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# Pesticide use only as last resort, region decides

BY JEFF MITCHELL  
Staff Writer

York Region will pursue its goal of reduced pesticide use through guidelines that call for chemicals on public properties only as a last resort.

The guidelines, which call for non-chemical management of pests and plant health, were drawn up by a regional task force in response to "growing public concern over pesticide use", regional health protection director Oryst Zyhar told the health committee last week.

While the region has no authority to legislate the

use of pesticides on private property or lands owned by other public entities, it hopes to lead by example with its limited use of chemicals, Mr. Zyhar said.

"It is hoped these pesticide reduction guidelines will be adopted by area municipalities, school boards and conservation authorities," he said.

The guidelines will apply to numerous regional departments in their management of regional lands, Mr. Zyhar said.

The region leases 40 per cent of its properties and owns the rest.

The guidelines will also figure in as future contracts for maintenance of region-owned properties are awarded to landscapers.

They are compatible with a number of the region's other policies regarding green space management and public health, he said.

And while the guidelines are intended to greatly reduce the use of pesticides beginning in 2003, they will not result in chemicals being phased out absolutely.

Mr. Zyhar said there are certain circumstances, including instances where food production, forestry uses and public safety are at issue, when pesticides will be required.

"The guidelines are not intended to be a total

See INPUT, page 13.

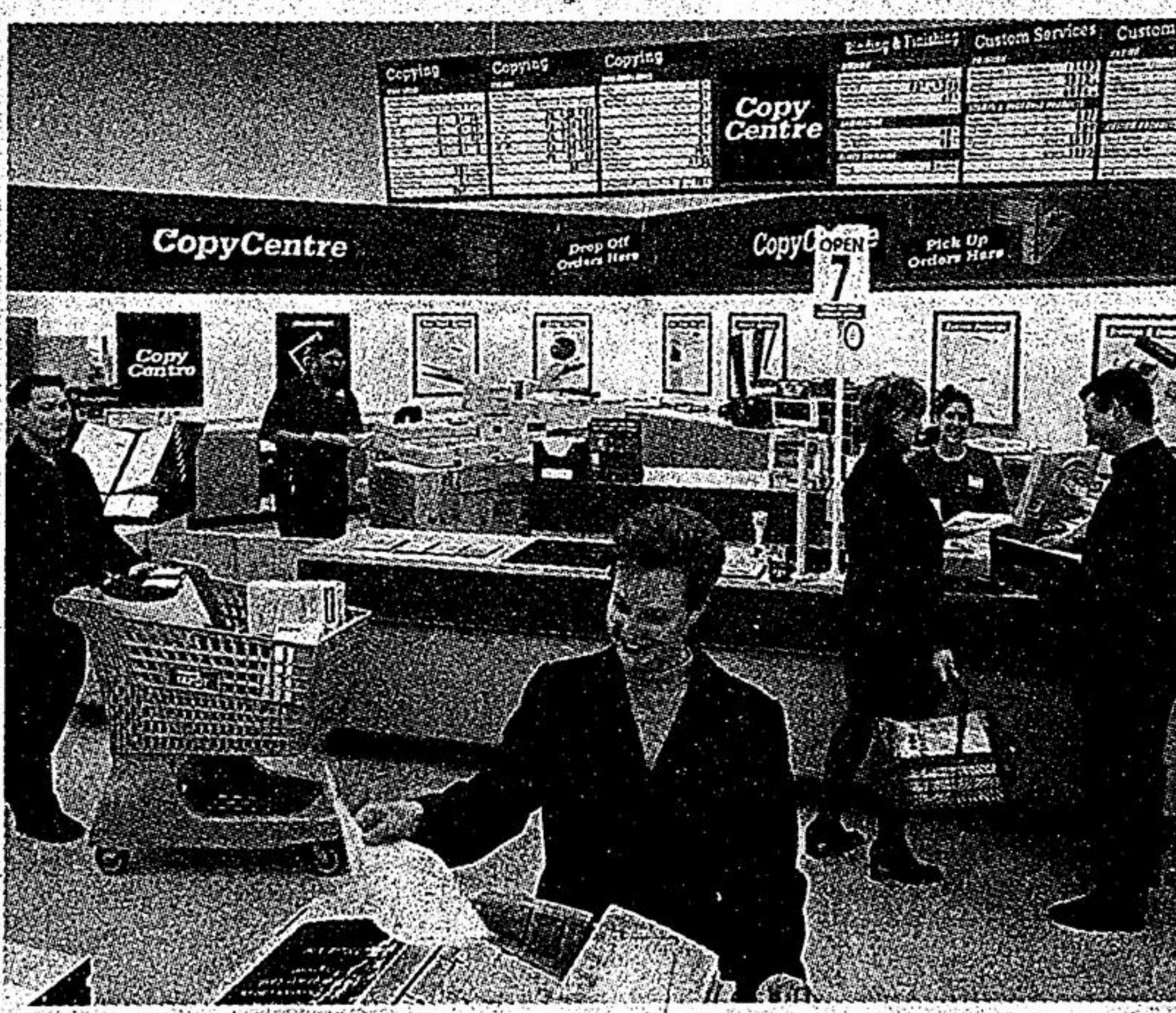
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Friday, May 17th  
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Sunday, May 26th  
Open Jam with Pierre..... 2:00-7:00 pm