eliminating

six jobs, selling assets and contracting the work out. Results were immediate — an instant 11-per cent rate reduction was realized.

Last February, local hydro commissioners predicted they'd see \$344,000 in saving this year. They were wrong. They saved \$650,000.

Customers reaped the rewards. The town's 3,200 customers each got a rebate — a \$100 credit applied to the monthly bill.

Tatone stressed that there are many issues facing the utility industry today. "Changes in the electricity industry are taking place world wide," said Tatone.

Restructuring is needed, he stressed. "It's a must to survive," said Tatone.

The local commission is looking at extending its boundaries to service such hamlets as Musselman's Lake. Amalgamation with others within York Region is being considered.

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"We have to move forward. The ratepayers have to benefit," he said.

The MacDonald report (commissioned by the province to look at the delivery of electricity) recommends that Ontario Hydro gets out of the retail business altogether. "Ontario Hydro is trying to replace utilities as the retailers of electricity," said Tatone.

He added, "Ontario Hydro has developed a \$60 million customer system that duplicates the services offered by local utilities."

Utility officials across Ontario are waiting to see how the government interprets the reform of energy services.

The province will look at size, boundaries, new roles and responsibilities and ways to "ensure efficient performance of utilities," said Tatone.

Town reps help draft report on York's environment

JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

When York Region took the first step last month to prepare a major environmental report, designed to protect our tomorrows, Stouffville was at the table.

The report, expected to be finalized in 18 months, covers key environmental factors: air, land water and social aspects.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Councillors Mike Johnson and Ivanka Bradley along with local resident Ken Jobe, representing the Sierra Club of Canada, joined 70 others in the one-day task of co-ordinating the process linked to the region-wide State of the Environment Report.

This document is expected to set the standards for improving the environmental quality of the community, said Dr. Dean Middleton, epistemologist with the Region of York through a letter written for the participants.

"The Health Services Department in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental organizations, hopes to produce a document that describes the condition of the biophysical environmental as well as factors that affect or are affected by the state of the biophysical environmental," Middleton stated.

Middleton invited environmental leaders from government and non-government organizations to be partners in sharing their expertise.

Bradley said the release of this document should "initiate an

improved attitude by our municipal administrators that to prioritize and include measures to enhance sustainable ecosystems within future planning proposals is a necessity."

To do otherwise would be to "jeopardize the future health of residents living within our com-

munity," she added.

The group includes the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Metro Toronto Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Ministry of Health, University of Guelph, Rouge Park Alliance, and the

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municipalities of Markham, King and Vaughan.

Watson said while it is "refreshing to see someone trying to identify and document the environ-

mental concerns" and in the future hope to have them dealt with, "it was very disheartening to speak with many representatives from the conservation authorities who have an abundance of information that is either being ignored or underutilized by our municipalities.

Harris gets an earful

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really unbelievable the amount of change and the amount of work ahead."

Municipalities outside Metro are challenging the numbers presented by the province on the cost of services they will soon be forced to pick up — housing, welfare, child care, GO Transit, ambulance and police to name a few.

"There is a \$47 million difference in the numbers in York Region alone," Cousens said. "We have to challenge that and we have to look at all the numbers, in total."

The task force, which plans to have its first meeting by the end of this week, hopes to come up with

a set of figures all stakeholders can agree on as they move towards implementing the province's massive changes.

"Once we all agree and get those numbers on the table we can work on how to implement the changes," Cousens said.

Also on the table was the thorny issue of tax assessment, another responsibility municipalities will be expected to shoulder come next spring.

But Cousens said Harris seems sincere in not wanting to save money by raising property taxes.

"He seems committed to the idea that property taxes remain revenue neutral," he said. "I don't know how he'll accomplish that."

Water restrictions in place

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residents with even house numbers can water their lawns on even days, while residents of odd numbered houses can water their lawns on odd days from 6 to 10 a.m. and from 8:30 to 10 p.m.

While the restriction is in place, an all out water ban has been averted

in Whitchurch-Stouffville, so far.

Residents of neighboring communities are not as fortunate. In Newmarket and Aurora, a total ban on the outdoor use of water was put in to place yesterday. This means residents of Newmarket and Aurora must stop watering the lawn, filling the pool and washing the car.



BUYING BAUBLES: Candice Rabe, 10, helps sister Kirsten, 3, with a jewellery purchase at the recent Fran Sainsbury garage sale on Ninth Line in Stouffville.

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