

# Drywallers want strike to end

**MIKE ADLER**  
Staff Reporter

Housing construction in York Region could be held up by a drywallers' strike.

Local drywallers are meeting with their employer, the Interior Systems Contractors Association, today, trying to end a strike which began May 1.

"Almost all of the 3-700 homes under construction in the Greater Toronto Area are being built with union drywallers, so the strike could have a big effect if it lasts," said Hugh Laird, negotiator for the contractors.

"It's going to delay closings," Laird said yesterday. "The longer they're out, the

more serious it becomes." Local 675 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters-Drywall Acoustic is asking for a 41 per cent raise. The contractors' final offer to the union was 7.5 per cent.

Laird said the average drywallers already makes \$55,000 a year, based on a rate of 14 cents a square foot.

A spokesperson for the union could not be reached yesterday. It's not known if members of other building trade unions will stay away from construction sites, Laird said.

The Greater Toronto Home Builders Association, representing developers, isn't directly involved but its members are caught in the middle, said spokesperson

Kelly Patchet.

"If they were able to find common ground tomorrow, the impact (of the strike) would be pretty minimal," Patchet said yesterday.

Despite being neutral in the dispute, however, the builders are stressing that consumers are "price sensitive" and higher prices will kill sales.

"This is not the late '80s. It's not 'build it and they will come,'" she said, arguing sales are being split between 540 new home sites in the GTA.

"If trade costs go up substantially, we're pretty much saying (to drywallers), you're going to have less to do," said Patchet.

## POLICE

# Thieves steal \$42K forklift

Thieves made off with - or perhaps rode off on - a \$42,000 forklift they stole from a Stouffville company last Tuesday.


Police say sometime around 7 p.m., an unknown number of suspects pried the padlocks at Forest Fence and Deck Co. on Woodbine Ave.

They removed tools, lumber and the forklift, causing \$1,000 damage.

Anyone with information is asked to call 881-1221 or CrimeStoppers at 222-TIPS.

~ Kathleen Griffin

Fax letters: 640-5477



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