

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Playoff-ready under the helmets



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Stouffville Spirit Jr. A hockey players Jeff Barbieri (from left), Cory Battista, Brandon Walker and Brock Ouellet show off their playoff haircuts before practice Monday at the Stouffville Arena. The Spirit opens the North Conference quarterfinals tonight at 7:30 at the arena against the Couchiching Terriers. The hockey haircuts and dye jobs are a post-season tradition. For more information, see story on page 26.

Stouffville bus ridership small, but growing

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
 Staff Writer

The small York Region Transit bus chugging around Stouffville is busier than it may sometimes look.

The service, which had been requested by Whitchurch-Stouffville residents for several years, started in September 2004 with 366 people paying their fare to take a ride. Numbers were slightly higher in October, but in November, ridership almost doubled to 634.

"Introducing service at an early stage in a community's development is critical in order to attract riders and establish a public transit presence," York Region spokesper-

son Michael Kemp said.

Ridership numbers continue to increase, he added. The 30-foot low-floor bus on Route 9 - Stouffville is wheelchair-accessible.

LAST MUNICIPALITY WITH SERVICE

Whitchurch-Stouffville was the last of the nine York Region municipalities to get regional bus service. East Gwillimbury, another largely rural municipality of roughly similar size, first received service in 2002.

To see whether service will continue, an assessment is made after six months to one year to see whether ridership targets are being met.

For a local route such as Route 9, a mini-

mum of 15 passenger trips per hour is required to sustain service. In November, there were an average of 28 riders daily in Stouffville.

The Stouffville bus goes south on Ninth Line from Millard Street to Markham Stouffville Hospital and from Ringwood Drive across Main Street to Lori Avenue, Hemlock Drive and the Eastern Gate community. It gives people access to the Stouffville GO Station, Lebovic Leisure Centre, Parkview Village and Stouffville District Secondary School, among other destinations.

See SENIORS, page 9.

LOBBYING COUNCIL TO AVERT FINANCIAL CRISIS

Gallery wants money from town

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
 Staff Writer

Latham Gallery supporters are lobbying Whitchurch-Stouffville council to avert a potential financial crisis they say could threaten the existence of Stouffville's 25-year-old art gallery.

An emergency meeting of gallery supporters was called early in January by board chairperson Marg Brock after the gallery received just over \$6,000 from 2004 town grants instead of the \$30,000 requested.

This year the gallery is requesting \$40,000 and \$50,000 in 2006. The aim is to increase funding from the town every year until the gallery is back at the level of town support it received in 1992. That year the gallery received slightly more than \$48,000.

ONTARIO GRANT MONEY

Municipal funding and support are vital to maintaining an Ontario Trillium Fund grant of \$200,000 the gallery received in 2004, gallery director Roz Pritchard said. Decreasing amounts are paid each year until 2007 when the gallery receives a final amount of \$25,000.

It was made clear to gallery staff an increased funding from the municipality should be in place to replace the decreasing amounts, from the Trillium Fund, she said.

The gallery also has to maintain and increase its programming to keep the provincial funding in place over the next three years.

The gallery's other sources of income include the Beyond Craft Christmas sale, Arty Party, donations

See GALLERY, page 20.

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