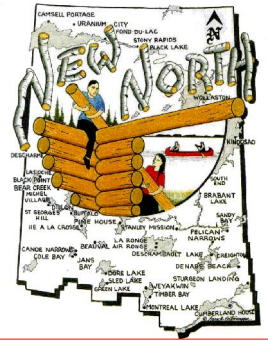


# New North



[www.newnorthsask.ca](http://www.newnorthsask.ca)

September 2014

## New North M&C Meeting: Get Your Walking Shoes On!

October 2nd's Mayor and Council meeting was a generally quiet affair—that is, until it wasn't

Sparked by the recent bus crash outside Buffalo Narrows that many feel was caused by the poor road surface, in which five students from La Loche were injured—one seriously—Mayors and Councillors called on New North to pressure the Ministry of Highways to act now on northern roads.

Estelle Laliberte, Mayor of Buffalo Narrows, was particularly adamant that New North organize a march on Regina.

Although most elected officials in the room silently said “you first, Estelle,” the point was taken.

Following the meeting on Monday, New North issued a press release strongly criticizing the state of northern roads.

Although not the first time anyone has done that, the response from government nevertheless took us by surprise.

The Ministry of Highways issued their own statement, and ministry officials scrambled to contact New North to offer their side of the story.

The good news is that the ministry has plans lined up for northern roads next year—including a “recapping” of many gravel roads.

We are also optimistic that the ministry will be looking very seriously at two or three major projects in the north, and will be setting aside money leading up the next provincial election.

At the very least, we believe the ministry will be more forthcoming in communicat-

ing with northern elected officials about their plans, and hope to receive someone from the ministry at the next New North meeting.

But keep your walking shoes on, just in case.

Other highlights from the M&C included a presentation by Tim Trottier of the Ministry of Environment on the latest developments in the ministry's caribou strategy.

As well, Hugh McLaughlin presented an overview of the new Community Safety Officer Program, and Ministry of Government Relations ADM Keith Comstock updated everyone on recent happenings around the Gas Tax, New Building Canada Fund, and next year's Municipal Operating Grants.

The next New North meeting is set for January in Prince Albert.



*The two Als: Cr Al Sayn (left) and CEO Al Loke put away their differences for the camera at the October New North Mayor and Council meeting in Prince Albert.*

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# Issues in Tax Enforcement

**This October 15 Administrators Conference will focus on tax enforcement. For those Administrators and officials who can't be there, New North will make available some of the materials handed out at the event on our website. So what are some of the issues in tax collection and enforcement?**

Governments of all shapes and sizes face the problem of tax collection. For municipal governments, the issues in tax collection are partly shaped by the kind of “government” municipalities actually are. For instance, municipalities have very limited law making power; you can't put someone in jail for not paying taxes. The federal government, on the other hand, can make laws very specifically to jail people who don't pay their income tax. Not paying tax, for the federal government, can be a criminal offence.

So municipalities are left with civil proceedings. That means going to a civil court, which means paying for a lawyer. For a whole variety of reasons, our guess is that going to court is a rare occurrence, especially in the north.

Smart senior governments know this. In Saskatchewan, the provincial government's municipal operating grants (MOG) to northern municipalities actually factor in a certain level of taxpayer default, so that municipalities with historically low rates of tax collection receive a little extra money to make up for it.

Going ahead, though, tax enforcement proceedings may become more necessary for municipalities. There are a couple of reasons for this. For starters, the government will soon have the power to “claw back” non-collected school taxes from the MOG. This will mean that municipalities that are not following the proper procedures in relation to the collection of school taxes could soon find themselves paying for it out of their own pocket.

Secondly, with senior government's no longer willing to put up for infrastructure, municipalities will increasingly find themselves falling back on their tax base to pay for essentials such as water and sewer. As well, debt-limits are based on “own sourced revenues”—including taxes. The more you collect, the more you can borrow.

## **Caribou No Show Highlights the Need for Drastic Action**

**Biologist Tim Trottier, from the Ministry of Environment, was a special guest at New North's Mayor and Council Meeting.**

Trottier's presentation focussed on the work being done through the ministry's Range Assessment and Planning process. To find a copy of the research parameters of the process, take a look at [www.environment.gov.sk.ca/woodlandcaribou](http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/woodlandcaribou).

A key factor in the disappearance of the caribou is habitat destruction. Unfortunately for the caribou, two of the major contributors to habitat destruction—the encroachment of industry and wildfires—present difficult, if not immovable, impediments to restoring caribou to sustainable numbers.

The ministry is also concerned about the potential effects of climate change on the caribou's habitat.

Discussion following the presentation noted the government's support for “let it burn” wildfire policies, and the effects of an increase in the number of wolves in the caribou range. Trottier noted that the ministry had no plan to order a cull to reduce the predatory activity of wolves.

## Ministry of Justice on Hand to Give Low-down on CSOs

The New North Mayor and Councillor Meeting heard from Bill McLaughlin, of the Ministry of Justice, about the province's plan for what they are calling Community Safety Officers (CSOs).

CSOs will have the ability to enforce bylaws as well as some provincial Acts, such as *The Traffic Act* and others related to liquor and gaming.

Some points to consider:

- CSOs will fall under the jurisdiction of Section 4 of *The Police Act*, meaning that they will be subject to the same complaint process as regular police officers
- It might be difficult, but not impossible, for CSOs to be “shared” by communities on a regional basis.
- If communities do share a CSO, their bylaws will need to line-up
- CSOs will need to be trained; estimated cost of around \$10,000
- Radio and PPTSN subscription may be required; cost of \$15,000 pa
- The start-up and ongoing of a CSO would be a minimum of \$115,000; the cost of an RCMP officer, by contrast, is around \$170,000

You can hear Bill speak more on this at the upcoming Northern Justice Symposium.

### Bylaw Officers: The Other Enforcement Alternative

New North's proposal for a regional bylaw officer was floated at the recent Mayor and Council meeting, but with the government's CSO plan in the works, communities have a choice to make.

The difference between a CSO and a regular bylaw officer is jurisdiction. Where a CSO can enforce both bylaws and provincial Acts, a bylaw officer can only enforce bylaws. However, the fly in the ointment for CSOs is that they may not be shareable—in other words, the CSO will only have jurisdiction within the community that they are employed by. Bylaw officers can be regionalized, and farmed out to communities when needed.

Although it has been suggested that communities ought to lobby for additional RCMP officers instead, it has to be remembered that the RCMP sets its own enforcement priorities—and those priorities do not largely include enforcing bylaws. The benefit of a CSO or bylaw officer employed by the community is that the officer's duties would

be directed entirely by the community, enforcing bylaws that the RCMP generally won't touch.



*Mayor Gord Stomp contemplating a beardless future at the New North Meeting in Prince Albert.*

### November 25-27: Northern Justice Symposium, Art Hauser Centre, PA

This is considered a must attend-event for members of Community Police Boards and everyone interested in justice and policing issues in the north. Registrations are open now and can be found by going to [www.newnorthsask.ca](http://www.newnorthsask.ca) or calling our office.

## From the CEO: Al Loke

To get things done in the north, we have to work together. That is the one thing that, over time, has proven again and again to be the truth of the matter.

Last month I met with Cameco to discuss a potential contribution by the company to the Northern Water and Sewer program. As we all know, the federal government's NBCP, which we were all relying on to pay for two-thirds of the program, fell through, leaving northern municipalities wondering where the money was going to come from.

Cameco vowed to take the issue to government. Although we'd like to see more than that, it does highlight to me the value of having a huge player like Cameco on our side. Cameco's interest in the north is to make money for their shareholders—we all know that. And at that they do a good job. Last year their revenues, across the board, were around \$2 billion; to put that in perspective, the Saskatchewan government's

revenues were about \$13 billion. If Cameco were a crown corporation, they would be putting around \$500 million a year back into the Saskatchewan government's coffers; even just 10% of that would solve northern infrastructure issues forever.

But Cameco is also interested in seeing northern communities remain sustainable. It is in their interests for that to happen, because they draw half their workforce from the north. The two agreements Cameco has with the government are about creating employment and other opportunities for northern residents.

We know there is more to come from Cameco in the coming months. But Cameco's ongoing value to the north will be measured not just by the money it shells out, but in the support they can provide to northern communities on a range of fronts.

Let's see that collaboration continue!

## New North Executive

### Chair:

Mayor Georgina Jolibois · West

### Board Members:

Councillor Al Sayn (Vice Chair) · Far North

Mayor Gordon Stomp, Village of Air Ronge - Central region

Mayor Val Deschambeault · Eastern Region

Mayor Kelvin Roy · Member at Large

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## New North Mission Statement

**New North - SANC Services Inc.** (Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities) through strength in unity is organized to advocate, negotiate and initiate, improvements for the interests and concerns to the Local, Provincial and Federal Governments to enhance the quality of life for Northern people within the Northern Administration District (NAD) of Saskatchewan.