

Car Heaven saving environment, raising funds for charity

LINCOLN COUNCILLOR ENCOURAGING LOCAL RESIDENTS TO LOOK INTO CLEAN AIR FOUNDATION PROGRAM WHEN RECYCLING VEHICLE

BY SCOTT ROSTS
THIS WEEK

LINCOLN—Carla Carlson's car has been taken away to Car Heaven.

Although there was some sentimental attachment to the vehicle the Lincoln councillor is not upset. She is pleased that she can help contribute to the Car Heaven program, which recycles old vehicles in an environmentally responsible manner and allows for incentives on a new GM vehicle or a minimum \$60 charitable tax receipt towards a participating charity.

Carlson says her old vehicle had been sitting on her Vineland property and she was "inspired" to utilize the Car Heaven program, operated by The Clean Air Foundation, when she heard about it.

"When I heard about their program I was inspired to do it," said Carlson, adding it was an effective way to remove the vehicle from her property.

Through Car Heaven, vehicle owners can have their vehicle towed away, for free, to get it off the road. Since its launch in July 2000, Car Heaven and its program partners have retired more than 34,000 vehicles. The program was initially launched in the Greater Toronto Area and has now expanded across the province.

The vehicle is towed by a Car Heaven partner. Carlson's vehicle was towed away last Friday by 406 Auto Parts in Thorold, which assists with donations in the Niagara Region.

Getting more than 34,000 vehicles off the road pays off environmentally. The Clean Air Foundation

estimates this has resulted in the reduction of more than 25,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, 15,000 tonnes of carbon monoxide and 4,000 tonnes of smog-causing emissions.

Carlson says this is a major factor for Ontario residents.

"In 2005 the Ontario Medical Association said exposure to air pollution caused 290 premature deaths, 840 hospital admissions, 2,730 emergency room visits and 1.2 million minor illnesses," she said.

With that in mind, she donated her \$60 charitable tax receipt to the Asthma Society of Canada.

"It seemed fitting since smog is caused in great part by cars," said Carlson, adding residents need to be more proactive in doing what they can for the environment.

Fatima Dharsee, program manager of Car Heaven, says the smog problem is one of the major thrusts behind the program. One of the primary targets of the program is pre-1988 vehicles, followed by those made between 1988 and 1995.

"Getting those vehicles off the road is a big part of the program," she said.

Newer cars, she said, are generally built to run cleaner.

The second part, she said, is recycling them in an environmentally-responsible manner.

"Cars are the most recycled product on the planet," said Dharsee. "We need to make sure we do this right."

Any reusable parts are removed and prepared for resale, except for those which contribute to emissions. Steel is recycled and hazardous ele-

ments such as oil and gas are "handled responsibly".

Those who donate their cars will receive either a \$1,000 incentive coupon from GM, pending meeting certain qualifications, or can choose to have funds donated to participating charities. A tax receipt will be prepared for a minimum of \$60 for cars that are 12 years old, or older. Cars 11 years old or newer are bid on by members of the Ontario Automotive Recyclers Association.

"Overall we've raised more than \$1.2 million for our charities," said Dharsee.

This year's participating chari-

ties include Sunshine Dream for Kids Foundation, Canadian Diabetes Association, Canadian Hearing Society, Literacy Link Niagara, The Kidney Foundation of Canada, Epilepsy Ontario, Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, Asthma Society, Bereaved Families of Ontario, Canadian Red Cross, Epilepsy Society, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Muscular Dystrophy Canada and the Canadian Liver Foundation.

For more information on Car Heaven, including how to donate your car, visit www.carheaven.ca on the Internet, or call 1-888-731-7311.



Johnny LaFratta of 406 Auto Parts in Thorold picks up Lincoln Councillor Carla Carlson's old vehicle, to be recycled as part of the Car Heaven program. Carlson is encouraging other residents with old, broken-down vehicles to donate to the initiative, which is operated by the Clean Air Foundation.

SCOTT ROSTS/THIS WEEK