

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

SATURDAY, NOV. 22, 2008 ■ SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE ■ 28 PAGES/\$1 INCLUDING GST



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Donors dig deep despite economic worries

But York United Way needs help to reach goal

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Reporter

York Region residents, employees and corporations are "getting their United Way on", participants at Wednesday's mid-campaign report meeting were told.

To date, the 2008 campaign has raised 63 per cent of the organization's \$9.5-million goal, United Way of York Region CEO Daniele Zanotti said.

The gathering, held at Motorola's National United Way Campaign kickoff in Markham, was informed that despite the success of campaigns, United Way needs help to reach this year's goal.

A midway analysis reveals that in the face of economic uncertainty, residents, employees and corporations are trying harder, digging deeper and giving more to lend a helping hand to those in need across York Region, Mr. Zanotti said.

"The story today is not \$9.5 million or our march towards it," he said. "The real story is the resolve and enthusiasm we've seen so far from long-time and new friends of United Way of York Region. The real story is that in unprecedented economic times, we are most remarkable, together."

Examples of the campaign's infectious zeal and commitment were evident.

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SPIRIT IN A CORNER



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Stouffville Spirit forward Craig McDowell is pressured by Markham Waxers defenceman Jordan Mustard during Markham's 9-2 win at the Stouffville Arena Thursday. It was the 12th straight loss for the Spirit, which fell to 3-25 on the Ontario Junior Hockey League season. For more information, see story on page 11.

Hospital optimistic expansion on track

Weak economy, lobbying could help long-awaited project

BY KEELY GRASSER
Staff Reporter

Hospital and municipal officials reiterated their belief the province will soon commit funding for the Markham Stouffville Hospital expansion as they presented updated plans to the community.

Hospital CEO and president Janet Beed and Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti hosted a community forum Monday at the hospital. They updated the public on the latest plans to expand the over-extended facility, which was built to serve a catchment of 110,000 but is currently serving 300,000.

"I have a lot of reasons to believe it's going to happen this time," Ms Beed said of a long-awaited provincial funding announcement.

Earlier this year, the province decided to delay some large hospital construction projects, including the Markham Stouffville Hospital expansion.

But Ms Beed said they are now further along in planning than ever before, Markham-Unionville MPP Michael Chan and board members have been busy advocating at Queen's Park and Mr. Scarpitti has been a vocal proponent.

The current economic situation may also bode well for the project, according to Ms Beed. The government will want to keep the construction industry going, she said.

"We think the price tag on our hospital makes it reasonable," she said.

"Hopefully we will hear that great news from the province...let's remain positive. Let's keep pushing," Mr. Scarpitti said.

See POOLS, page 10.

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