

**York Catholic District School Board****Public Input into 2006/07  
Budget Process**

Presentations or written submissions are welcomed.

**When:** Tuesday, May 9 @ 7 p.m. &  
Tuesday, May 23 @ 7 p.m.**Where:** Catholic Education Centre  
320 Bloomington Road West, Aurora**How:** Register to speak or arrange to submit your comments.  
Call 716-221-5051 or 905-713-2711 ext. 3006  
or e-mail frances.smith@ycdsb.ca  
by May 1 (for May 9 session) or by May 15 (for May 23 session)Complete budget information is available on our website at  
[www.ycdsb.ca](http://www.ycdsb.ca)Susan LaRosa  
Director of EducationElizabeth Crowe  
Chair of the Board


**The Great  
MARKHAM  
RODEO**  
Saturday  
May 27th  
Markham  
Fairgrounds  
[www.markhamrodeo.com](http://www.markhamrodeo.com)

**Markham Little Theatre**  
presents**Moon Over Buffalo**  
A Comedy by **Ken Ludwig**  
Directed by **Gloria Thomas**

April 26 - 29, 2006

8:00 P.M.

Markham Theatre  
for Performing Arts  
171 Town Centre Boulevard

Tickets \$20.50

Seniors & students  
on Wednesday and Thursday  
Group rates available**Good Seats Still Available!****Box office 905-305-SHOW (7469)**

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French (Canada) Inc.

# New pre-paid credit cards help fight personal debt

## Cards help create credit history

BY LINDA JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

Two credit card companies have programs to help you reduce on your credit card debt.

Home Trust VISA and the Pre-payEdge Mastercard have been designed to help those who spend too much, those who have bad credit or those too new to Canada to get a regular credit card.

Apart from limitations imposed on shopping excursions, the absence of credit cards means you have no chance to build a credit history.

The Visa and Mastercard work in different ways.

With the so-called secured card, you put down a security deposit — in the case of Home Trust VISA card, any amount from \$1,000 to \$10,000. That amount is your credit limit.

If you are approved — and 95 per cent of applicants are — you receive a credit card that works in the usual way: as you shop or make cash advances, you create a balance owing that you have to pay off.

"It's a revolving credit, so you will have to make monthly pay-

ments. How you make the monthly payments on the account is what we report to the credit bureau," said Jocelyn Bernardino, a customer service representative at Home Trust Secured VISA, which launched its card five years ago.

As with any credit card, the amount of credit you have left at any point depends on your outstanding balance. If you overspend or cancel the card, the amount owing is deducted from your deposit.

And as long as your credit card is in good standing, your security deposit earns 1 per cent interest.

"It's an excellent way to re-establish credit rating," said Robert Trarov, a counsellor with Community Credit Counselling Services of York Region.

Because the cards are secured, they don't promote debt, he added.

"When you put aside \$1,000 into that card, you're going to be very careful when you spend that money. You'll be thinking, 'this is like real money because, if I don't pay it back, they will go into the secured deposit and take it out,'" he said.

To apply, you must be a Canadian resident and 18 years old.

As well, you must have a minimum income of \$500 a month or \$6,000 a year, chequing account and social insurance number.

Anyone who filed for bankruptcy must be fully discharged and new immigrants must have lived in Canada least 6 months.

There are also fees. With Home Trust VISA, for example, you pay a one-time, set-up fee of \$39, plus \$7.50 per month. The interest rate is 19.5 per cent on purchases and 21.5 per cent on cash advances.

With the Mastercard, you front load the card and spend whatever balance you put on it.

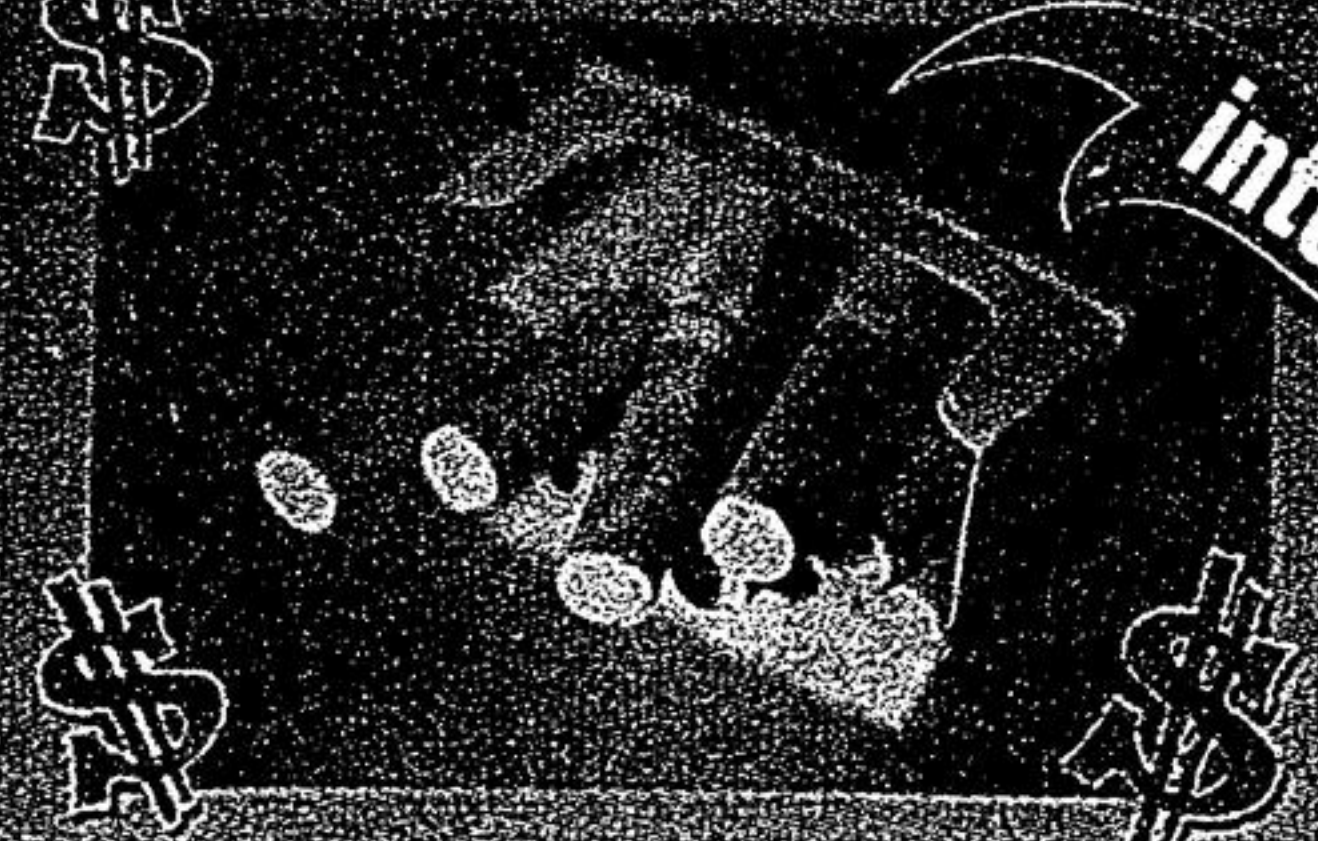
These do not require a security deposit.

Instead, you apply money to the card and, as you shop, you deplete the sum. At any time, you can add more money.

Like the secured card, it gives many people — who are low-income or had past credit problems — the chance to make purchases they otherwise could not have, Mr. Trarov said.

For more information on the Pre-payEdge Mastercard, visit [www.tns-prepaid.net](http://www.tns-prepaid.net). For more information on the Home Trust Visa, visit [www.hometrusted.ca/visa/](http://www.hometrusted.ca/visa/).**CHATS**  
Community  
Home Assistance  
To Seniors*Caring for Caregivers*Are you a caregiver for an aging parent,  
spouse, relative or friend?**Celebrate the launch of our new  
Caregiver Support & Education Services****Open House - Sat. May 6, 2006,  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**at the CHATS Wellness Centre for Seniors and Caregivers  
126 Wellington Street, West, Aurora, Suite 103

Seminars, displays, presentations and more!

Call to sign up: 905-713-3373 or 1-866-677-9048, ext 7240 by April 28  
Walk-ins also welcome!*live well, age well, be well.***It's time to...**  
**FOCUS**  
*on the important  
things in life.***Turn These...***into***THIS!****See sales staff for details!****Your Home Town Ford Store That Cares!****HOUSTON FORD LTD.**  
**5786 Main St., Stouffville,**  
**905-640-4541**[www.billhoustonford.com](http://www.billhoustonford.com)