

# Let us deny license renewals to non-paying drivers: 407

From page 12.

he recalled: "There are stories of customers being on hold for half an hour."

Because some customers honestly couldn't reach a representative, Mr. Albers said, 407 asked the province to suspend a controversial practice: denying license plate renewal for customers who wouldn't pay.

"It was our decision, but we went to the ministry to see if it agreed with that."

A private enterprise able to block license renewal was an arrangement "unique around the world," said Mr.

Albers, and the 407 — which sends out 1.4 million bills each month to four provinces, 37 states and Mexico — wants it restarted.

"There is no way we can prevent a violator from using the highway if they're not paying their bill," he said.

"The only way you can catch them is if you have a hammer and that hammer is plate denial."

The 407 launches its new customer-call system July 9, along with easier-to-read billing and instant payment at kiosks in Markville Shopping Centre in Markham and the Promenade in

*'The government sold 407 users down the drain.'*

Thornhill.

Mr. Albers said the highway administrators also hope this summer to eliminate a 1.5-kilometre bottleneck around Pine Valley by adding extra lanes, and to open all ramps on the partially-closed Woodbine Avenue interchange in Markham.

Eventually, the consortium believes it can present customers with bills on-line, and give them the opportunity to change addresses and plate numbers.

The province won't make a decision on plate denial until Transportation

Minister Norm Sterling is satisfied customer service has been improved and a fair dispute resolution process is in place, said Bill Parish, spokesperson for Mr. Sterling.

Liberal MPP Gerry Phillips said granting the power of plate denial is inappropriate.

A persistent critic of the Tory government's deal to sell the highway, Mr. Phillips said the province should have sold it to whoever would give users the best deal, not who would pay the province most.

"The government sold 407 users down the drain," he said.

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This message brought to you as a community service of the Economist & Sun/Tribune

## Charges laid after Milliken brawl sends two to hospital

Three men are charged and three more sought after a brutal brawl in Milliken last week which left two victims bloodied, one requiring surgery.

Two victims, 20 and 23, were sitting in a car on Dolson Court — a small, dead-end street — last Sunday when three cars pulled up and surrounded them.

Six people jumped out and began smashing the victims' car. When the victims stepped out, they were beaten and stabbed with several sharp objects including knives and machetes.

Both were rushed to hospital, the 20-year-old requiring surgery to repair puncture wounds.

Two men, a 22-year-old from Markham and a 19-year-old from Scarborough were arrested last week and charged with two counts of attempted murder, aggravated assault, possession of dangerous weapons and breaching probation.

A third suspect, a 21-year-old Scarborough resident, was arrested Tuesday and faces the same charges.

Warrants have been issued for three other suspects.

Anyone with information is asked to call 905-881-1221 ext. 7500 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

— Kathleen Griffin

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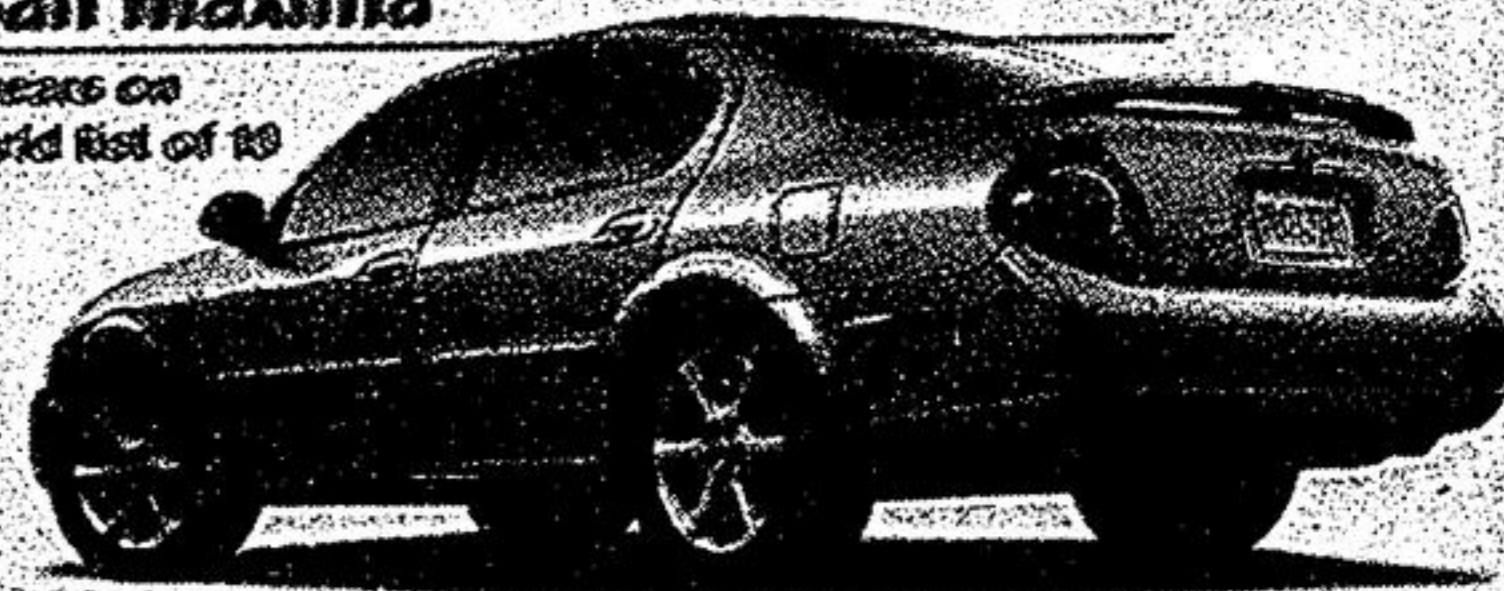
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