

Airport battle gathers speed

Group opposing Pickering site to upgrade lobby efforts

BY MIKE ADLER
STAFF WRITER

Opponents of a future airport at Pickering are ready to start a second wave of actions in York Region, organizer Steven Frederick says.

VOCAL, a Clarendon-based group that passed thousands of flyers in Stouffville and Markham last month — showing what VOCAL says is a large airport planned for the federal lands nearby — was to supply a new handbill to its volunteers last night.

The volunteers will sweep towns on both sides of the Durham-York boundary, and will address Stouffville Council Nov. 17, Frederick said yesterday.

VOCAL is doing all it can to bury the airport before Dec. 31, the twice-extended federal deadline for comments on re-designating 18,600 expropriated acres of farms in Pickering and Markham as an airport site.

Frederick's latest press release turned a reported comment by Louis Turpen, CEO of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, into an admission that building a Pickering airport "is unnecessary."

Turpen, whose GTAA is the leading contender to build Pickering Airport, was quoted in the Toronto Star saying renovations to Pearson International Airport should make a second international airport in the area unnecessary until 2030.

Turpen shrugged off VOCAL's attacks this week, and suggested the authority will be closer to a starting date for a Pickering facility after the designation is done.

Federal Transport Minister David Collette is said to be thinking about the proposal. "We're giving it due consideration but no decision has been made," Transport spokesperson Laura Cooke said.



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