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3 Earth Day 2002 will literally take flight this weekend in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Firefighters vs. police charity hockey game
WHEN: Sunday, 2-5 p.m. (see page 17)
WHERE: Stouffville Arena, Ninth Line



25 Dust off your tackle box. Tips on where to catch the big ones this spring nearby.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2002

TO REACH US: (905) 640-2612

Education minister will have to pass tests

York teachers, boards sizing up Witmer

BY STEFANIA RIZZI
Staff Writer

The appointment of former teacher and school trustee Elizabeth Witmer as education minister may not be enough to heal the rocky relationship between teachers and the government, a union president argues.

"They can't mend bridges. The damage has already been done," said David Clegg, president of the York Region branch of Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. "Symbolically, considering the (Tories) first education minister (John Snobelen) did not graduate from high school, they appear to be dedicated, but it will take action and concrete change.

"Her previous experience in education is encouraging, but as for the latitude she'll have in cabinet and her ability to look for compromise, we'll have to wait and see," he said.

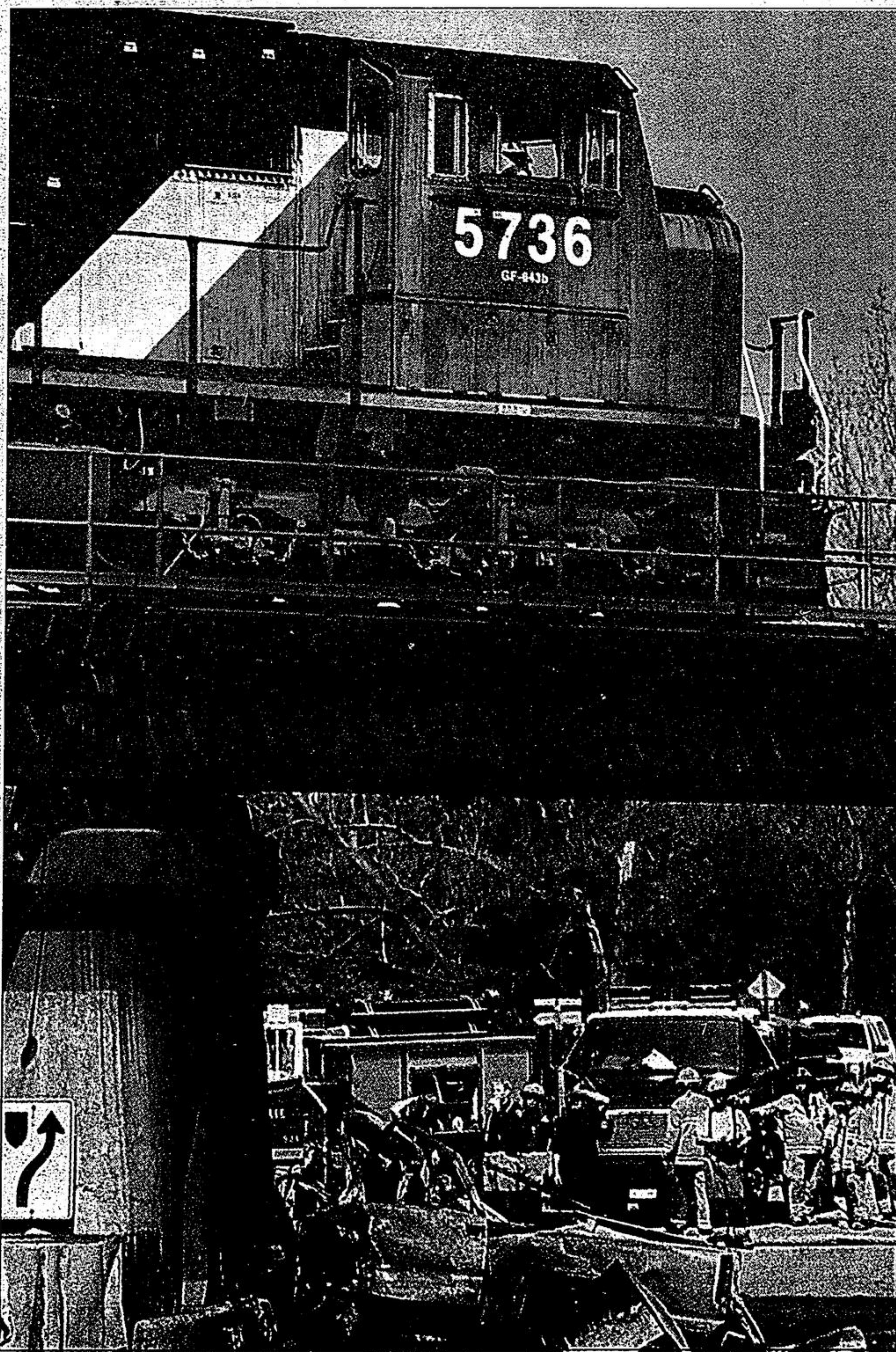
As part of the cabinet shuffle announced Monday by new Premier Ernie Eves, Ms Witmer, former environment minister and leadership candidate, was appointed deputy premier and Minister of Education.

Former education minister Janet Ecker has been promoted to finance.

As Education Minister, Ms Witmer will be responsible for

See **TEACHERS**, page 8.

At least one dead in fiery crash



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

The burned-out hulk of a pick-up truck lies underneath the railway trestle at Woodbine Avenue and Vandorf Road in Vandorf Wednesday. Police said the pick-up was westbound on Vandorf Road, before slamming into the concrete trestle support. At least one person died in the crash and fire. Two men attempted to rescue the driver. See story on page 5.

Residents oppose Lebovic plans

2,600 homes in 10 years too much, marathon meeting told

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

A developer's plan to build 90 homes on a 10-acre site in southeast Stouffville came under fire from area residents and members of Whitchurch-Stouffville council at a public hearing held Tuesday.

Developer Joe Lebovic of Lebovic Enterprises listened for close to three hours as residents outlined their concerns linked to his 10-year plan to build about 2,600 homes on 250 acres with frontage on O'Brien Avenue, the Ninth Line, Thicketwood Boulevard and Hoover Park Drive.

Even though Andrew McNeely, Whitchurch-Stouffville's manager of planning, stressed that the meeting was held to deal specifically with the first segment of the development plan, made up of the 90 homes and four reserve residential blocks to be reserved for parklands, those attending opted instead to address all three phases of the proposed subdivision.

Mr. McNeely told the standing-room-only crowd that start-up for both the preliminary construction and the roadwork for the first phase could begin as early as late summer while the major work could get underway in 2003 when the Big Pipe (the York Durham Sewer System) is expected to arrive in Stouffville.

If town council approves the housing plan, access to the 90 homes will be from Hoover Park Drive and Thicketwood Boulevard. On

See **RESIDENTS**, page 17.

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