

Stoney Creek News

Wal-Mart, water, Winona school

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Page: 01
Section: News

The year 2009 had its share of bad news (H1N1 deaths, job losses) and good news (Hamilton's win as part of the Toronto bid for the 2015 Pan Am Games, Hamilton Tiger-Cats' first playoff appearance since 2004).

Here are some notable news stories from close to home

FEBRUARY

Winona school

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board unveils plans for a new Winona public elementary school with a targeted opening date of September 2011.

APRIL

Local leader

Niagara West-Glanbrook Progressive Conservative MPP Tim Hudak announces he will run to become the party's next leader.

Bottled water ban

City public schools say they will ban the sale and purchase of bottled water in stages over the next two years.

CAS investigation

Dominic Verticchio, executive director of the Hamilton Children's Aid Society calls a case involving six children, ages two to 13 years old, one of the worst he has seen in his 30 years with the organization.

Police were called to a home on Third Road. Upon investigating the home they found that a two-year old boy was locked in a windowless basement with fecal matter smeared on the walls and a stench of urine in the air.

MAY

PCB concentrations

A first-ever Water Quality in Ontario Report released by the Ministry of the Environment identifies Windermere Arm, the channel between ArcelorMittal Dofasco and the Eastport Drive shoreline, as the key area for sediment contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls.

PCB concentrations in the harbour and fish have been falling in recent decades, reflecting a ban on their release into the environment in 1985. But levels in

many fish - bottom feeders in particular - remain too high for human consumption.

NHL hopes

Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger confirms he has talked to billionaire Jim Balsillie about relocating a NHL franchise to Copps Coliseum.

Special citizens

Lisa Bifano wins Stoney Creek's Junior Citizen of the Year award from the Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce, along with The Meat Factory, which picks up the Outstanding Business of the Year award. The Village Restaurant wins the Legacy Award and Hamilton Professional Firefighters Association Local 288 firefighter and fundraising public relations co-chair Tony Holubeshen earns the Citizen of the Year honour.

JUNE

Wal-Mart developments

While the proposed Wal-Mart development in Winona remains in limbo, politicians approve a \$100-million hotel and Wal-Mart development on the former site of a scrapyard on Centennial Parkway.

Hudak wins

Niagara West-Glanbrook Progressive Conservative MPP Tim Hudak elected June 27 as the party's 21st leader.

JULY

H1N1 death

Hamilton experiences its first death of a person with the H1N1 virus.

Public health officials confirm a 41-year-old Hamilton female with H1N1 died, but it was not known if the virus was a contributing factor in the death, as the individual had underlying health conditions.

Bestech Academy

The Ontario ombudsman criticizes the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for its "inept" oversight for more than two years of what he called an "illegal" operation of a small, private college in Stoney Creek.

The ombudsman says Bestech Academy Inc. was allowed to operate illegally while taking thousands of

dollars from students for worthless certificates.

Although the ministry had learned the academy had been advertising as a registered vocational college, while it was not registered, it continued to provide support, including \$60,000 from the Ontario Skills Development Program for tuition fees to send seven mature students for retraining.

Peach queen

Miss Knights of Columbus Marissa LaBianca crowned Miss Winona Peach Queen at the 2009 Winona Peach Queen Pageant.

Flooding

Heavy rains batter most parts of Hamilton, including Stoney Creek, causing flooding. Reportedly, an area on Queenston Road received 111.7 mm of rain.

Other areas, including Lakeview Avenue and the neighbourhood around Eastgate Square received several inches of water, causing damage to many homes.

AUGUST

Clark decision

Hamilton's interim integrity commissioner says Stoney Creek councillor Brad Clark had political motivations when he released a taped conversation between Mayor Fred Eisenberger and a Hamilton Spectator reporter last year.

Toronto lawyer **George Rust-D'Eye** says Clark should be reprimanded for his breach of the city's code of conduct, including making the report public. **Rust D'Eye** says there was no need to impose a fine against the veteran politician.

Clark, who admitted publicly in 2008, he released the taped conversation to a Hamilton Community News reporter, argued it was a case of "whistle blowing" to show the mayor had violated the city's code of conduct when he provided information from an in camera meeting to a reporter.

Wal-Mart war

Hamiltonians for Progressive Development file an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board against council's decision to allow a \$100-million hotel and Wal-Mart development at Centennial Parkway and the QEW.

Michael Desnoyers, chair of HPD, says the proposed development on 14.7 hectares of the former Waxman scrap yard property, violates the city's planning policies, including its recently approved Urban Official Plan and a number of provincial planning guidelines.

Pilot dies

The Hope and Kent Harrison Search and Rescue recover a body from BC's Fraser River, identified as

53-year-old Robert Woodhead of Stoney Creek.

Woodhead had disappeared after his helicopter crashed into the river Aug. 14. Woodhead had been contracted to work on the Intipam forest fire near Lytton, BC.

Woodhead graduated from Orchard Park Secondary School and was the father of two girls and two boys.

Wal-Mart war continues

Environment Hamilton becomes the second citizens group to formally challenge city council's decision to rezone land by Centennial Parkway and the QEW to make way for a big-box retail centre anchored by Wal-Mart.

SEPTEMBER

Work begins on the Hamilton Conservation Authority's 3.1-kilometre section of the 10-kilometre East Mountain Trail Loop, which will connect to Felker's Falls, Albion Falls, the Red Hill Valley and Chippawa trails, Valley Park and Mount Albion Conservation Area.

Brick by brick

Work begins at Saltfleet District High School to remove old brick and install new brick and related wall materials to the 1996 school, which suffered water damage to its outside surface.

Portions all around the building had lost their faces, with most of the damage on the west side near the daycare.

Battle continues

For the second time in two months, Hamiltonians for Progressive Development appeal a Wal-Mart development, joined at the OMB table by Environment Hamilton and Citizens Assessing Development on the Niagara Escarpment.

The organizations oppose council's 10-6 decision, which approved an \$85-million commercial development at the corner of Fifty Road and the Queen Elizabeth Way in Winona.

Flood costs rising

City financial staff estimate residential claims for Hamilton's two summer floods could top \$11 million.

Politicians approve a staff recommendation to boost the \$5,000 compassionate grant to \$6,000 for flooding victims who have been denied flood insurance. The additional grant is estimated to cost about \$5 million.

H1N1 at St. Mark's

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board confirms St. Mark Catholic elementary school in upper Stoney Creek has H1N1 swine flu.

OCTOBER

Overtime ends

Jim Balsillie, who was denied an opportunity to buy a NHL franchise for the third time releases a statement that he would not appeal Judge Redfield Baum's decision, which rejected his \$242.5 million bid for the Phoenix Coyotes.

Fred seeks term two

Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger announces he will seek a second term for office in next year's municipal election.

NOVEMBER

Pan Am win

Toronto's Golden Horseshoe bid is selected over cities in Peru and Colombia to hold the 2015 Pan Am games.

H1N1 outbreaks

As of Nov. 4, almost 100 Hamilton schools report H1N1 outbreaks. There is also a higher than usual absenteeism rate among workers at local businesses.

Health care officials vaccinate more than 33,000 people as of Nov. 14, while providing 15,200 doses to area hospitals and 32,850 doses to family physicians and another 7,760 doses to other health care facilities.

New chief

Glenn De Caire, a former staff superintendent with the Toronto Police Service, is introduced as the new Hamilton Police chief to begin Dec. 9.

DECEMBER

Former employee rattles city

Former director of Water and Wastewater Treatment for the City of Hamilton Abdul Khan sends 18-page e-mail with allegations of city officials withholding critical information from politicians about the cost of upgrades to the wastewater treatment facility, safety concerns over drinking water, financial irregularities and manipulation of documents to secure government stimulus funding.

Later, Hamilton Police confirm they are investigating a city department. The city's senior director of Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure Jim Harnum hires a lawyer who calls some of Khan's statements libelous.

Wal-Mart deal reached

A deal is reached between Smart Centres and Hamiltonians for Progressive Development and Environment Hamilton that could pave the way for the construction of a proposed \$100-million

Wal-Mart commercial development on Centennial Parkway.

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Vote for your top story

Let us know what you think the top story for Stoney Creek was in 2009. Was it

- Flooding in East Hamilton, Stoney Creek?
- Brad Clark rebuked by integrity commissioner over Tape-gate?
- Hudak wins Ontario PC leadership?
- Fight against two new Wal Marts?
- Stoney Creek Warriors win GHL championship?

Vote in our online poll. To nominate another story, e-mail editor@stoneycreeknews.com. We will publish the results next week.

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