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#### Message from the Director - Steven Hall

With summer in full swing and the demand for electricity breaking records, conservation efforts are at the forefront of daily news. While warmer temperatures typically trigger spikes in energy consumption, the need to conserve is really a year round necessity.

Indeed, the health and environmental impacts of excess energy use is proving particularly costly – a fact underscored by the Ontario Medical Association's recent report on *Illness Costs of Air Pollution 2005*. As the report explains, smog related illnesses contribute to the deaths of 5,800 Ontarians annually, a figure expected to almost double in the next 20 years.

At the Region of Peel, energy conservation efforts are well underway. I am proud to announce that in the upcoming weeks, Corporate Energy and Information Technology Services will jointly launch a computer shut down initiative that will remind all staff to power-off all non-essential office equipment before leaving for the night. By asking staff to participate in energy conservation, it reinforces the notion that everyone can make a difference. Every effort to conserve energy contributes to better air quality — not only for our local communities, but for Ontario and beyond.



#### Watt's New: 'Packing Up? Power Down'

Computers and office equipment are rapidly becoming one of the largest consumers of energy in Canada. Across Canada, 30 to 40 percent of computers are left running during non-business hours, unnecessarily contributing to wasted energy, higher electricity bills and greenhouse gas emissions. To help conserve energy, protect the environment and extend the life of computer equipment, Peel's computer shut down initiative asks staff to power down each evening. This initiative helps alert staff to the unrealized savings available in everyday conservation efforts. Each computer that is turned off can save approximately \$25 each year in energy costs. When multiplied by the number of computers in an office place, that's conservation that really adds up! Watch for the official program roll-out in the upcoming weeks.

#### Feature

On June 9, 2005, the Region of Peel was formally awarded an *Ontario Certificate of Leadership in Sustainable Energy Practices* for its contribution to provincial energy conservation. This certificate was presented by the Hon. Dwight Duncan, Minister of Energy, at the Ontario Energy Association's Conservation and Demand Management Forum. "Peel Region has proven to be a leader in

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sustainable energy practices said Minister Duncan. "It is this leadership and innovation that will help create a sustainable energy future for Ontario." This award follows Peel's recognition in *Building a Conservation Culture in Ontario*, a report by the government's Conservation Action Team. The report highlights best practices in energy management, identifies barriers to conservation and explores ways for the government to incorporate energy efficiency in policies and programs.

Accepting the award on behalf of Peel were Regional Chair Emil Kolb and Dan Labrecque, Peel's Treasurer and Commissioner of Finance. "Our energy efficiency initiatives have already paid dividends in financial savings and reduced green house gas emissions," explained Commissioner Labrecque. "We are delighted to receive such a prestigious honour from the province and will continue to lead conservation initiatives to benefit the Region and the environment." In keeping with the Region's continuous improvement philosophy, Peel was commended for its cost-saving, environmentally friendly initiatives such as: building retrofits, exploration of renewable energy alternatives, bi-fuel generation, energy audits, demand reduction programs and internal advisory services.



*Regional Chair Emil Kolb and Peel's Treasurer and Commissioner of Finance, Dan Labrecque, accepting the Ontario Certificate of Leadership in Sustainable Energy Practices*

## *Questions Answered Information by Peel Public Health*

### **What is smog and how does it affect our air quality and health?**

The term "smog" describes a mixture of pollutants which come from a variety of sources such as vehicle exhaust and coal fired power plants. Together, the pollutants appear as a brownish-yellow haze which is clearly visible on smog days.

The two key components of smog are ground level ozone and fine airborne particulate matter. Airborne particles have a significant effect on human health because they can penetrate deep within the lungs, causing severe respiratory problems, premature deaths, as well as increased hospital visits and lost days at work and school. Ground level ozone is a colourless gas that forms when sunlight heats up air pollutants on hot summer days. Periods of high ozone can last several days and generally occur with warmer temperatures, when a stagnant air mass traps pollutants over a region.

Air pollution is a year round problem. Be energy efficient so that you reduce the amount of smog-causing pollutants released into the air. Also ensure that you take measures to protect your health. Poor air quality can have negative health impacts on everyone, even healthy individuals. To learn more about the health effects of smog, please visit [www.peelregion.ca/health/smog](http://www.peelregion.ca/health/smog). Also visit the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's website at [www.airqualityontario.com](http://www.airqualityontario.com) where you can find information on air quality and the air quality index.

