



RYAN PFEIFFER, GUELPH MERCURY

A touring train will run along the tracks in Guelph, past the River Run Centre, to Campbellville and back.

# Tourist train on track

Train will run from Guelph to Campbellville and back

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**GUELPH** — Destiny Tours staff will soon be shouting “all aboard” as they bring a tourism train to the city next month.

“It’s a really interesting new addition to tourism in Guelph,” Mayor Karen Farbridge said yesterday, referring to lunch and dinner excursions to Campbellville and back.

Farbridge said the Guelph development has an intriguing twist.

“We’re the only municipality in Canada that owns its own railway,” she said, referring to the Guelph Junction Railway on whose track the train will run. Passengers will board the Ontario Southland Railway train, pulling 1950s-era railcars, at John Galt Park beside the River Run Centre.

The feasibility of a tourist train was proved by the Guelph Historical Railway Association in 1999-2000, when it ran fundraising excursions between Guelph and Campbellville.

“We were very successful and very well received,” president Steve Host said.

Such trains have proven successful, like Orangeville’s Credit Valley Explorer that makes regular 70-kilometre round trips south through rolling countryside to the outskirts of Brampton.

Destiny Tours International Inc., headed by John and Rita Carroll, organized group travel excursions for almost a decade before teaming with the local railways to offer the Guelph Junction Express. The tourism train will feature weekend dinner, brunch and sightseeing cars on the 55-kilometre round trip.

Dinner trip tickets will cost about \$59 each. The price for trips alone hasn’t been determined.

John Carroll said the sightseeing train, which hasn’t set a launch date, should appeal to the general public, businesses, organizations and schools wanting to delight people with special outings.

Carroll said his climate-controlled cars can operate year-round, adding to the train’s viability.

The Orangeville tourist train, which has been running for four years, had 15,000 passengers last year.

“It’s meeting our target, so we’re happy with it,” spokesperson Ted Wakeford said, adding the Guelph tourist train should also prove successful.

The tours are expected to last about two hours and 15 minutes.

# Gravel pit licence application pulled

Company says new application will be submitted to Ontario Municipal Board

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**PUSLINCH** — Members of a residents’ group battling a contentious gravel pit application in Puslinch Township will want to hold off a bit before uncorking the champagne.

Capital Paving has withdrawn its application for an aggregate licence at the site off Downey Road, but the company’s lawyer said Capital will soon resubmit a licence application “identical to the old one.”

Peter Pickfield said the company is taking the unusual step essentially to derail a possible legal challenge from the residents’ group about the process that landed the original application before the Ontario Municipal Board.

Capital feared the group “would spin this into a legal issue . . . that could drag this out a year or two before we even get to the OMB,” Pickfield said.

The Cranberry Area Ratepayers and Residents Association filed a motion with the OMB alleging the Ministry of Natural Resources did not properly consider some objections to the proposal before referring the matter to the municipal board.

“It’s very legalistic,” Pickfield said of the motion. “It doesn’t have anything to do with the merits of the proposal.”

Instead of taking the time to argue that motion, Pickfield said, the company has decided to resubmit its application and go through any new objections carefully to prevent the allegation from arising again.

“While we don’t think (the CARRA group) is right, it is a legal issue.”

But CARRA president Dennis Lever has another take.

“Any time I had to go back to the beginning and do it over it wasn’t because I’d got it right,” Lever said, suggesting Capital’s approach validates his group’s contention there were issues with the original process.

Lever noted an OMB hearing of the case scheduled to begin next month will be delayed several months by Capital’s latest direction, which he said will give CARRA more time to mount a case against the proposed pit.

Three weeks ago, Wellington County council voted 8-7 to turn down a bylaw that would have approved the Official Plan amendment required to move the pit application forward. It was the latest twist in Capital’s proposal to open a pit on farmland off Downey Road just south of Guelph.

Last November, county councillors voted 7-6 in favour of giving the same bylaw first and second reading. But at the January meeting the issue was referred back to the county’s planning department after new information provided by CARRA suggested there might not be as much usable gravel at the site as the company believes.

Yesterday, Pickfield said the company is committed to the site and will continue to pursue its application.

This was bad, though not unexpected, news for Lever.

“Our preference would be that they drop the whole thing, but I guess that’s a bit pie in the sky,” he said. “We weren’t expecting that.”

Capital’s licence application will be resubmitted in six to eight weeks, according to a company press release.

# South-end residents dealing with smelly problem — skunks

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**GUELPH** — If you live in Westminster Woods or Pine Ridge, it might be wise to buy some tomato juice, just in case.

Residents of those south-end neighbourhoods are complaining of skunks.

The black and white animals have been spotted in backyards and smelled in the area.

Ward 6 Councillor Karl Wettstein said the skunk complaints began about a little over a week ago.

“Every spring, I get a few phone calls. With the long winter, it appears as if perhaps there are a few more than there were last year,” he said.

City staff gathered a few tips on dealing with skunks after receiving inquiries from city councillors, including Coun. Christine Billings, the other Ward 6 representative.

She plans to put a bit of wolf urine on her property because she’s heard it keeps skunks away.

“It’s like they take over the neighbourhood,” she said. “Quite often, in the evenings, you had to close your windows because they were spraying. They’re cute, though. But not that cute when they’re spraying.”

The Guelph Humane Society only picks up skunks during the spring if they are injured. The organization recommends homeowners with skunk problems contact a

## What stinks?

**How to deal with backyard skunks**

- Skunks signal that they’ll spray by fluffing their fur, growling and lifting their tails above their heads.
- If you get sprayed, wash your skin with tomato juice, vinegar or carboloc soap.
- Call a humane removal service instead of trying to trap the skunks yourself.
- Lights and noise, like music, deter skunks.
- Keep pets indoors after dusk.
- Close off decks so skunks can’t make dens underneath your house.
- Don’t leave the garage door open if there is garbage inside.

Hamilton-based company called Humane Wildlife Control instead of trapping the animals.

Baby skunks die of starvation if the adult is trapped.

“It’s spring so all the animals are on the move. They have young, so trapping is not a good idea at this time of the year,” said humane society director Elizabeth Bonkink. “In fact, it’s an inhumane practice, regardless of if they are a nuisance or not.”

## at a glance

### GUELPH Four arrested in connection with weekend assault of two teens

Four people were arrested after two teenagers were assaulted Saturday. Around 7 p.m. Saturday, an 18-year-old Guelph male and a 15-year-old female went to an Algonquin Road residence, where four males and two females were already there, Guelph Police said. There was an argument and the 18-year-old was punched and kicked repeatedly by the group. The 15-year-old girl was also assaulted and forced to stay in the residence when she tried to leave, police said. The male was treated at hospital for facial injuries and the girl wasn’t injured. Daniel Hansen, 21, of Fergus, Tia Petrie, 28, of Guelph, Jaret Popp, 20, of Guelph and Daniel Nugent, 19, of Guelph were charged

with assault causing bodily harm. Petrie is also charged with uttering threats.

### GUELPH Police arrest suspect after man tries to break down woman’s door

A man tried to break down an apartment door Tuesday while a woman was inside the downtown home, Guelph Police said. A 26-year-old man was arrested early yesterday morning, minutes after the woman called police. He was charged with break and enter and two counts of breach of probation. There was \$200 in damage to the door in a Macdonell Street building at 1 a.m. Tuesday. Police said the man was not known by the 21-year-old woman.

Mercury staff

# MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS

The newest issue of Rex features the Environment, Waterloo Region and Guelph are at the forefront of Canada’s growing renewable energy industry, an industry that will benefit the environment and potentially create significant business and employment opportunities.

Consumers are demanding green and businesses are listening. Rex reports how local companies and certain industries are paying attention and taking steps to reduce their impact on the environment.



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