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Klees considered leadership material

From page 1.

have begun to roll in, asking him to attend functions in Calgary, including a fundraiser for Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and to meet with the Reform caucus members in Ottawa.

Klees' announcement surprised local Reformers, who said they didn't know he was considering the leadership.

"I've always thought Frank was clearly leadership material and he has been involved in the Canadian Alliance. But his announcement did surprise me, only because I hadn't heard from any people associated with Frank that this was his intention," said Paul Pivato of the York North Reform Association.

Critics say, unlike other Ontario Tories who had been suggested as possible leadership

hopefuls, Klees isn't well known.

But supporters say that won't hurt him long-term.

"Frank commands tremendous support with Reformers here in York Region and the leadership process will raise his profile. He is charismatic and a great speaker. It's a mistake to underestimate him. Similar talk was raised locally when he first announced he was going to run for MPP," said Pivato.

Should Klees decide to throw his name into the leadership race, Pivato says he will have to make himself known outside the province to compete with Reform leader Preston Manning and potential candidate Stockwell Day, the Tory treasurer of Alberta.

"Clearly, he would come into the race with less of a profile than Stockwell Day or Manning, but I think he could quickly galvanize support

I think a lot of people in Ontario are looking for a candidate like Frank," said Pivato.

But Klees sees an advantage in entering the race without an established reputation.

"Quite frankly, I see it as an opportunity to enter the race as someone from Central Canada with a fresh face who doesn't carry any baggage. Sometimes that is an advantage."

Ontario Tories had hoped Environment Minister Tony Clement, Consumer and Commercial Relations Minister Bob Runciman or longtime backroom strategist Tom Long would emerge as potential leaders.

Long is considered a good speaker but has not held any elected office.

Klees said he will not announce his decision until after March 25, the day when results of the Reform Party referendum on the Canadian Alliance will be released.

Driver error accounts for majority of crashes

From page 1.

"We have to use safety to help focus our resources. We are ready to change the trend of collisions and change it for the better. We had 6,000 collisions last year, but we could have had a fair bit more. These were only the reported accidents."

According to Philip, more than 90 per cent of all accidents are the result of driver error.

The program will prioritize the areas for safety reviews by comparing the number and types of collisions to the road and traffic characteristics.

Additionally, staff will recommend roadway changes to reduce collisions.

"The police have determined driver error and over-driving the limits of the roadway are

the main causes of accidents," said Philip. "We are not necessarily addressing aggressive driving and road rage through this program, but we can look for areas where drivers make a mistake and then assist them."

"We can tell drivers where they are approaching a less forgiving portion of the roadway. We can focus more on assisting drivers that are unfamiliar with the road, giving them a heads up of what's coming on the road."

Over the past two years, York Regional Police have focused on traffic and road safety, including doubling fines for speeders in front of elementary schools and monitoring intersections for vehicles running red lights and stop signs. Recently, officers spent two hours stopping 800 cars travelling westbound on Hwy. 9 in Newmarket, explaining the dangerous stretch

of highway to commuters and the fact two people have died in accidents since September 1999.

And this year, the force will also start a year-round RIDE program.

A database of roadway characteristics, traffic volumes and the corresponding safety level for each road section will be completed by June, with the information forwarded to the police and used by regional staff in the design and planning of future projects. Funding requirements will then be identified.

Next year, officials will begin an awareness program and form partnerships with other road authorities and academic institutions.

Reviews will continue throughout 2002 and 2003.

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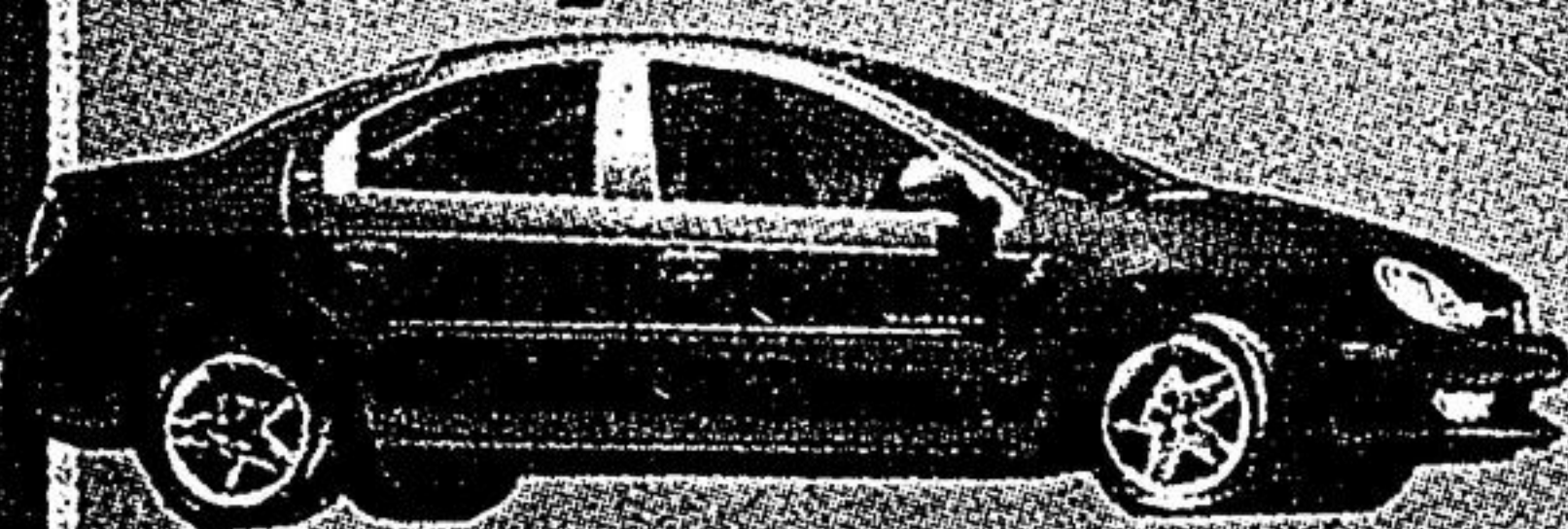
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