

Organics program changed Markham residents' habits

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

Use "tough love" and smart words to sell green-bin waste collection, councillors and staff from across York Region were told in Markham this week.

They'll thank you later, suggested Markham politicians reporting on a successful organic waste-collection program they said changed the minds of many citizens who did not want to change their habits.

In November, the test area of 12,000 households, where organics and recyclables are collected weekly and regular garbage every other week, diverted 72 per cent of waste from landfill, double the town's overall rate.

The new three-stream collection system, known as Mission Green, expands from these east-end neighbourhoods to the rest of Markham in mid-June and even an 80-per-cent rate looks achievable, Regional Councillor Jack Heath said Friday.

Yet Mr. Heath joked staff "put

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John Webster
Markham councillor

their lives on the line" and a riot nearly broke out when residents first looked at plastic organics collection bins at a school a few years earlier, before an earlier three-stream pilot project was launched.

"A year later, we were in the same room with the same crew and people said, 'We don't want you to take it back; we like this.'"

Don't tell residents they'll only have garbage pickup every other week; tell them collection service will be better than before, said Councillor John Webster. "All the problems that happen (with angry residents) really disappear if you say it right."

"We don't have any garbage in Ward 5," said the councillor, who used the three-stream system at

home for months before its September launch so he could anticipate residents' concerns. "We have yucky stuff (organics), recyclable stuff and landfill because everybody knows that landfill's bad."

Participation is now nearly universal and animals have a much harder time reaching "yucky stuff", thanks to the bin's lockable lid, the councillor added.

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The test area east of Hwy. 48 was chosen because it had few apartments or "language issues". The program will use more visuals and multilingual materials in the rest of Markham.

A waste audit in November showed 70 per cent of green bins set out were full. The bins captured 75 per cent of food waste — fast food waste and wrappers were more likely to go straight in the garbage — 89 per cent of pet waste but only 66 per cent of diapers.

COMPOST DEADLINE

York Region has told its nine municipalities to start collecting organic waste no later than Jan. 1, 2006. This is when they promised to start:

- Aurora: July 1, 2005;
- Whitchurch-Stouffville, September, 2005
- East Gwillimbury: 2005, after region's materials recovery facility in the town opens;
- Georgina: September 2007;
- King: No date chosen;
- Markham (All households): September 2005 or sooner;
- Newmarket: September 2005;
- Richmond Hill: July 1, 2005; and
- Vaughan: No sooner than July 2005.

Source: York Region

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The Youth Entrepreneurship Program is delivered by Job Skills and funded by the Government of Canada



Bereaved Families of Ontario

Founded in 1978, under the auspices of the Hospital for Sick Children, Bereaved Families is a self-help organization staffed by bereaved persons. Specialists in the area of grief and bereavement from the professional community serve as a resource both in the development of on-going programmes and in the supervision and training of self-help group leaders.

This co-operation between lay and professionals has enabled Bereaved Families to better respond to the needs of the bereaved and has helped guarantee that the best support is provided.

1-800-969-6904

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York Region An association of families who have lost a child through death.

Tradition is cherished, change is welcomed

Health care professionals are invited to attend an information session to discuss the feasibility of developing a Family Health Team at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Monday, January 31

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

East Building - Cafeteria
Southlake Regional Health Centre

Guest Speaker

Dr. Jim MacLean, Lead of Primary Care, Provincial Health Results Team

Family Health Teams are a high priority of the provincial government and are intended to strengthen primary care in Ontario by providing patients with comprehensive care that is focused on preventing illness, promoting good health and treating illness.

Purpose

- Introduce the concept of a Family Health Team
- Identify key factors for success
- Discuss services to be provided
- Identify health care professionals with an interest in ongoing involvement

Who should attend

All health care professionals including physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, chiropractors, pharmacists, dietitians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, midwives, etc.

Free parking will be provided
Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP to 905-895-4521, ext. 2754



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