

Cut back on air conditioning, hydro marketers advise

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drew significant levels of humidity up from the southern United States, resulting in the sticky, oppressive conditions we've endured for the past couple of days.

Mr. Choquet said that by yesterday the system was dissipating — but offered little hope of any extended relief.

"This upper ridge is starting to break down a bit, but it's only temporary. By the end of next weekend I think we'll be back into a heat wave," Mr. Choquet said, from the comfort of his air-conditioned office.

Speaking of air conditioning, we're all being asked to scale back our dependency on the A/C. The Independent Electricity Market Operator (IMO) issued an alert earlier in the week, warning increasing demand sparked by the scorching temperatures is putting a strain on power supplies.

Localized blackouts were being reported in some Toronto neighbourhoods Wednesday. The IMO is asking people to cut back on power usage wherever possible, including setting air conditioners at a minimum of 26 degrees and refraining from the use of major appliances until after 8 p.m.

Meanwhile, increased demand sent hydro prices on Ontario's newly deregulated market soaring.

They peaked during the supper hour Tuesday at about 47 cents a kilowatt hour, nearly 15 times the normal rate.

Extreme temperatures, coupled with poor air quality, prompted York Region's health department to issue warnings to residents about keeping cool and avoiding strenuous work or exercise while the heat wave endures.

Oryst Zyhar, director of health protection with the region, said this type of weather, combined with heavy smog, can add up to poor air quality.

"It's a compounding factor," he said of the humidity.

For some, even moderate exposure to ground level smog can result in eye, nose and throat irritations, as well as coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath.

For the very young and elderly, as well as those with respiratory problems, the consequences can be more extreme, Mr. Zyhar said. "Some are more susceptible," he said.

The health department works to increase and sustain awareness of the

hazards that come with the heat, said Vicki Morley, a community health manager with the department.

That includes not only publicizing the symptoms of heat-related illness — dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting and loss of consciousness — but also encouraging people to approach their routines differently to avoid exposure to the most brutal conditions.

"Obviously our concern would be for

the most at-risk people: young children, seniors and people who are working outdoors," Ms Morley said.

The department has begun working with employers to promote "sun sense", measures to reduce exposure to extreme heat or help mitigate its effects.

"We have some draft policies developed and some of the employers have expressed an interest in that," Ms Morley said.

She said working alternative hours, early in the morning and late in the day, is encouraged where possible.

Above all, be aware of the effects the heat is having on you and others, Ms Morley said, and be sure to keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

And if you have time, seek places to cool off, like the many municipal pools and splash pads that are attracting a lot of traffic these days.

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Ontario Mayors, Chambers of Commerce and Community Organizations Celebrate with Office Depot at Special Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies at its 12 Retail Stores

Office Depot Inc., the world's largest seller of office products, celebrated a special event by hosting individual Grand Opening ribbon-cutting ceremonies at its 12 Ontario retail stores as the Company changed its name from Office Place to the Office Depot (brand name throughout Ontario).

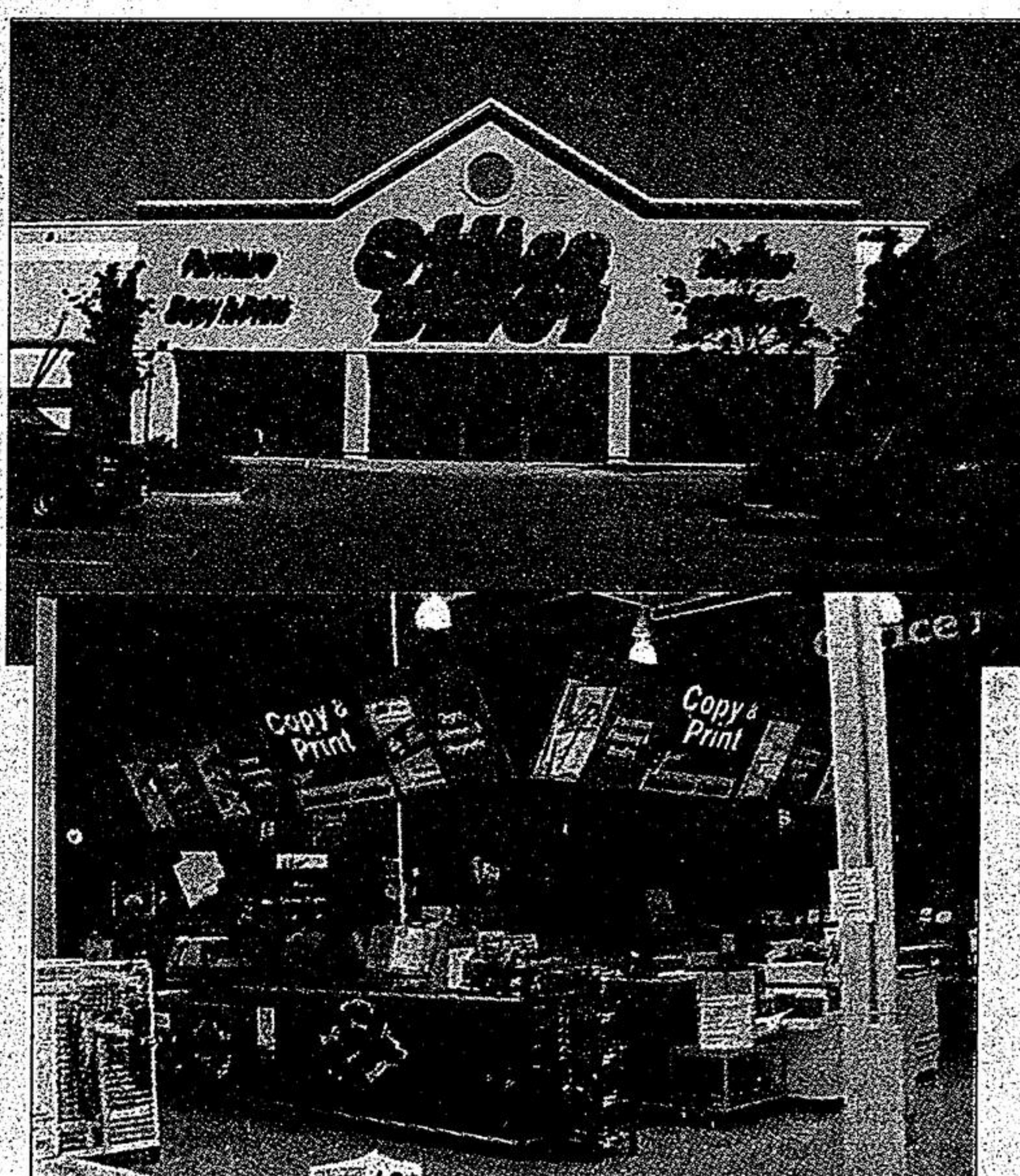
Individual Grand Opening ribbon-cutting ceremonies took place at all 12 stores on Friday, June 21 beginning at 11:00 a.m., with the exception of its Markham store, which began at 11:30 a.m. All ceremonies featured lively music from local band favourites.

Mayors, officials from Chambers of Commerce, and children's community organizations across Ontario joined Office Depot senior executives as well as the Ontario community for the festivities.

"Office Depot has been a part of the Ontario community since 1992 under the Office

Place brand name. We are thrilled to now brand our stores under the Office Depot brand name and are honoured to share this important day with those from the Ontario community. We invited our Ontario customers to celebrate our renaming. We know our customers will find the same great service and selection at Office Depot that they have come to expect at their neighbourhood Office Place store," said Jerry Colley, Office Depot's President of North American Stores. "Our customers will still work with the same friendly and caring staff that is dedicated to providing the knowledge and support our customers need to help them succeed and grow their businesses."

Also, underscoring the company's charitable mission of directly impacting the lives of children's education, Chioma, a motivational speaker who addresses high school



students with her message of Respect, Restraint and Responsibility throughout the Greater Toronto Area was a special guest at the festivities at the Company's celebration in Markham. Chioma presented local resident and honour student, Suzanne Nguyen from Weston Collegiate Institute with this year's "Chioma Talks Scholarship." This is the second year this special scholarship has been awarded. Expansion plans for the Scholarship will be announced at this special event. The scholarship is presented by Chioma Productions, in partnership with Office Depot (formerly Office Place), and provides a student with a new computer, printer and a cheque for \$1,000.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremonies across Ontario, Office Depot also presented

children's community charities with in-kind donations, symbolic of their commitment to making a difference in lives of children's education, healthcare and welfare.

In addition, customers were invited to enter a special store sweepstakes that offered the chance to win a grand prize of attending the Molson Indy, which will be held on July 7th. The in-store sweepstakes began on June 21 and ran through to June 28, 2002 and customers entered at all 12 participating stores in Ontario.

Office Depot currently operates 35 stores in Canada. Store operating hours for all Ontario Stores are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CORRECTION NOTICE

In the Saturday, June 29th edition of the Markham Economist & Stouffville Tribune, the telephone number for Colournet Paints was incorrectly printed.

The correct telephone number is **470-1099**

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused Colournet Paints and their customers.

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