

# Presto 'working well,' YRT says

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"To be honest with you, it's a coaster — an expensive coaster," she said.

Ms Brown encountered a perfect storm of problems obtaining a card for her 16-year-old daughter, Mackenzie.

The greatest source of frustration for the Newmarket resident was having to haul down to the Richmond Hill office during the day, a difficult task for someone working full time.

As with Mr. Ball, she instead waited a week for the card to arrive by mail.

But she found she still had to go to Richmond Hill to register it as a student card after, like Mr. Ball, erroneously being told she could get it done in Newmarket.

"It's actually ludicrous that nobody really knows how to set up the card," she said.

Both riders then had issues with activation. Mr. Ball's showed up as "unrecognized" on the Presto website. Two days after talking with a customer service representative, the issue was resolved and, 10 days after he first tried to get it, he used it to go to work.

However, the first time he went to load more money onto it, he received the same "unrecognized" warning and, when calling Presto back, could not get a live operator on the phone.

He sent an e-mail and, after two days with no response, he sent another. Finally, he put his card in the mail and returned it with a letter asking his \$6 issuance fee be refunded.

"It is hard to know for certain whether they even received the e-mails," he said. "With the live operator option unavailable, this means they are virtually unreachable."

"A convenient arrangement, I suppose, if you have a system that is in a shambles."

Ms Brown had to tap the card within seven days to complete activation, but was told that, since she didn't want to actually board a bus, she could have the fare refunded by pushing the cancel button. There was no cancel button, however, and instead she had \$2.75 deducted, leaving her with that \$16 coaster.

"I understand it's new, but they knew it was coming," she said.

YRT general manager Rick Leary said the rollout has gone better than expected and the transit service has registered only eight complaints.

The region has distributed 5,000 cards that waive the issuance fee people such as Mr. Ball and Ms Brown had to pay when they ordered online.

About 2,200 cards have been issued since Presto launched July 18 and Mr. Leary said the region has benefitted from being one of the last transit systems to go online.

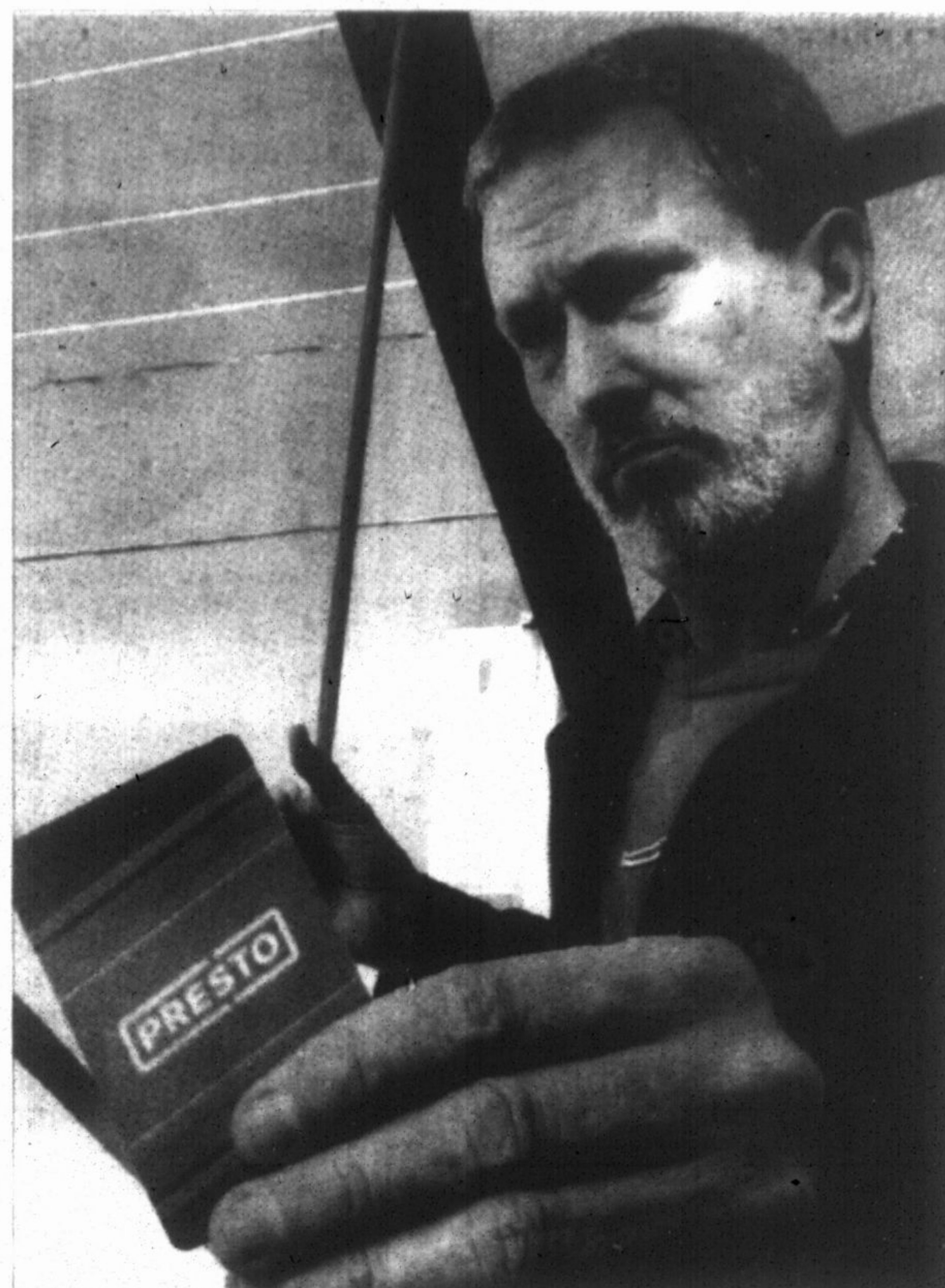
"We're very fortunate," he said. "It's been nearly seamless because everyone else has gone first."

As for the issues raised by Mr. Brown and Ms Ball, he conceded the distribution network is not fully in place, but said it will change in 2012 as the system expands.

Right now, the focus is on education and attracting riders who typically use a cash fare or 10-ticket packages. By the middle of next year, YRT hope to also sell monthly passes via Presto.

While YRT headquarters is in the region's south, it has had two distribution events in Newmarket and is eyeing expansion to retail and other outlets.

"What we have is working very well," Mr. Leary said.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

York Region Transit rider Kevin Ball has encountered a series of problems attempting to register and use his new Presto transit card.



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