

## Stouffville Tribune

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PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot

### EDITORIAL

## Residents key part of tourism strategy

Tourism is the fastest growing sector of the provincial economy. It's Ontario's sixth largest industry, providing jobs for 500,000 people.

And Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees, Ontario's newest tourism and recreation minister, wants us to get in on the action.

Mr. Klees made a strong pitch to the province's municipal administrators last week, asking them to ensure their municipalities are supporting growth of the tourism industry.

He released a tourism study, which recommends areas that could attract international tourists be identified and developed.

It seems a stretch to imagine visitors from around the world flocking to York Region.

Certainly, York Region isn't Muskoka or Sudbury, agrees Don Eastwood, the region's director of economic development, but that doesn't mean capturing a bigger piece of the tourism pie is out of the question.

Canada's Wonderland, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and Kortright Centre for Conservation in Vaughan and Sibbald Point Provincial Park, Briars Inn and Red Barn Theatre in Georgina are key attractions.

As it stands, tourism is nothing to sneeze at in the region. More than 1.7 million visitors travel here annually, spending about \$180 million. That helps generate \$540 million in direct economic activity and more than 30,000 jobs.

If you ask him to "blue sky", Mr. Eastwood will share a vision that includes the development of equestrian facilities and events.

He sees the development of a superior network of trails in natural areas such as the Oak Ridges Moraine. He sees extensive golf tours and arts and cultural experiences. When that happens, the investment will come.

By emphasizing partnerships, York Region is well positioned to take advantage of its potential — and Mr. Klees has indicated the province is prepared to come to the table.

But there's another important partnership to be considered; one with us, the ordinary residents of York Region. For tourism to be successful, the tourists must feel welcome. We have to be prepared to adjust our lives to make our communities more attractive to visitors.

For example, one of the obstacles to exploiting Lake Simcoe's potential is lack of public access. Most of the Georgina shoreline is private.

While Mr. Klees promotes eco-tourism as a way to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine, will residents who fought so hard to save the natural area, accept parking facilities, trails or interpretive centres near the Jefferson Forest?

Tourism offers enormous potential for more jobs and more tax revenue. But area residents should be aware and involved.

Later this month, the ministry is launching a series of stakeholder consultations to shape a three-to-five year tourism strategy.

It's a good time for residents to put their views forward to local governments and business organizations.

# OPINION

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Raymerville death reminder to drive with greater care

Re: Markham student hit by car, dies in parents' arms, Nov. 5.

When I heard about the incident that took the life of Jorge Martinez I was very upset. His picture appeared in The Economist & Sun/Tribune and I recognized him immediately. I burst into tears. A sweet boy's life has been cut short. His parents' and sister's lives will never be the same.

We all feel the same emotions — grief, shock and anger. But when you think about it, we are all responsible. Everything we do affects others.

Every time we drive to an appointment — home, work, school or wherever — we need to drive responsibly and obey the speed limits and stop signs. I have been a crossing guard for 11 years and have noticed so much deterioration in people's driving habits. Most drivers don't even bother to stop for me anymore.

I am sure people involved in car accidents are horrified at their outcome. Still, every time we climb into our cars we need to stop, think and drive responsibly.

Just remember: wherever you're going, it will always be there. But a child's life, his hopes and dreams can end in a second and the repercussions go on forever.

GLORIA TRUSSLER  
MARKHAM

The Economist & Sun/Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Economist & Sun/Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Write: Letters to the Editor, 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, L3P 1M3, e-mail letters@econsun.com

### If club moves into town hall, what happens to old post office?

Is one heritage building more heritage than another heritage building?

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Silver Jubilee Club has operated from the old federal post office on Main Street for 25 years. This structure is on the built heritage inventory.

Town authority but, so far, not Whitchurch-Stouffville council, has offered the club the opportunity to move into another building on the built heritage inventory, the old town hall on Civic Avenue.

This structure is in the process of being officially designated as a heritage building and is to remain town property.

Question: if the club move takes place, will the old post office building remain town property or will it be sold to generate revenue?

Is the proposed move a matter of money and not the preservation of heritage?

FRED ROBBINS  
STOUFFVILLE



Dave Teetzel

## Politicians pay our money, take their chances

Sometimes it seems like this municipal government business is like picking a horse — and I don't just mean at election time.

Just look at the bill the region is eating as a result of last summer's garbage strike in Toronto.

The problem was most towns trusted the advice of York Region staff.

They believed Toronto would have to pay any added costs caused when the CUPE strike gummed up operations at the Keele Valley landfill. So York trucked the trash from most municipalities to private dump sites. Then, after the region had spent \$377,593 hauling waste to alternate sites, the bureaucrats started singing a different tune.

Suddenly, the legal opinion was costs couldn't be recovered unless York could prove Toronto hadn't fulfilled its side of the agreement. And the lawyers weren't so confident they could do that.

Interestingly, Vaughan, which has the most experience in dealing with Toronto on garbage-related matters, chose to make its own arrangements.

Georgina and East Gwillimbury kept their waste at local transfer strikes, gambling the strike would be over before the sites were overloaded.

They were the only ones who weren't presented with huge bills.

Markham was being asked for \$166,000, the region tried to squeeze \$114,000 out of Richmond Hill.

Richmond Hill Mayor Bill Bell fought the buck passing and won.

When it comes to picking political horses, Mr. Bell looks like the smartest guy at the track right now. For the past couple of years, the mayor has been vilified by many for his council's decision to sell Richmond Hill Hydro to Markham and Vaughan. The mayor gave away control of a vital service without consulting the public, critics said.

Hydro privatization has been a disaster. Beating an all-out retreat from an enraged electorate, Premier Ernie Eves has capped rates, putting the viability of new private utilities in question. Most hydro utilities, including municipally owned ones, are on credit watch.

Richmond Hill doesn't have to worry about that. Unlike Vaughan, Richmond Hill is a mere consumer of hydro electric power. Not that Mr. Bell is doing an endzone dance quite yet. He says it will be years before we can safely form an opinion about that decision and a lot can happen between then and now.

Like, Vaughan and Markham might decide to save on their hydro costs by shutting off the grid to their obnoxious neighbour?

When you do well at the track, it's best not to wave your winnings in peoples' faces.

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