

## Thinking beyond the almighty water bottle

By CHRIS HALLIDAY  
WEEKLY STAFF WRITER

Paying more for a bottle of water than a litre of gas is just plain ludicrous, but yet many residents continue to do it.

Then after being gouged by the cost of water, many choose to gouge the environment either accidentally or not, littering the streets with little plastic presents all over the city.

It appears that for this reason among several others, city councils all across Ontario may seriously think about eyeing up a water bottle bans in city buildings shortly.

After the city of London, Ontario passed a bylaw prohibiting water bottles all of its city buildings late last month, Ward 5 councillor Alan Shefman lined up a similar ban for Vaughan when council reconvened this past Tuesday.

Council received Shefman's recommendation to ban the sale of bottled water in all city buildings at its Committee of the Whole meeting this past Tuesday. It should either accept or reject Shefman's recommendation through a ratification vote at its next council meeting on Sept. 9.

While a bottled water ban in all city buildings appears to be a good start, changing the mentalities of bottled water drinkers is a must.

Vaughan based company Forefront Homesprings Inc., which recently unveiled its T-Eau water filtration system earlier this summer, is hoping to change that mindset.

Lory Jackson, project manager at Forefront Homesprings Inc., claims the bottle water industry has done an excellent job making North Americans believe bottled water is safer or cleaner than your everyday, ordinary, run of the mill tap water.

"The funny thing is that a lot of bottled water is city water just gone through the process of filtration and put in a bottle," Jackson said. "You or I can bottle it at our house and as long as you say what is in it, than we can sell it."

In fact, the Chief Drinking Water Inspector of Ontario recently documented York Region's drinking water cleanliness standards to be an almost perfect score of 99.3 per cent.

"City water is monitored



Vaughan company Forefront Homesprings is trying to do away with plastic water bottles in restaurants, office space and homes with its recently unveiled T-Eau water filtration system. photo courtesy of Forefront Homesprings Inc.

more closely than bottled water," Jackson said. "Coming out of the treatment facility, it's monitored probably hourly, if not every minute."

While city water is by no means unsafe, Forefront believes it may be aging

water main infrastructures which may also scare drinkers into ultimately buying re-bottled tap water.

"You still have pipes in Toronto that are like 100-years-old. You still have wood water mains in Toronto," Jackson claimed.

"The distribution systems are where you have problems."

Forefront's fibre membrane system was originally developed around 20 years ago intended for municipal water and waste treatment use. Later, it was downsized

into a home unit, Jackson said. The system takes incoming city water, sends it through a carbon filter of membranes which reject anything larger than 0.02 microns.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

## Drowning pocketbooks and heading straight to landfill

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

"It flushes all that stuff down the drain and you're left with clean water coming out of the unit," Jackson said. "Pretty much everything is taken out except what will dissolve in the water."

Not only will Forefront's technology clear away any unwanted contaminants which may be picked up along the way to residents' faucets, it may also save bottled water drinkers and businesses a tonne of money at home and by the water cooler.

"The cost of a litre of water in your house is 0.0005 cents, so you can pretty much fill those 20 litre jugs that you put in your office water cooler a

thousand times for a penny," Jackson said, noting it seems ridiculous for offices to spend \$5 to 10 bucks for them. "We have one of the largest supplies of fresh water in this country, yet we find it necessary to buy water from wherever it comes from and ship it over here. We ship it, store it and the costs associated with that is huge to the consumer and the environment."

According to the GE Ecomagination website, a family of four goes through about 357 pounds of green-

house gas and 119 pounds of plastic waste per year. The idea is to bring those numbers down, Jackson said.

Forefront has installed

ing Greater Toronto Area, Jackson said, including Grano Restaurant in Toronto, the Scott Health Centre in Woodbridge, the Building Industry and Land

skid of water probably twice a year. Now, everybody has their own cup," Jackson said of BILD. "They fill it up in their office at the dispenser. They

bring it back to their desk and they use their mugs. None of their employees use water bottles anymore."

Roberto Martella, owner of Grano Restaurant, is pleased to offer his customers the choice of ultra-filtered tap

sparkling bottled water if they choose, "But once they taste T-Eau flat or T-Eau carbonated, most see no real need to go back to the bottle."

Jackson added the biggest challenge will be to educate the consumer, but don't be surprised if more companies try to take a look at different water filtration technologies.

"There are more people coming out with ultra-filtration systems because they are realizing that it is more and more appropriate for uses like this as the customer awareness and education grows," Jackson added. "This is nothing new, but it hasn't been applied to the household market very well until recently."

*"There are more people coming out with ultra-filtration systems because they are realizing that it is more and more appropriate for uses like this as the customer awareness and education grows... This is nothing new, but it hasn't been applied to the household market very well until recently."*

— Lory Jackson  
project manager for Forefront Homesprings Inc.

its water filtration systems in several different restaurants, office spaces and homes within the City of Vaughan and the surround-

Development Association's (BILD) headquarters in Don Mills and the Trent-Severn Waterway.

"They were ordering a

water with their meals.

"The response so far has been terrific," Martella said in a statement, noting he still offers customers