



March 2009

For Immediate Release

York Regional Council – March 26, 2009

The Regional Municipality of York prepares for 2009 United Way fundraising campaign following a record-breaking effort in 2008

York Region is preparing for another successful United Way fundraising campaign for 2009, following an extremely successful 2008 campaign that saw York Region staff and York Regional Police raise \$238,000.

York Region was given the United Way of York Region's *Community Fund Spirit Award* in both 2008 and 2007 for outstanding fundraising campaigns.

York Region participates in Earth Hour Challenge

Following requests from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) York Regional Council unanimously endorsed the Region's participation in the World Wildlife Fund's 2009 Earth Hour challenge by turning off the lights on Saturday, March 28th from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

York Region will be turning off all non-essential lighting at two main locations:

- The Administrative Centre, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket
- The South Services Centre, located at 50 High Tech Road in the Town of Richmond Hill

Approximately 2,800 York Region employees and their families are also being encouraged to participate by turning off the lights at home.

York Region recognizes Administrative Professional Week, April 20th to 24th

York Region will recognize Administrative Professional Week between April 20th and 24th.

Administrative Professional Week, and Administrative Professional Day, April 22nd, recognizes the contributions of administrative professionals – through project co-ordination, event planning, marketing and other important roles that keep Canadian businesses running effectively.

York Regional Council's recognition follows a request from the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP), whose 1,500 members represent 34 chapters across Canada.

York Regional Council authorizes RFP for design of new Central Services Centre

York Regional Council today authorized staff to proceed with a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the design of a new Central Services Centre (CSC) to be located at the north-west corner of Yonge Street and Eagle Street in the Town of Newmarket.

The \$125 million facility, which will be built to environmentally-friendly LEED standards, will consolidate York Regional services currently housed in leased facilities throughout the Town of Newmarket, including Provincial Offences Act (POA) Courts currently located at the Tannery on Davis Drive.

Cost savings to Regional taxpayers to build a consolidated facility, rather than continuing to lease, is estimated to be \$35 million over 20 years.

April and May are Sustainable Works! months in York Region

April and May are *Sustainable Works!* months in The Regional Municipality of York.

Sustainable Works! Public Works partnering with our communities is a new annual campaign promoting the role of York Region Public Works in environmental sustainability through a series of community activities and events.

Public Works encompasses the services of transit, roads, water and wastewater, solid waste management and forestry within York Region's Transportation Services and Environmental Services Departments. Hundreds of York Region staff and volunteers and thousands of residents will participate in over 25 community events throughout *Sustainable Works!* months.

Construction of Savage Road vivastation in Newmarket to begin in late spring

York Regional Council has awarded a construction contract to Kiewit EllisDon to build a new vivastation at Savage Road in the Town of Newmarket. The award is subject to an acceptable final bid under \$1.5 million.

The Savage Road vivastation will be built as a standard York Region Transit (YRT) shelter on the north-east side of Yonge Street. Southbound service will be provided from an existing YRT shelter on the north-west side of Yonge Street.

Construction is scheduled to begin in late spring.

York Region has great successes in building green infrastructure

The Regional Municipality of York achieved another milestone in 2008 for our successful Greening Strategy program by increasing forest cover, creating greater public awareness of greening initiatives and securing a record amount of land from development.

Through restoration and tree planting programs, 33,000 trees and shrubs were planted on 40 sites across York Region. Another 34,000 trees were planted in the York Regional Forest. In addition, thousands of people were educated about our natural environment through the Region's popular Nature's Classrooms, Monthly Forest Walks and greening events.

The year 2008 will also be remembered as a banner year for conservation land securement in York Region. The Region and our partners secured a total of nine properties from development, comprising 315 hectares (782 acres) of land.

For 2009, York Regional Council has approved \$1.35 million for the Greening Strategy from the 2009 Capital Budget. This includes protecting strategic properties from development and the completion of a feasibility study to implement a backyard tree-planting program to enhance the Region's urban forest.

Since the Greening Strategy began in 2001 more than 879 hectares (2,189 acres) of conservation land have been secured from development.

York Region to develop integrated ISO 14001 environmental management system for waste management and water and wastewater services

York Regional Council received a report on the development of an ISO14001 Environmental Management System for Solid Waste Management facilities. As both Solid Waste Management and Water and Wastewater services are part of the Environmental Services department, the management system will be achieved by updating an existing Water and Wastewater ISO14001 registration.

York Region must establish, maintain and continually improve activities to reduce pollution, improve compliance and efficiency to achieve ISO14001 registration.

The cost of the integrated management system is estimated at \$18,750.

The Regional Municipality of York helps housing providers create safer playgrounds and more accessible facilities

York Region will assist social housing providers to create safer and more accessible social housing communities across The Regional Municipality of York. To pay for this work, Council endorsed a \$337,000 disbursement from the Region's \$500,000 Social Housing Innovation Fund, established in 2007 to help housing providers meet new standards for playground and accessibility modifications. This includes:

- \$211,115 to help housing providers create three new playgrounds and help cover the costs for required repairs to two other playgrounds
- \$125,937 to support the creation of an accessible parkette at a social housing community in the Town of Richmond Hill and retrofitting existing facilities

In York Region, there are more than 7,000 affordable rental and subsidized rental housing units operated by non-profit, co-operative and municipal organizations.

York Region strengthens commitment to affordable housing

York Regional Council today approved the first phase of a \$53-million social housing strategy to identify potential partnerships with the building development community and increase the number of new affordable housing units in The Regional Municipality of York.

There are currently 499 affordable housing units where development is underway and approximately 235 of them will provide housing to low-income households. Potential partnerships between York Region and the development community could create as many as 400 more affordable housing units.

Through a Request for Information process, York Region will invite the building development community to submit ideas for affordable housing development opportunities.

The \$53 million in funding was allocated to the Region through the *Investing in Ontario Act, 2008*, that allows the Provincial government to use a portion of any unanticipated year-end surplus to pay down the deficit and address priority public needs. The 2007/2008 surplus included \$1.1 billion in additional funding allocated to municipalities on a per capita basis to support infrastructure investments.

York Regional Council approves \$1 million expenditure to help vulnerable residents and develop a multi-year community services plan

York Regional Council today approved a plan to invest \$1 million to assist vulnerable residents immediately and commence development of a multi-year Community and Health Services plan.

The immediate expenditures include five new programs and one program enhancement that will:

- Improve support to the working poor
- Improve support to clients with multiple barriers
- Respond to residents' immediate needs

The original focus of the plan was to address crucial community needs and service gaps resulting from provincial under-funding of social and health services provided through the Region. But due to the economic downturn, the plan now places urgent focus on supporting vulnerable residents.

This expenditure to help vulnerable residents is funded through a 0.2 per cent tax levy increase in the Region's 2009 Operating Budget that was reserved for social services and housing.

Expected to be in place for 2010, the multi-year plan will focus specifically on provincially-mandated and Council-approved programs and services that the Community and Health Services department provides. It will highlight and assess key human services issues and challenges in York Region and develop strategic directions and best practices for responding to these issues.

York Regional Council has approved the printing and release of the 2009 YorkLink Directory

York Regional Council has approved the printing and release of *YorkLink: A Community Services Directory*, a comprehensive guide to more than 700 community service providers and related government agencies.

This 10th anniversary edition of *YorkLink* will be distributed in April to local community agencies, settlement agencies for new immigrants, child care centres, libraries, schools, government offices, and information kiosks, which use *YorkLink* to connect their clients to other community services.

YorkLink is available online through the York Region website at www.york.ca

In late April, printed copies will be available free-of-charge to the public by calling (905) 830-4444 or 1-877-464-9675, Extension 2151, or by emailing yorklink@york.ca

Translation assistance is available for *YorkLink* users by calling 1-877-263-6867.

Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, April 23rd at 9:30 a.m. at the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

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