

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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HWY. 407 MOTORISTS HAUNTED BY BILLS

Collection agency won't listen: drivers

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

People unlucky enough to run afoul of 407 ETR are in for calls at all hours, six days a week, from a collection agency that won't listen to reason. Liberal MPPs heard this week.

And going to the highway operators with a billing error, even one as simple as a wrong address, can lead to months of frustration, several toll road customers told a provincial review panel in Thornhill.

"You are guilty until proven innocent," said Des Bethell of Markham, who doesn't have a 407 account and, at first, was mystified by the recorded collection agency calls to his unlisted number.

Told he owed the highway \$106.30, he eventually deduced his wife had used her transponder in his car and it didn't work properly.

Still, Mr. Bethell said, it took months to fix the problem.

Concord resident Nayna Pancholi said her husband Jitendra has two panel vans the toll road sometimes counts as heavy trucks the size of tractor trailers.

As heavy trucks, they are assigned a special \$50 "no transponder" charge per trip, so from February to October,

See DRIVER, page 4.

Victorian service for 2



Richard Preston of Preston Lake offers up a tray of sweets to Evelyn Seemann, 3, and her sister, Katrina, 6, at a Victorian tea at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum in Vandorf last week.

STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Hospital lays off workers, cuts hours

Markham-Stouffville cuts costs over \$9.5-million deficit

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

Cost-cutting measures to trim a projected \$9.5-million deficit at Markham-Stouffville Hospital have left 36 full-time staff without a job and another 95 with reduced hours.

The 131 affected employees represent approximately 10 per cent of the hospital staff and includes workers at the Markham facility and affiliated Uxbridge Cottage Hospital.

The cuts are across the board, including administration, clinical and support services, senior vice-president Lorne Zon said.

It isn't clear if all staff have been informed of the cuts.

"Some of the people are not on schedule so I'm not 100-per-cent sure every individual person has been spoken to," Mr. Zon said.

Some of the staff changes are immediate, while others take effect as late as April 30 next year.

In other cases, the exact timing will be determined after collective agreement reviews with CUPE.

Following recommendations in a study initiated in the spring, the hospital is trying to save \$5.9 million a year. The rest of the deficit will be made up with money-making initiatives.

Health care staff cuts may become a trend, CUPE communications representative Stella Yeadon said.

"I know very little about the specific layoffs at Markham-Stouffville," she said. "The only

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