

Surcharge surprising business owners

From page 1.

Mr. Scott said that unknown element — the surcharge is believed to be around eight cents a kilowatt hour, over and above the going market price — is causing businesses that haven't locked in their supply at a fixed price to look at their options.

The surcharge is not reported on the IMO's website (www.theimo.com), so consumers are not aware when it kicks in, how much it is or for how long it is being applied.

"There's no control over it and there's no disclosure of it," Mr. Scott said.

"If there's hidden costs there (businesses) don't know about, that's a problem."

In many cases, Mr. Scott's company is recommending

high-end users lock in a percentage of their required hydro and shop the open market for the remainder.

The percentage of locked-in and open market costs is determined by analyzing the amount of power needed and the company's need for stable overhead prices, Mr. Scott said.

"If big companies don't do anything, they're leaving themselves open to a risk they have no control over," he said.

Market volatility and price issues necessitate a concerted approach from Vaughan's populous business community, Mr. Bradbury said.

He hopes business will buy in to an initiative to track power usage and use the information to industry's advantage.

Power could be bought in blocks, giving business access to

cheaper hydro, he said. And analysis of demand could lead to more strategic energy management — such as alternative operating times — to help ease the pressure on Vaughan Hydro's power grid and ensure a constant supply, he said.

John West, an Aurora councillor and business operator, said smaller commercial consumers appear to be biding their time before making a decision on signing contracts with private suppliers, or sticking with municipal systems.

"I think most businesses do the same as I do: You don't take the spikes, you take the (monthly market price averages) and compare them month to month," said Mr. West, who was a vocal opponent of the province's now-abandoned plan to sell off Hydro One.

Watch for illegal garbage dumping

Garbage from Toronto and Newmarket is finding its way to Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Whitchurch-Stouffville, said chief bylaw enforcement officer Keith Saunders.

Residents are being asked look out for anyone dumping garbage bags on street curbs and road sides.

Toronto's outside workers strike — and the resulting lack of garbage pickup — plus a three-bag limit recently imposed in Newmarket has resulted in an increase in illegal dumping in

The town has a 24-hour phone line (905-640-1910, ext. 254) to report illegal dumping.

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