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Inserts for Sat., Jan. 29, 2011

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## Women videotaped, OPP officer charged

An Ontario Provincial Police inspector faces charges after women were secretly videotaped in states of undress in York Region and Toronto during the last decade.

A 44-year-old police veteran has been charged with two counts of mischief following an investigation into the actions of an off-duty OPP officer, the force said in a media release.

It revealed that on two occasions, in January

2000 and December 2002, an off-duty police officer videotaped women, the OPP said. Neither offence occurred while the officer was on duty, on OPP premises nor with police equipment, the OPP said.

The officer is a 23-year member of the OPP who works in its highway safety division.

The officer is scheduled to appear in a Newmarket court in March following an investigation by the OPP professional standards bureau.

He has been suspended from duty.

## GOVERNMENT: Town awaits word from private sector

# Rural high-speed Internet closer

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
sbolan@yrmg.com

Some rural Whitchurch-Stouffville residents are one step closer to being able to access high-speed Internet.

The town was notified its \$262,967 grant application to the province's Rural Connections Broadband program was approved last week.

The money will be used to help offset the total cost of bringing broadband to rural residents, which is estimated to be about \$788,000.

The remaining two-thirds of the cost is to be paid by the Internet Service Provider.

"Some sort of incentives are necessary to move this along because there are large swaths in this province that are greatly underserved," said Councillor Ken Ferdinands, who calls high-speed Internet access an "essential service" and has been fighting for it on behalf of rural residents since being elected eight years ago.

There are about 12,000 rural residents in Whitchurch-Stouffville and about 3,849 do not have broadband access.

The project is anticipated to provide 3,272 residents, 239 businesses and two community centres with high-speed Internet access.

"It's a sizeable minority. It's significant to me," Mr. Ferdinands said.

*'We have languished here, even though technology has advanced. It's definitely a liability from a business expansion standpoint and for homeowners as well.'*

The reason it is taking so long for broadband to come to rural Whitchurch-Stouffville is two-fold. One issue is infrastructure. Whether it be cable, wireless or satellite service, it is expensive to install due to the vast area it has to cover and the relatively small number of people residing in those areas.

The second issue is topography. Between the Oak Ridges Moraine and York Region Forest, signal transmission is virtually impossible in some areas.

Now that the municipality has a carrot to dangle in front of ISPs, a request for proposal will be issued Feb. 23.

"We're very hopeful, but don't know," said Rebecca Mustard, economic development officer for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. "It's a private sector issue. We're doing all that we can on our end to do that."

The Rural Connections Broadband program stipulates all projects must be completed by March 2012.

In 2007, the provincial government



**HELENA JACZEK:** MPP announces rural high-speed Internet program grant at New Year's levee.

announced the four-year, \$30-million program, which would provide one-third of a project's cost, up to \$1 million.

The province defines broadband as having a download speed of no lower than 1.5 Mbps. The average web page takes 0.39 seconds to load via a 1.5 Mbps connection. With a dial-up connection, which runs between 40 and 50 Kbps, that same web page takes about seven seconds to load.

"We have languished here, even though technology has advanced," Mr. Ferdinands said. "It's definitely a liability from a business expansion standpoint and for homeowners as well."

On Sunday afternoon, during her New Year's Community Levee at Stouffville Creek Retirement Home, Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP for Oak Ridges-Markham, announced the grant approval.

"The construction of a broadband network will help to expand and improve local businesses in Whitchurch-Stouffville and connect family and friends to one another, which will help boost our region's economy," she said.

## THE NUMBERS

- ▶ 12,000 people live in rural Whitchurch-Stouffville
- ▶ 3,849 do not have broadband access
- ▶ 3,272 residents, 239 businesses and two community centres would be provided with high-speed Internet access under program
- ▶ \$262,967 grant application approved by province
- ▶ \$788,900 estimated total cost of project

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