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**23** Keith Barrick is matching his dad's success on the go-kart circuit.

**ARTS & CULTURE CALENDAR**

**EVENT:** York Symphony Orchestra  
**WHEN:** Sunday, Oct. 18, 7:30 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Markham Theatre, (416) 410-0860



**21** A little soap and water can go a long way to keeping your family healthy.

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**SATURDAY FOCUS**

*Airport will be built quicker than ministry says, group warns*

## Protest takes flight

Residents will taste jet fuel in the air, protesters warn

BY MIKE ADLER  
 STAFF WRITER

**T**housands of flyers drumming up support against a possible airport in Pickering have been handed out to residents in Stouffville and Markham.

This week, supporters of VOCAL, a Claremont-based anti-airport group, have stood at busy Stouffville intersections during the morning rush hour, giving maps of a fully developed Pickering Airport to motorists.

Yesterday, however, a Transport Canada official said the map, presented by the protest group as a ministry document, is not accurate.

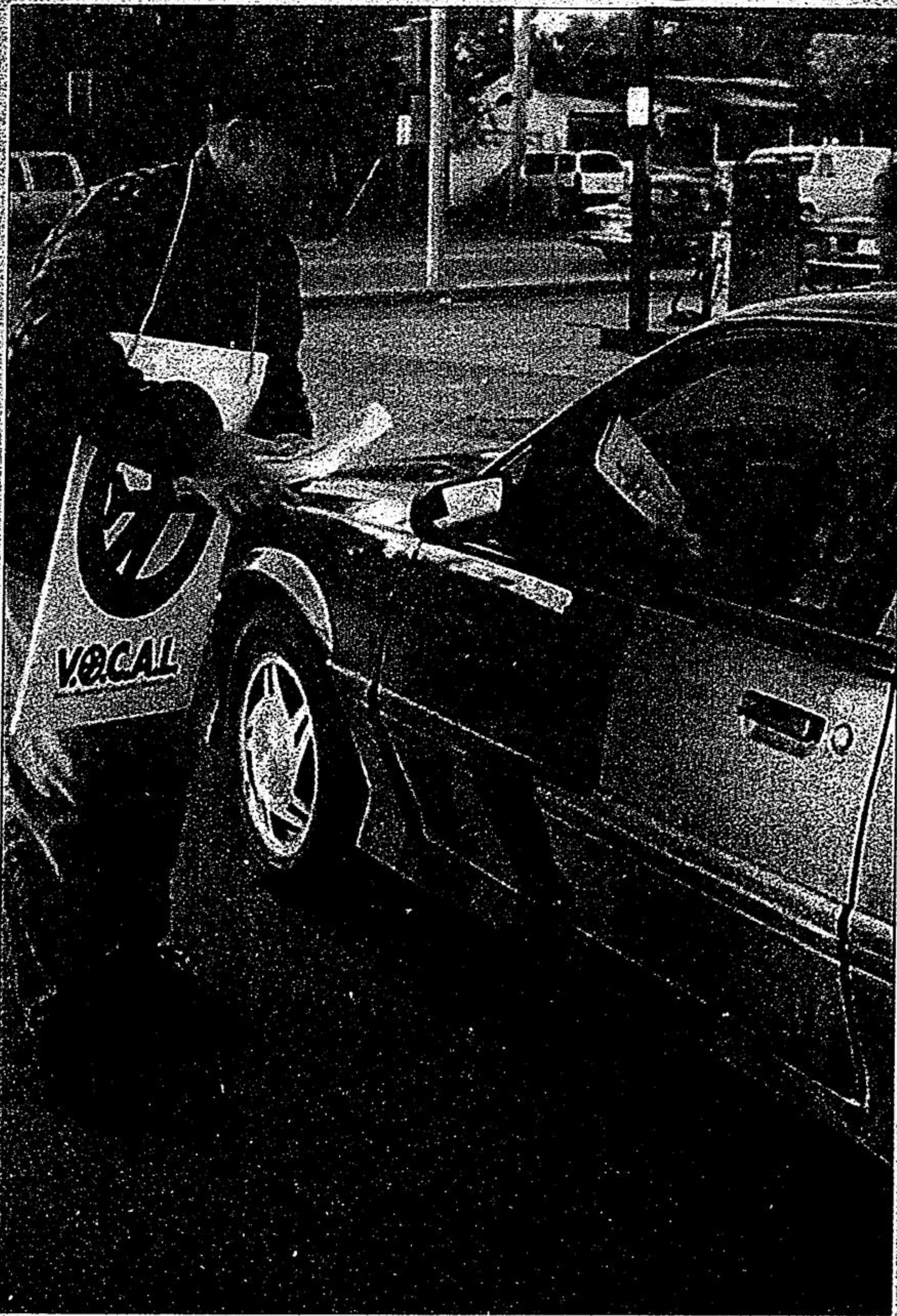
Residents are being warned they will taste jet fuel in the air and won't enjoy their backyards after 2007 — when VOCAL says the airport will open unless it's stopped.

"We're talking a huge cargo airport," said Rick Shaban, who gave out hundreds of pages yesterday at Stouffville's Main Street and Ninth Line intersection.

"Is this good for business? Absolutely. Is this good for the residents? Absolutely not."

Although Transport Minister David Collette has repeatedly said any airport on the federal lands south and east of Stouffville is at least 15 or 20 years away, members of Shaban's group — whose full name is Voters Organized to Cancel the Airport Lands — are stirring up York and Durham Region residents now to fight a federal plan to make the vast holdings a permanent airport site.

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PHOTO/CHERYL JOHNSON

VOCAL (Voters Organized to Cancel the Airport Lands) member Rick Shaban stops cars at Ninth Line and Stouffville Road Thursday and Friday during morning rush hour to hand out the group's literature against a proposed Pickering Airport. Stouffville life will dramatically change if the airport is built, they say.

## Tax hike wars force politicians to protest

*Tories ignoring business concerns*

BY LISA QUEEN  
 STAFF WRITER

Municipal politicians from the Greater Toronto Area will protest on the front steps of Queen's Park next month unless the province relieves the property tax blow small businesses are facing.

"Does it take a death in the emergency room for the government to realize there's a crisis in health care?" Markham Mayor Don Cousens asked Friday at the monthly meeting of GTA mayors and regional chairpersons.

"Does it take the death of small business for the province to understand we have a (tax) issue?"

Cousens, a former Tory cabinet minister who is organizing the rally, said mayors, councillors and regional chairpersons have no choice but to threaten to hold a public demonstration.

He pointed out York Region has requested to meet with provincial Treasurer Ernie Eves for the last month to address concerns of business owners facing tax hikes of 100 to 1,000 per cent because of Ontario's new property assessment system. But Eves hasn't responded.

"What am I supposed to do, say I'm going to sit around waiting for the phone to ring?" Cousens said.

He wants assurances the province will tackle both short and long-term problems.

For instance, York is asking Queen's Park to contribute \$5.4 million toward a one-time rebate for businesses saddled with substantial tax increases. The province has until Nov. 8 to respond.

Municipalities are also demanding the province

See RALLY, page 2



**DON COUSENS**  
 Markham mayor organizing rally at Queen's Park.

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