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Warmth spreading West Nile quicker

One human case confirmed so far

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

There have been no confirmed cases of West Nile virus in York Region, but that doesn't mean we can relax.

In fact, residents should be extra cautious to avoid mosquitoes that can carry the virus, health protection manager Margaret McCaffrey said.

"Because of the warmer weather, there are more mosquitoes and the virus is replicating faster inside them," she said, adding the region has picked up 615 dead birds this year, none of which have tested positive for the virus.

"That could change at any time," she said.

Dead birds, particularly blue jays and crows, are early West Nile warning signs and are routinely tested for the virus. Mosquitoes spread the disease by feeding on the birds, then biting people.

With one confirmed human case in Etobicoke and infected insects discovered in Peel and 20 GTA locations, York Region Health Services is continuing its surveillance program, Ms McCaffrey said.

The region continues to test birds and trapped mosquitoes. The summer's third round of larviciding is under way, applying chemicals to catch basis and

See BEST, page 11.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

WORKER DIES IN FALL AT CHURCH

A man working on renovations was killed Friday morning when he fell off the roof of Christ Church Anglican on Sunset Boulevard in Stouffville around 8:45 a.m. The man was airlifted to hospital in Toronto, but lost vital signs en route and was pronounced dead around 10 a.m., police said. His name was not released pending notification of his family.

MOVE TO CONSERVE POWER SNARLS TRAFFIC ON YORK ROADS

Traffic signals knocked out

BY MARTIN DERBYSHIRE
Staff Writer

It looks like the problem that caused traffic light malfunctions across the south end of the region Wednesday has been solved, but ensuring it doesn't happen again is another issue.

The province's Independent Electricity System Operator ordered utilities across the

province Wednesday to reduce power consumption by 5 per cent to keep up with the increased demand and limited supply of electricity.

The problem is local traffic signals are on a system that malfunctions if the unit's voltage drops below 98 per cent.

Local electricity distributor Powerstream attempted to config-

ure power distribution across the region to ensure no traffic lights were affected.

But signals broke down in the Bathurst Street area from Centre Street in Thornhill to Elgin Mills Road in Richmond Hill according to Gary Cosgrove, manager of road maintenance for the region.

The electricity distributor fixed the problem Thursday by reconfig-

uring power distribution loads throughout the area, Powerstream's Eric Fagen said, but there are questions about what's next.

If consumers don't cut electricity consumption, the next step will be rolling blackouts, which are sure to force traffic signal malfunctions across York, Mr. Fagen said.

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