

# Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SATURDAY, JULY 12, 2008 ■ SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE ■ 32 PAGES/\$1 INCLUDING GST



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## WETTER THE BETTER



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Andrew Dequilla, 8, enjoys the splash pad on Hoover Park Drive Wednesday. The three Stouffville water parks should remain busy this weekend. See page 3 for more on the parks.

*Region lost 3,600 manufacturing jobs in past two years*

# Blue-collar jobs disappearing in York

BY PATRICK MANGION  
Staff Writer

Blue-collar workers are being squeezed out of a York Region economy heavily dependent on service-producing jobs.

The region has shed more than 3,600 manufacturing jobs the past two years, which could point to financial hardship for some local workers, said Daniel Drache, a political science professor at York

University and the Roberts Centre for Canadian Studies.

That means job seekers are far more likely to find help wanted ads for health care, real estate, finance, retail and education careers than construction or manufacturing, according to the region's recently released 2007 report on employment and industry.

Nearly three in four local jobs are service-related.

More than 26,000 York Region businesses were surveyed in the report, which revealed a widening gap between white collar and blue-collar jobs.

Four years ago, 67 per cent of all jobs in the region were service-related, compared to 33 per cent goods producing, such as manufacturing.

Last year, those numbers were 73 per cent service-related; 27 per

cent goods-producing.

The dismal manufacturing trend hit home when more than 2,000 workers were suddenly dismissed when Progressive Moulded Products closed its doors in Vaughan earlier this month and Aurora's Magna International laid off about 400 workers at a St. Thomas plant.

"Imagine going from making \$16 an hour in manufacturing to \$10 or \$12 in retail. With our low mini-

mum wage, it could push people into holding down several jobs," Mr. Drache said.

The shrinking proportion of production jobs is something the region will monitor, said John Waller, director of long-term planning.

"There is work to do. But York Region has a strong, diverse economy

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