

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Customers may save up to \$6M in merger

New utility would be third largest

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

The hydro utilities of Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill have agreed to merge into a single electricity provider that would be Ontario's third largest.

The merger of Markham Hydro Distribution Inc., Hydro Vaughan Distribution Inc. and Richmond Hill Hydro Inc., which the Markham and Vaughan utilities co-own, should take 12 to 18 months to fully implement and save customers \$6 million a year, Markham Mayor Don Cousens said.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings will be held at 7 p.m. March 3 at the Markham Civic Centre and the Terrace Banquet Hall in Vaughan before the merger goes to the Ontario Energy Board for approval.

Hydro Vaughan and Markham Hydro, each bought half of Richmond Hill Hydro in 2001 after an attempt to merge five utilities in York Region ended in failure.

Combined assets of the new utility would be about \$550 million and only Toronto Hydro and Ottawa Hydro would serve more customers.

A two-year transfer tax holiday on utility assets, announced

See **SOME**, page 7.

The littlest goalie



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Tom Whillier, 18, moves in on goalie Travis Thompson, 5, during shinny action at the rink in Vandorf Park behind the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum.

PORN CASE FORCES REVIEW

Longtime foster parent made child pornography on computer

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

York Region's Children's Aid Society is reviewing policies regarding home computers and scrutiny of employees in the wake of last week's conviction of a longtime foster parent on child pornography charges.

"We're always looking at ways of improving our service," CAS executive director Martin McNamara said.

"Certainly we're recognizing there is significant potential for inappropriate computer imaging and things like that, that wouldn't be supportive of our children."

A committee has been struck to examine possible policies with regard to home computers, Mr. McNamara said.

The CAS was rocked last June when 50-year-old Wayne Relf, a foster parent with the agency for several years, was arrested on charges of manufacturing and possessing child pornography. He pleaded guilty in a Newmarket court last week and was sentenced to 28 months in jail.

Court heard Mr. Relf had used a web camera to make a video featuring a 13-year-old girl in his care at his Keswick home. The child performed a strip tease in the video.

She was described as physically developed, but with the intellectual capacity of a six-year-old.

Police also seized some 500 pictures deemed child pornography. A sample of those pictures submitted as evidence included boys and girls

See **FOSTER**, page 10.

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