

Dr. Helen Jaczek, York Region's medical officer of health, spoke at a seminar on breastfeeding yesterday. The region wants more mothers to breastfeed their babies longer.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Region wants more breastfeeding

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

York Region Health Services is celebrating World Breastfeeding Week with the launch of a community education campaign.

"Efforts need to be made to support York Region mothers in their decision to breastfeed and to encourage women to continue breastfeeding," medical officer of health Dr. Helena Jaczek said.

"Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life provides infants with the optimal nutrition for healthy growth and development."

The 2002-03 health services infant feeding study indicated 94 per cent of York mothers initiated breastfeeding, 75 per cent breastfed to six weeks and 51 per cent breastfed for at least six months. However, only 31 per cent of surveyed mothers breastfed exclusively for the

first six weeks. By six months, only 13 per cent breastfed exclusively without giving their infants formula.

The awareness campaign seeks to boost women's trust in themselves and the process by offering information and support. The breastfeeding resources available to parents include fact sheets, prenatal and postnatal clinics and no-cost home visits by public health nurses. Health services offers free breast-

feeding clinics staffed by public health nurses and certified lactation consultants.

In Markham, a clinic is held Mondays, 1 to 3 p.m., 4261 Hwy. 7 East, Unionville. Newmarket hosts clinics Tuesdays, 1 to 3 p.m., and Thursdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tannery Mall, ground floor, 465 Davis Dr. For more information on breastfeeding, clinics or other health-related issues, contact Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or visit www.region.york.on.ca

'GTA should follow PEI on renewable energy'

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advancements in renewable sources such as solar, biomass, wind turbine and hydrogen technologies.

It's a plan that has been received with open arms in Prince Edward Island, where Environment and Energy Minister Jamie Ballem has set ambitious energy goals for Canada's smallest province.

PRODUCE CLEAN POWER

Over the next six years, the island hopes to produce 15 per cent of its electricity from renewable resources. By 2015, Mr. Ballem wants the entire province powered by more environmentally friendly sources.

It's an ambitious plan to be sure with a lesson from which every other province can learn, Mr. Ballem said.

He will be a keynote speaker at Monday's Forum on Renewable Energy in Toronto, which also includes several European

representatives.

While Ontario, in particular high-growth areas such as York Region, faces more pressing demands for power, it can follow PEI's lead, Mr. Ballem said.

"If the solution is always that we need big hydro plants, then we'll need the big transmission lines too," he said.

Meanwhile, a final decision from Hydro One on whether or not to route the transmission towers along the preferred Markham-Newmarket corridor is expected some time in the fall, company spokesperson Peter Gregg said.

BLACKOUT WARNING

Hydro One has warned of potential blackouts and brownouts by 2006 if electricity needs in the region are not addressed.

Some residents living along the corridor want the hydro lines buried, despite the added cost to York ratepayers.

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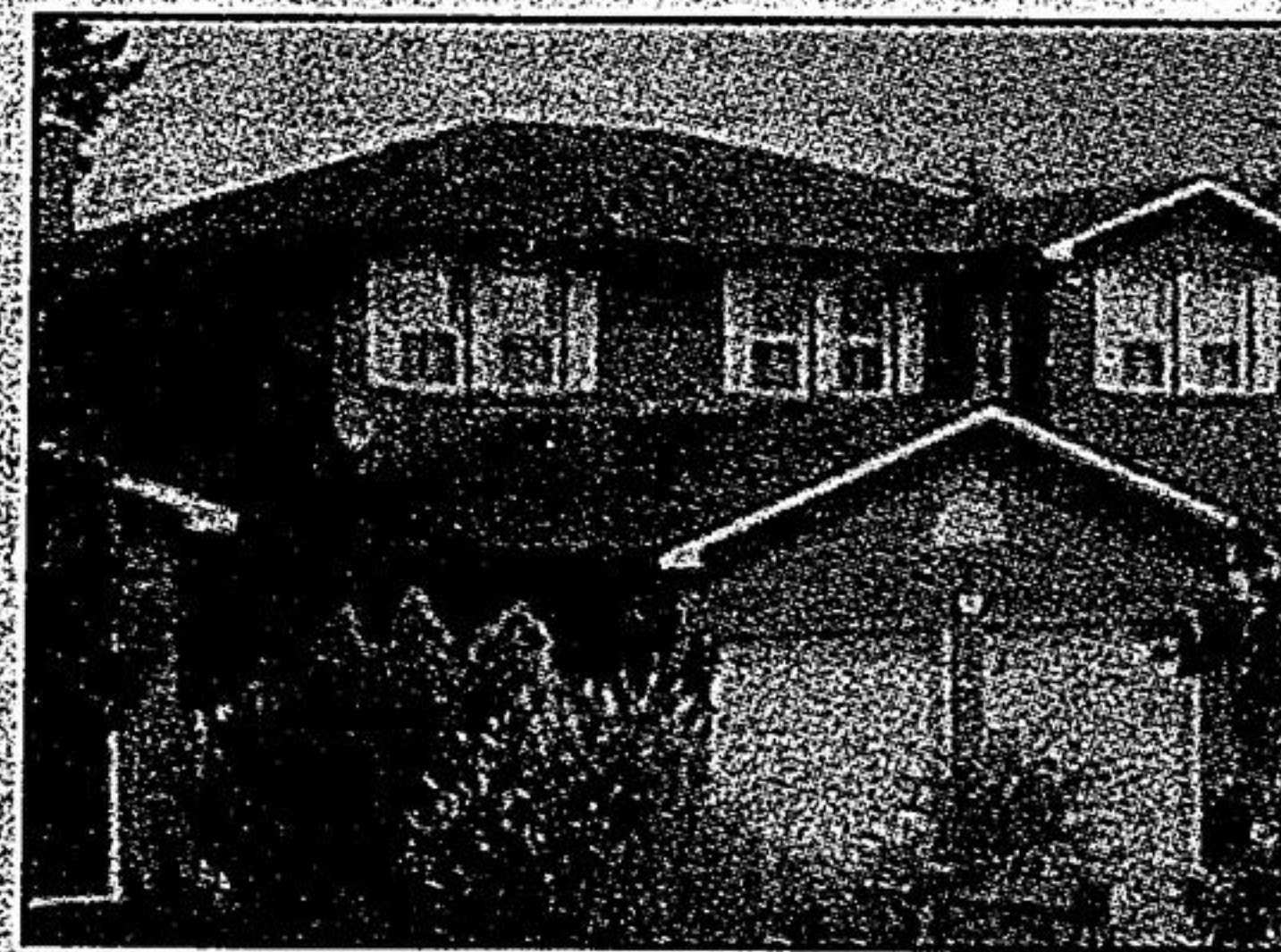
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