

# OPINION

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## Editorial

### Hydro battle first of many

Chalk one up for the power of the people.

At least for now. Hydro One is backing away from plans to double the capacity of hydro lines from Markham to Newmarket, Ontario Energy Minister Dwight Duncan announced Tuesday.

While the utility may revive the plan, it has withdrawn the proposal while the new Ontario Power Authority, created to oversee planning for the province's electricity supply, explores alternatives.

By boosting the power of the existing 115kV line, which runs for 24 kilometres between Markham and Newmarket, Hydro One said it could meet the growing demand for power in the region.

A study released last spring indicated York's power consumption was growing by 6.5 per cent each year and without boosting service, the region could begin suffering blackouts by 2007.

The proposal, however, prompted an outcry from those who feared doubling service along the line would lead to cancer-causing electromagnetic fields.

Strongly worded letters were written by politicians, including Markham Mayor Don Cousens. School boards passed resolutions and announced they would close schools if the plan went ahead. Residents groups were formed to battle the plan.

And it appears Queen's Park listened. Their efforts, it appears, were successful, albeit perhaps only temporarily.

The Ontario Energy Board will make the final decision on how best to provide the additional power the region needs.

Now those who opposed expanding the line have a new role to play.

There's no way around the need for more hydro in the north end of the region. Through one route or another, the power must be supplied.

The Markham route was chosen over others options as the one with the least impact on existing development.

Those opposed to the Markham option must now work with provincial hydro officials to come up with a workable solution to the problem. They must offer input and open minds as all options are explored.

In the end, residents may see the Markham line expanded, despite their best efforts to fight it.

York Region's population is expected to double to 1.3 million during the next 25 years, with a projected increase in employment to 700,000 jobs.

It's a simple fact more power is needed and this will likely be just the first of several battles over new lines we'll see.



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Churches entering big box era

Walk into EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church and you're immediately overwhelmed.

If it's not the size of the building or the amenities inside, it's the warmth of the people working at and attending the Tenth Line congregation.

Standing proudly next to the Stouffville Country Market and the municipal water tower, it is the new standard of churching in Whitchurch-Stouffville since opening late last year.

Just as big box stores are lining up to serve Stouffville's population — three proposals for power centres at last count, fellow taxpayers — so is big-time religion.

You knew something was up when the Missionary congregation outgrew an already impressive facility on Main Street across from Summitview Public School.

The old church, now home to a Coptic congregation, has a school-sized gym, mega parking lot, numerous meeting rooms and a big, balconied sanctuary.

In short, the building has many features smaller churches across Whitchurch-Stouffville lack and envy.

EastRidge is not on this crusade alone. Springvale Baptist, one of the largest and most vibrant churches in the area, is also building a new facility at Stouffville and Kennedy roads.

Christ Church Anglican has expansion plans. Other churches have at least put the idea of growth to their memberships.

But is bigger better? Can the little, old churches with minimal facilities compete for members with the newer buildings with double gyms, coffee houses and theatre-like acoustics and visuals?

Probably. Just as not all shoppers flock to the mega malls and power centres, not all worshippers are comfortable in big houses of worship.

Smaller churches, the religious boutiques of our big box society if you will, can be more personable and cosy.

Bob Hyatt, a pastor in a growing community in Portland, Or. leads an Internet discussion on the topic.

"Whether I am a young suburban/middle class, well-educated female, or a Vietnam vet from inner city Detroit, most churches tend to assume that my spiritual needs and progress will be strikingly similar," he writes.

They aren't, says the fan of smaller congregations.

Then, if you build it, some will come. Some will go elsewhere.

Just as long as they go somewhere.

Jim Mason is editor of the Sun-Tribune.

## Letters to the Editor

### Kidney donation helps future mother-in-law

March is Kidney Month. Like most people, I never really thought much about it before as I am fortunate to have relatively good health.

I became engaged recently. My future mother-in-law, Gerri, a wonderful woman, is scheduled for a kidney transplant next month.

After enduring several years of exhausting dialysis treatments, the family has been blessed to find a suitable donor, a truly remarkable person who is deserving of the title "hero".

Finally, Gerri will be able to travel, spend time at the cottage with her family, volunteer in her community and enjoy life to the fullest.

Unfortunately, the disease that has interrupted Gerri's life has also touched past generations of her family and will probably affect future ones.

So I feel compelled to briefly share this story and ask readers to consider the gift of organ donation. You never know when you or someone you love will be touched by kidney disease.

March is also the month of Gerri's birthday and hopefully this will be the last she celebrates in a cloud of illness.

R. WARR  
 STOUFFVILLE

### Latham Gallery deserves support of public, council

I support of Latham Gallery's request for ongoing stable funding from the town. Possibly one of Latham Gallery's problems is

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because it is an art gallery, it is considered an elitist group. I do not believe this to be true. If it was elitist, it never would have survived 25 years in a small community.

The gallery's vitality is due largely to support from the business community, council and people from all walks of life.

Ten thousand visitors passed through its doors last year. This shows the gallery is a vital part of our community and it is situated in our downtown.

I know there is support from this community and councils past and present. I would like the gallery to be shown as a line item in the town's budget.

So, as an artist, I am asking other artists to show their support by signing the following statement:

"We the undersigned are artists who support Latham Gallery in its request for ongoing sustainable funding from the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville."

This statement will be at the gallery for all artists to sign if they wish. I will present it to Mayor Sue Sherban and council in two weeks.

SANDRA BURKE  
 STOUFFVILLE

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