

Radar board tattles on speeders

Displaying drivers' speeds has reduced aggressive driving in other municipalities

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Speeding motorists take note: Take your foot off the gas pedal, we know how fast you're going.

Whitchurch-Stouffville is taking a pro-active approach to combat heavy-footed motorists by using a mobile radar message board that displays drivers' speeds.

The radar board has already been used successfully in Richmond Hill and Aurora, and it's about to be moved from location to location in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The unit tells motorists — and everyone else in the area — how fast the driver is going. When a vehicle drives by, the speed is recorded and flashed on a board for all to see.

The radar board remains at the same location for a day or two, moving on to other problem areas based on requests from residents.

Last week, Whitchurch-Stouffville council gave the nod to the local Road Watch committee to buy a \$6,000 radar board.

The purchase marks the third in York Region, with Richmond

Hill and Aurora using radar boards during the past two years.

Robert Cowie, a traffic analyst with the Town of Richmond Hill, said the radar board has deterred speeding. In Richmond Hill, the unit operates from Monday to Friday.

"Residents are reporting they notice a reduction of speeding in their area when the unit is in place," said Cowie. "They're slowing down."

The mobile radar system has also worked well in Aurora, said Ken Laupee, the town's operations services manager.

"It's a good concept and based on the feedback we're getting from our residents, the radar works," Laupee said.

But there is a down side. At times, drivers will use the radar display to see how fast they can go in a brief time span.

"Yes, once in a while it gets tested this way. But overall, it's a good thing for the community," Cowie said.

Feisty drivers aren't the only unintended use for the units. "Sometimes the radar picks up birds when they're in a dive

mode," said Laupee.

Whitchurch-Stouffville residents have long suggested that speeding in the municipality, including in the hamlets and rural areas, is getting worse.

"Something had to be done," said Road Watch spokesperson Herb Bell, a long time resident and retired teacher.

*If a speeder is spotted,
the licence plate number
can be anonymously
recorded.*

While the mobile unit is managed by the municipality in Richmond Hill and Aurora, in Whitchurch-Stouffville, it's under the umbrella of Road Watch. "It's a people program," Bell said. "The people run it."

Whitchurch-Stouffville was one of the first municipalities in Ontario to adopt Road Watch, a community program designed to

catch motorists violating traffic laws. The program is growing province-wide, Bell pointed out.

While Road Watch signs are displayed at each end of town and 12 Road Watch mailboxes are in place to help citizens report bad drivers, the mobile radar is expected to further improve driving habits, Bell said.

Surveillance programs hinge on community involvement, Bell stressed. He advised motorists to stay alert, and to watch for children, cyclists and pedestrians. "The nice weather brings everyone outdoors."

If a speeder is spotted by a member of the public, the licence plate number can be anonymously recorded on a report card.

The card can then be placed in one of the boxes to be set up in town. In the past year, 96 complaints have been forwarded to York Regional Police.

Aggressive drivers who have been reported to police receive a letter saying their bad driving was noticed by a citizen. If police get two or more report cards on one individual, the motorist could end up in court.

Lloydtown residents advised to boil water

BY DAWN LIERSCH
Staff Writer

Lloydtown residents have been warned to boil their water before consumption after tests showed almost half of the hamlet's private wells are contaminated with high levels of bacteria, including the deadly E. coli responsible for the Walkerton tragedy.

The results turned up during water tests to determine whether Lloydtown residents should be hooked up to Schomberg's municipal water supply. Engineers found high bacteria levels in 20 out of 65 private wells, King Township Mayor Margaret Black reported in a news release Friday.

Black said staff from the township and the region have visited the affected properties in Lloydtown to notify residents of the situation.

Residents were warned not to consume the well water without boiling it for at least 10 minutes, she said.

Earlier this month, regional officials warned residents on private water supplies to sample the water every six months or whenever the supply is in question, after learning of the rising death toll in Walkerton due to E. coli.

They warned shallow private wells are susceptible to bacterial contamination, particularly during flooding.

Lloydtown's water woes may have resulted from heavy rain in May, Black said.

Water sample bottles are available at municipal offices and the samples must be taken to 22 Prospect St., Newmarket or 10 Trench St., Richmond Hill (York Central Hospital) between 8:30 a.m. and noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays for testing.

For more information on water sampling or test results, contact York Region Health Services at (905) 895-4511 or 1-800-361-5653.

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Polo for Heart for everyone

You don't have to be royalty to play polo, but it helps if you own a horse or two.

"Unfortunately, when most people think of polo, they think of Prince Charles or the rich people cavorting around in Palm Beach or Santa Barbara," said Cliff Sifton, chairperson of this year's Polo for Heart event.

There will be seven visiting teams this year, including a team from Ireland, competing in 10 matches — two per day — over five days June 16, 17, 18, 24 and 25.

Tickets are available at the gate for \$10 and there is no admission charge for children under 12 years. Gates open at 10:30 a.m., with games at noon and 1:30 p.m. The centre is on Leslie Street, south of Bloomington Road. Call (416) 789-7100 for more information.