

OPINION

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Editorial

Where are plans for energy conservation?

It will be 13 months Saturday since a blackout rendered Ontario powerless, literally, for more than 24 hours.

The unprecedented blackout left Ontario, New York and parts of the northeastern United States — 50 million people — without power Aug. 11, 2003. Life was only partially back to normal in some places the next day. Many people waited three days before hydro was fully restored.

Area businesses lost revenue, a weary police force was taxed to the limit, hydro crews worked for days on end and raw sewage spewed into creeks and lakes due to backup system failure.

It taught us a lesson about energy conservation like never before and politicians urged residents to hang laundry, wash dishes by hand, leave cars dirty and lawns thirsty. For its part, the region was making do with generators to operate lights and machines.

York chairperson Bill Fisch said, at the time, the region would set an example by cutting back hydro use significantly and would come up with a report on ways it could practise conservation.

But more than one year later, there is no such report. Thirteen months have gone by, nearly 400 days, and still there are no concrete plans on how the region will reduce energy use.

To the contrary, this newspaper regularly receives calls from residents saying the regional headquarters in Newmarket is fully lit at all hours of the day and night. One York Region staff member, who refused to give her name, said lights are on at the headquarters "full tilt 24/7, in every room and every office."

It doesn't sound like efforts are being made. When asked about the region's long-term efforts to conserve energy a few weeks ago, this newspaper was told a report was, in fact, being compiled but wasn't complete.

This must be the wheels of government churning at a snail's pace; 13 months and nothing to show York Region is leading by example to conserve hydro.

The Town of Aurora went so far as to post a "power outage update" in its regular newspaper advertisement.

So far, not one of York Region's nine municipalities has announced solutions to waste but residents are still being warned of brownouts and blackouts.

It's time governments at all levels lead by example.



Letters to the Editor

Return of police helicopter eye-opening experience

It is 4:05 a.m. on Aug. 25. I am sitting at my computer, writing this letter (instead of sleeping) because there is a police helicopter circling above my town.

It has been going around and around for almost an hour, at least, that is how long ago it woke me up.

Since this is the second time in a week this has happened, I called the only number in our phone book, OPP, and they gave me the York Regional Police number to call.

After two calls, during which I let the phone ring for two minutes each, no one answered. I guess they are all up in the helicopter.

Last year, the police did the same thing a number of times, all in the wee hours. When I finally got someone to answer the phone last year, they told me not to worry, it was a police exercise.

Why were they exercising above a residential area? Why were they not orbiting around gravel pits or tracts of forest?

Why were the citizens who live directly below this pollution not swamping the police switchboard with noise complaints?

Oh, I remember. No police are awake at 4 a.m., except, of course, the ones in the helicopters.

ROBERT GREENWOOD
STOUFFVILLE

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address.

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5, e-mail jmason@yrng.com

Terry Fox set the course

We hope you will join us Sept. 19 at the Stouffville Arena for the 24th annual Terry Fox Run. Registration begins at noon with the official start under way at 1 p.m.

We aim to take our community event over the \$500,000 mark this year. With your help in raising \$53,000, we can do it.

Please call 640-4705 for more information or check out www.terryfoxrun.org.

Pledge sheets are available at Schell Lumber, Stouffville Credit Union, A&P, Stouffville Arena, Stouffville library, Bank of Montreal, Scotiabank and the LCBO.

Terry Fox, a remarkable Canadian, set us on a course we need to complete.

Terry Fox ran 42 kilometres every day for cancer research.

How far will you go?

SANDY SCHELL KENNEDY
EVENT ORGANIZER
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Get rich off our land rush of 2004

The fields north of Glad Park Public School off the Ninth Line have been ripped into something that resembles outer Sudbury.

More giant, yellow land-shaping machines sit on the Tenth Line, ready to make additional farmland house-fertile, so more brick two-storeys can pop out of south Stouffville.

Like a junior version of Markham, Brampton or Ajax, this place is in for a population explosion.

The developable lots have been snapped up like free Christmas turkeys from Honest Ed's.

And it's too late to manufacture the Big Pipe sewage system in your basement and sell it to engineers and contractors working along the Ninth Line south of town.

CATERERS, PORTABLE TOILETS

But there must be other ways to get rich off the land rush of 2004.

- Buy a catering truck and stock up on cut-rate coffee and Coke. All of those construction workers must remain hydrated and temperature-adjusted through all seasons.

- Buy a fleet of portable toilets. See previous scheme. Say no more.

- Invest in a portable dust-cleaning vacuum system for the vents of Stouffville's homes. Have you seen the mountains of material piled north of Elm Road? All of that dirt won't make it under the sod. "Get some more bags for the vacuum cleaner at Canadian Tire, Martha."

- Get your real estate licence and prepare to help people move. If you've backed on to a farm field for 20 years, a development full of semis and full-sized homes won't be the same. And if they aren't moving, the old-time residents will want a wall of cedar hedging or pressure-treated wood along their back 40. (*Memo to self only: buy shares in Schell Lumber.*)

- Open a store selling children's clothing, minivans, playground equipment, diapers, video games and sports gear. If our new neighbours don't have children, fact is they will soon after moving into their Stouffville dream home.

- Take it to the bank, kids.

Jim Mason is editor of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune.

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