

Hon. **Donna Harpauer** is the new Minister of Government Relations, Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs.

What changes will that bring? Beats me.

See page 4 for story.

## New North AGM

*November 17-18, Prince  
Albert Travelodge*

Saskatchewan Association of  
Northern Communities

**NEW  
NORTH**

## Inside this month ...

- News & Updates
- Municipal Elections Guide
- Code of Ethics for elected officials
- We think someone is living in the fire escape stairwell

**Monthly Newsletter**  
**August 2016**

## Premier Announces Major Funding for La Loche

**A**t a gathering in La Loche on August 16, Premier Brad Wall announced a slew of initiatives for the community spanning 7 ministries and totalling well and truly over \$1 million.

The funding package includes about \$1.4 million for the construction of 14 affordable rental units, in a partnership between Sask. Housing and Methy construction, and \$465,000 for two new training programs through the Dumont Technical Institute and Northlands College, which will offer new Adult Basic Education programs. Northlands will also offer a new Tri-Trades program in heavy equipment, truck and transport and automotive mechanics.

The Ministries of Advanced Education and Education are partnering with the First Nations University of Canada to offer a new Dene Teacher Education Program (DTEP) for up to 30 students over four years, training local university students to teach local students. The province is contributing half of the \$480,000 program costs, with the school division and First Nation covering the remainder.

It was announced that the Ministry of Health has hired an additional community mental health nurse to provide counselling and around the clock on-call services, as well as a new suicide prevention worker/community wellness worker, who will start later this month.

The Ministry of Justice is funding a second full-time Victims Services Co-ordinator, as well as a new half-time Community Justice Co-ordinator.

It was also announced that the Northern Lights School Division is developing its 2016-17 school plan to improve outcomes for students.

And the Ministry Government Relations staff in La Ronge completed an Official Community Plan for the municipality, with the ministry also acting as the storefront for the interaction between federal authorities and provincial and community partners.

Premier Wall told those attending the funding announcement that “[his] promise to you is that the government of Saskatchewan will be with you every step of the way.”

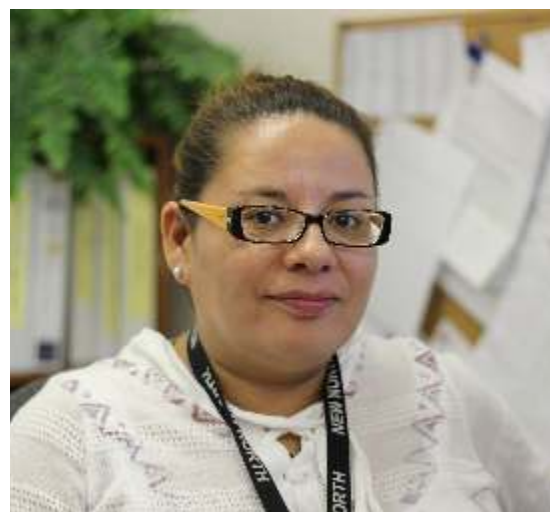
# NewNorth News & Updates

## If Losing One Administrative Assistant is Careless, What does it Mean When You Lose 17?

We've always been admirers of Lady Bracknell, and it seems appropriate to quote her now, with slight variation, in light of New North turning over yet another Executive Assistant, with Shivon Venne leaving us in August to take up a position with Sport, Culture and Recreation. Shivon was our 5<sup>th</sup> EA in 4 years.

But no mind, because we've hired Emily Ross to replace Shivon. Emily comes recommended by the good people at EAs R US, and has a solid background in accounting and finance. She is also chipping away at a degree in commerce from Athabasca University in her spare time.

So, as Emily debates whether to bother trying to learn our last names no not, we say a sad goodbye to Shivon, and wish her all the best. You did a good job, EA-#17, serial number 34790002209.



Emily Ross is New North's New EA

## Regional Justice Symposium: Ile a la Crosse

We're looking forward to heading over west to spend a day at the Regional Justice Symposium on **September 30**, which is being held at the **Rossignol High School at Ile a la Crosse**.

The event is put together by the Ile a la Crosse Community Safety Board, with the intent of discussing strategies to make our communities safer. Topics on the agenda will include community policing, alternative justice and developing community tools to achieve safer communities. There is a special emphasis on break out sessions, so bring your talking shoes. For more information, contact Donny Favel by emailing: [dfavel99@hotmail.com](mailto:dfavel99@hotmail.com).

## New North AGM: November 17, Prince Albert Travelodge

Municipal elections have reminded us that New North's Annual General Meeting is on November 17, at the Prince Albert Travelodge. New North members will have the chance to join the New North Executive if they like. Any northern municipal elected official is eligible to be on New North's Executive, with five spots needing to be filled, one from each of the four sectors (far north, central, east and west), and one member at large.

## Census Response Rate Was Very Good, Even in the North, Apparently

The federal government is understandably ecstatic about the tremendous success of the 2016 census, with a response rate above 98%. With a lot of funding for municipalities (and provincial governments) dependent on population figures, it was in everyone's interest

for people to open up their door when the census-taker came knocking.

We don't have official response rates for the north, but our personal contact, Emily, says that her team of census-takers got a very high response rate—higher than 96%.

### Census Release Schedule

February 8, 2017	Population and dwelling counts
May 3, 2017	Age, sex and type of dwelling
August 2, 2017	Families, households and marital status, Language
September 13, 2017	Income

## Those Broadband Internet Expansions into Northern Communities

Proving that there are only theoretical limits to how many times you can repackage an announcement, especially if it has something to do with the Internet, Sasktel has once again said that it is partnering with the federal government to expand broadband Internet to northern communities.

The communities getting new broadband service includes: Bear Creek, Black Lake, Brabant Lake, Canoe Narrows, Clearwater River Dene Nation,

Dillon, Dore Lake, Far IR [sic], Fond du Lac, Grandmother's Bay, Jans Bay, Missinipe, Patuanak, Red Earth, Shoal Lake, Sled Lake, Southend, St. George's Hill, Stanley Mission, Stony Rapids, Sucker River, Turnor Lake, Wadin Bay, Wahpeton, Waterhen Lake, and Wollaston Lake.

Sasktel is covering about \$2.5 million of the project, with the federal government coming in with the other \$7.5 million.

## Ile a la Crosse Planning its Own Cable Internet Service

Speaking of fast access to the Internet, we just discovered a new reason to move to the Northern Village of Ile a la Crosse after they announced they are planning to bring speeds as fast as 30 MBS to the community with a new cable service courtesy of the municipality.

To put that speed in perspective, Sasktel offers up to 5 MBS, with realistic speeds of bleh.

The Ile a la Crosse Communication Society Inc, which is wholly owned by the village, received funding to become an Internet provider with a grant of \$130,000 through the Community Business Development Grant program as part of the Clarence Campeau Development Fund.

General Manager of ICSI, Jansen Corrigan, said they will be the first small community in the northern Saskatchewan to offer this kind of service.

Once it is up and running, cable customers will be able to bundle their cable packages with the Internet to save some costs. There will also be a full time position created as a result of the new service.

No pricing has been set for the service. With speeds that fast, we are anticipating about a million bucks.

## Northern Municipal Election Dates 2016

Municipality	Election Date	Criminal Background Check Bylaw?
Creighton	October 26	No
La Ronge	October 26	Yes
Beauval	October 26	Don't Know
Buffalo Narrows	October 26	Yes
Sandy Bay	October 26	Yes
Dore Lake	October 26	No
Cole Bay	October 26	No
Jans Bay	September 28	Not Sure
Green Lake	October 26	Not sure
Ile a la Crosse	October 26	Yes
La Loche	October 5	Yes
Pine House	September 21	No
Stony Rapids	October 26	Yes
St. George's Hill	October 26	No
Turnor Lake	October 26	Yes
Weyakwin	October 26	Yes
Air Ronge	October 26	No
Cumberland House	October 26	No
Patuanak	Not Available	
Black Point	October 26	No
Denare Beach	October 26	No
Michel Village	October 26	Yes
Timber Bay	Not Available	
Pelican Narrows	October 26	Yes

### Northern Settlement Election Dates & Places 2016

**Bear Creek – Wednesday – September 28, 2016 – 7:00 p.m. – Bear Creek Community Hall**

**Brabant Lake - Wednesday – September 28, 2016 – 2:00 p.m. – Brabant Lake Community Hall**

**Camsell Portage – Wednesday – September 21, 2016 – 1:00 p.m. (Contingent on Airplane Flights)**

**Descharme Lake – Wednesday – September 28, 2016 – 1:00 p.m. – Descharme Lake Community Hall**

**Garson Lake – Wednesday – September 21, 2016 – 1:00 p.m. – School Activity Centre**

**Missinipe – Wednesday – September 28, 2016 – 10:00 a.m. – Missinipe Community Hall**

**Sled Lake – Wednesday – October 5, 2016 – 7:30 p.m. – Sled Lake Community Hall**

**Stanley Mission – Wednesday – October 5, 2016 – 5:00 p.m. – Stanley Mission Community Hall**

**Uranium City – Wednesday – September 21, 2016 – 7:00 p.m. (Contingent on Airplane Flights)**

**Wollaston Lake – Wednesday – September 21, 2016 – 1:00 p.m. – (Contingent on Airplane Flights)**



# Cabinet Shuffle 2016

The Premier Brad Wall's cabinet shuffle has brought both new and familiar faces to the front bench.



First of all, we say hello again to Ken Cheveldayoff, who is back as Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport. Scott Moe returns as Minister for the Environment, taking over from Herb Cox. Mr Cox is taking some time to deal with cancer treatment, so we wish him all the best. You may recall that Moe was the Environment Minister before getting the promotion to Advanced Education.

The new Advanced Education minister is new-comer Bronwyn Eyre from Saskatoon. The minister has had a rough start to her new job, having to "walk back" comments she made in one of her media columns a few years ago where she described some climate change research as "witchcraft." She is reported to have said that the comments were written in jest. We know the feeling.

There is a new Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, Dave Marit (former President of SARM), and Christine Tell moves from Corrections and Policing to the Ministry of Central Services. Gord Wyant, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, is still that, but now there should be no longer any confusion about whether the Ministry of Corrections and Policing is actually a ministry or what it is, because Wyant takes over the whole shebang now.

The big news for us is probably the arrival of Donna Harpauer as Minister of Government Relations and Minister responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs. The minister's first job will be to learn the longest title in politics without looking at her flash cards. Jim Reiter, the former minister for all those things, is now the Minister of Health. Reiter's first business will be to figure out how to get a few more things into his title, perhaps by adding health a couple more times. Harpauer leaves behind Social Services, the role which is now being done by another newcomer, Tina Beaudry-Mellor. The Minister for Alliteration, aka Rural and Remote Health, is still Greg Ottenbreit which, we think you'll agree, is pretty good. Joe Hargrave, the new Prince Albert MLA, is Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.



**Jim Reiter is now Minister of Health! Health! Health!**

## Minister of Government Relations Appointment Could Signal Reform is on the Way. Or Not.

When the then Minister of Government Relations Minister Jim Reiter gave closed-off his remarks to municipal officials at the SUMA Convention last February, you could have sworn he was saying goodbye as "our" minister.

It turns out he was. This month, he took on the new role as Minister of Health—aka, Minister for Tackling Some Really Big Changes, including shepherding home a reduction in the number of health regions and the likely rationalization of services. No doubt, he has been earmarked for this role because of his exceptional work as a formidable, no-nonsense communicator in his job as Minister of Government Relations, especially notable during last year's fire emergencies. There are few people, let alone cabinet ministers, who can command so much respect.

But the appointment of Donna Harpauer as the new Minister of Government Relations also suggests that "transformational change" may be about to hit the municipal sector, too.

Harpauer's time as Minister of Social Services was not without its controversies, but she was quite successful in pushing through some potentially difficult changes, such as the sale of liquor stores. Unlike Reiter, Harpauer has no stakeholder allegiances to worry about in the municipal sector. So, if there are any big policy changes coming, what might they be? We take a look 3 or 4.

### 1. Municipal Amalgamations

We think municipal amalgamations are the least likely to happen—so, using our logic of always being wrong—the most likely to happen. Municipal



amalgamations have been a thing in Manitoba of late as a result of government enforcing legislation requiring municipalities of less than a 1000 people to join with another municipality. In 2013-14, over 100 municipalities became 47, reducing the overall number of municipalities in the province from 197 to 137.

The prospect of municipal amalgamations in Saskatchewan got raised by again by small government types as government began talking about “transformational change.” No doubt the Saskatchewan government is looking very closely at the outcome in Manitoba to see if any real savings occurred. In preparation for its assault on the municipal sector, the Manitoba government commissioned research into municipal “strength indicators,” one of the criteria of which was, and this is no joke, “growth of female population age 20-39.” Look out for government-commissioned reports seeking to identify the number of women of child-bearing age, firm of thigh and stout of constitution. Here, it is likely amalgamations would be aimed at the rural sector. While lower administrative costs and efficiencies are cited as reasons to amalgamate, as far as the revenue sharing formula goes, no money would be saved, as the rural formula is basically the number of kilometres of road they have (70%), plus a per capita allocation. Neither of those things would change, since reducing the number of municipalities doesn’t suddenly eliminate the kilometres of road you have, or the number of people that are served.

The rural municipal sector in Saskatchewan is very powerful, and no government would want to get on their bad side. The Manitoba Municipal Association got tough with government, to the extent of mounting a legal challenge to forced amalgamations. You would expect nothing short of scorched earth from SARM if government went down the same path.

## **2. Tweaking the Revenue Sharing Formula**

Public Accounts show that provincial sales tax (PST) for 2015-16 dropped to \$1.28 billion, as against budget of \$1.4 billion. That translates into a revenue sharing pool of \$250 million in 2017-18, a drop of about \$20 million from this year. Northern revenue sharing, everything else being equal, will be about \$19 million—down by \$1 million from this year.

But what about over the long-term? Might government impose a cap at \$250 million, with a 2-3% chaser each year? Or simply lower the percentage of PST that goes into the pool? Either way, it’s a double whammy: a generally lower pool (from falling PST revenues), combined with a lower point take, would definitely hurt.

## **3. Education Property Tax Mill Rate Increase**

If you are wondering what this is all about, join the queue. Government part-funds the cost of education using taxes collected by municipalities. This is

called the Education Property Tax. After reform in 2009-10, the share of education funding from property taxes is about 36%, with government picking up the other 64% (that is, a 36/64 split). Government sets a mill rate for education property taxes, just like a municipality can set a mill rate for its own taxes. The government’s mill rate (which is about 5 mills for residential properties) hasn’t changed since 2013.

A few years ago, government dropped hints of wanting a bigger share of property taxes, but the Premier is on record as saying government won’t touch the EPT mill rate until economic conditions improve. In its discussion of potential tax increases going forward, the 2016-17 budget documents said that “changes to EPT remain an area of consideration for government.”

To bring municipal/provincial shares of education funding to the fabled 60/40 split, government would need to get about \$100 million more than the present \$650 million from property taxes.

In order to stave off a taxpayer revolt—and believe me, we are pretty revolting already—municipalities would likely have to absorb the vast majority of that one or two mill squeeze on their finances.

Perhaps one factor in favour of nothing happening here is the fact that the share of education funding from property taxes has been creeping up without government needing to pop up the mill rate. According to Public Accounts, EPT revenue climbed \$33 million this year, or 5.3%, due to more housing construction. The \$39 million budgeted increase in EPT was actually 72% of the Ministry of Education’s \$52.8 budgeted increase to school operating grants last year. We can see a clear trend here: despite EPT mill rates staying the same, the EPT is taking an increasing share of the school grant, having gone from 34% in 2013, to almost 36% today. Within four or five years, everything else being equal, government will have reached its ideal 60/40 split—all without having done anything other than under-matching the municipal share of education funding! (Having said all that, the numbers above depend on how we measure the education grant. For this year, the school operating grant and capital grant are allocated separately. If those are added back together again, the share of total education coming from municipal property taxes is back to about 33%).

## **4. A Combination of all the Above.**

We shouldn’t count out the possibility of government taking a little from columns a, b and c. Voluntary amalgamations, combined with a small tweak to revenue sharing and a half a mill increase to EPT, over the space of three years or so, might give the sector the time they need to make structural adjustments to cover lost revenues.

# Municipal Elections 2016

## ...New North's Quick Guides

### When are municipal elections?

Municipal elections in northern Saskatchewan are every four years. They used to be every three years, but changed in 2012 to bring them in line with the election dates in the Mayan calendar.

In the north, elections can take place on certain Wednesdays in September or October, depending on if anyone has a wedding or engagement or whatever.

### 2. Who is eligible to be a candidate or vote?

Any resident of a municipality can vote, as long as they are over 18, a Canadian citizen, have been living in the municipality for at least three months, and a resident of Saskatchewan for at least six months.

Candidates have to fulfil some of the above criteria, and in addition find five people who can stand being in the same room as them long enough to get signatures for the nomination form.

### 2a. What if I have a criminal background?

A criminal background is not a requirement to hold municipal office—this is not Toronto. You may have to submit a criminal background check if the municipality has passed a bylaw to that effect. A criminal foreground check is no longer a requirement.

### 3. What if I'm the auditor of the municipality?

Trick question: northern municipalities don't have auditors. Just kidding: no, you're disqualified to run for office in that municipality. Also, if you are a judge.

### 4. What if I'm employed by the municipality? Can I be a candidate or vote?

That's two questions: yes, you can vote if you are an employee. However, employees of municipalities need to take a leave of absence to be candidates. If you are elected to council, then you are deemed to have resigned as an employee with the municipality.

### 5. When is nomination day? How do nominations work?

Nomination day is five weeks before the election. Ten days before nomination day, the returning officer (ie, the municipal administrator) will call for nominations. To determine when that day is, you count back 11 days from the day after nominations closed. Nominations are received between 9am and 4pm, including lunchtime, during the nomination period.

### 6. Can an administrator refuse my nomination if they think I am not qualified to run for office?

No. It is up to you to attest to your eligibility on your nomination form. A returning officer is not authorized to reject nominations, even if they think you are kind of "funny looking." Just wait until they finish their cigarette, and try again.

### 7. What happens if a candidate dies?

The so-called Weekend at Bernie's clause of *The Local Government Election Act* (s57) allows for returning officers to "engage in a lively farce whereby any recently deceased candidates may be artificially animated to provide the appearance of being alive for the purpose of private amusement."

Just kidding: the election proceeds as if the candidate had never been alive, a la *It's a Wonderful Life*.

### 8. What happens if I am elected, but wasn't actually eligible to even run for office?

Hoo boy, now we're getting into the heavy stuff. You can be disqualified even after you are elected if it turns out you weren't eligible, wrote in the "Do Not Write Here—Office Use Only" part of the nomination form, bribed the wrong people to vote for you, or for any other of violation of *The Local Government Election Act*.

## Voter Guide to Voting



### 1. Are you qualified to vote?

The biggest question prospective voters have is whether they are qualified to vote.

Check for a pulse to find out.

### 2. Being able to remember your name is an important prerequisite for voting.

*Handy tip:* See if your wife has sewn your name into your underwear!



### 3. Who to vote for is up to you, but be sure to scrutinize the ballot carefully to see if you are one of the candidates.



### 4. Local government plays a crucial role in determining the quality of life of residents in your community. It is important to cast your vote responsibly and with the best interests of the community in mind.



## The Donald Trump Guide to Electoral Success

1. Start spreading rumours that your opponents are gravely ill.
2. Pick the most divisive local issue you can think of, and take an unprincipled stand on it.
3. Money raised through campaigning should be directed at keeping any one of your private businesses of your choosing afloat.
4. If you can't think of a campaign slogan of your own, go ahead and steal someone else's.
5. When things start going bad, make a vague and unspecified apology
6. Use words. You want to show people you know words.
7. Tell people even if you lose, you win, so they might as well vote for you.
8. Put it out there that you'll sue everyone who doesn't vote for you.
9. Marry a babe.



## Comment Box Do Elected Officials Carry Higher Expectations of Personal Conduct, and What Does That Mean Anyway?

BY MATT HELEY\*

In the last month two elected officials in Saskatchewan resigned from public office due to conduct.

The first was Don McMorris, who drove while under the influence, and worse still, got caught doing it. He resigned from cabinet.

The second was the municipal councillor from the RM of Browning, southeast of Regina, who resigned his office in the wake of the outrage following remarks he made on social after the death of Colten Boushie. He said, and I'm paraphrasing here: "[The shooter's] only mistake was leaving three witnesses."

The resignation of each from at least some of their duties of public office (McMorris is still an MLA) seems to suggest an understanding that "citizens expect the highest standards of conduct from the members they elect," to quote the draft Code of Ethics for Members of Council.

Cynically, most of us probably know that McMorris' and our rural councillor's resignation had nothing to do with sending messages about appropriate personal conduct in public office. The biggest cost of keeping McMorris around was a political one. The councillor resigned, most likely, because of the extreme embarrassment generated by the publicity related to his comment—which stretched from one side of the country to the other. It is highly unlikely—although perhaps we should give him the benefit of the doubt—that his deeply off-colour remark was not a true reflection of his feelings. If he ran for office again, would he be elected? Again, cynically, I'd say in a landslide.

Even so, their resignations raise the age old question of the extent to which elected officials should, are or, held to a higher standard of conduct. What are the appropriate standards, and who sets them? Who are these "citizens" mentioned in the Code of the Ethics? And what if I disagree with their ideas of "good conduct"?

There is certainly a case to be argued that an elected official, especially an MLA, should only ever be removed—in the absence of something really criminal—by the people who put her there: the electorate. Implied in this argument is that the standards of elected official's individual conduct is really a matter for the people they represent to figure out.

A good example of where this logic goes is actually playing out in the race for the highest political office in the world going on right now to the south of us. This may shock you, but Donald Trump is not as universally reviled as some of his

utterances would likely lead us to believe. His attack on Mexico for "sending people [to the US] that have lots of problems ... [T]hey are bringing drugs, and bringing crime, and their rapists," did not disqualify him for running for public office. He told an audience that he could go into Times Square, shoot someone, and not lose any votes. We presume the victim was not a supporter (probably the reason he was shooting them). Comments like that only seemed to raise him up in the eyes of many Americans, as he went on the win the Republican nomination.

If Trump becomes the next President of the US, do his bigoted views become the new baseline for ethical conduct in public office there? Or is there some other, abstract but also universally acknowledged standard that comes into play at some point? Perhaps his colon will rise up and strangle him? In the absence of a just God, sometimes we need a lower intestine to restore the cosmic balance.

A Code of Ethics for elected officials is a way of establishing a set of guidelines, and at some point in the next 12 months municipal councillors will have an actual Code of Ethics to follow (it doesn't differ all that much from the one observed by MLAs). Of course, some people will say that anyone who needs a document to tell them how to behave properly probably shouldn't be in office to begin with. But this is to mistake the point of a Code; it isn't an instructional manual. There's an old joke about the Italian traffic code. Italians are renowned as terrible drivers, yet everyone knows the traffic code. Why? So they know who to blame when an accident happens. A Code of Ethics is like that: it won't stop you acting like a pillock, but when the time comes, it'll give your electors, and fellow councillors, something to hang you with.

But a Code of Ethics won't really address the question of standards of conduct. In most cases, even with a Code, elected officials are not, in any practical sense, really held to a higher standard than anyone else. At worst, a scandal brought about by some questionable personal conduct can bring embarrassment, but not necessarily end with that person leaving office. There is no mechanism other than public pressure to make that happen. Let's take the recent example of the London, Ontario, mayor who had an affair with a fellow councillor. The affair got national media coverage—why wouldn't it; the public loves anything salacious. Argument raged as to whether he should resign as mayor. He stayed



stay, although his chief of staff resigned, apparently in disgust.

In the CBC coverage of this story, University of Windsor political science professor Lydia Miljan said that residents are entitled to feel angry with their political leaders, “considering the higher standards placed upon them.”

“If a politician breaks trust with their family, then by virtue of that they, by extension, are breaking the trust with the public,” she said. “If they can’t be trustworthy with a person they made a lifelong commitment to, then it puts to question whether they



can be trustworthy with the electorate at large,” she went on.

The emotive language (e.g. “a person they made a lifelong commitment to”) underscores some worrying logic here. Does an affair really disqualify you from deliberating upon a building code bylaw, chairing a workplace safety working group, a zoning committee, preside over a budget, or serve as president of the public morals committee?

In the present case, if letters to the editor are anything to go by, rather than asking legitimate questions about whether the affair affected the councillors’ capacity to continue acting in their positions, what most people seemed to be really expressing was their moral outrage at the affair itself (or, rather, using such questioning to disguise their moral outrage). The same has been evident in the past in relation to, say, sexual orientation, or even political convictions. Alleging questionable personal conduct in public officials has often been a convenient way to enforce public morality at the expense of personal freedom and basic human rights. And what better way to do draw attention to broader perversions, like wearing socks with sandals, than focusing on the personal conduct of a high ranking elected official?

## Disqualification

*The Northern Municipalities Act* allows for an elected member of local government to be disqualified for any number of reasons. It is very rare for councillors to be disqualified.

There is no specific avenue to be disqualified for personal conduct, apart from those specifically mentioned in the Act relating to public disclosure statements, conflict of interest, the committing of an indictable offence, or various things in *The Local Government Elections Act*.

That is, if we exclude s424 of *The Northern Municipalities Act*. This section enables the Lieutenant Governor in Council to remove anyone from municipal office if they “consider it in the public interest” to do so. This is a new section, added with the recent changes to the legislation as part of the conflict of interest amendments. The changes underscore the reality that municipalities really are, ultimately, creatures of the provincial government. But you can see how such changes are also reactions to the impotence of the public and senior government when “mayors go bad,” to paraphrase the title of a recent book on the matter. The public appetite for turning

a blind eye to the shenanigans of public officials in office is at an all-time low. The Rob Ford and the Senate expense scandals all but exhausted the public’s tolerance for the malfeasance of politicians. It is inevitable that this sensitivity will be extended to any and all conduct, and include any and all public officials, even those elected to local government.

A code of ethics might require the “highest standards of conduct” from public office holders, but the standards themselves are not only negotiable, they are contextual. A serial racist will offend my sensibilities no matter whether he also happened to make one hell of a good committee chair, but others will see his conduct differently precisely because of how well he performs his official duties.

It remains to be seen if government will ever use its power to remove an elected municipal official because of a racist remark, wearing the wrong coloured shoes, or co-habiting with the barmaid at the Vern’s Tavern. In the absence of that happening, we just have to fall back on the right sort of people going into public office, and then doing the right thing when they get there.

**\* Opinions are those of the author.**

## Emergency Management Planning

Communities have already begun reviewing their Emergency Management Plans, which are mandatory for you to have under *The Emergency Planning Act*. The province has a 68 page document outlining the 9 steps of emergency planning. If you've forgotten how to find that, go to our website, [www.newnorthsask.org](http://www.newnorthsask.org); we've got a link to it there. Or you can Google Emergency Management Saskatchewan.

FROM THE CEO

By AL LOKE

The welcome announcements of initiatives and investments aimed at La Loche are only the beginning, says the provincial government. The announcements, along with hints of more things to come, will amount to millions of dollars of badly-needed help and support for that community over the next few years. The inter-ministerial subcommittees—in Health, Education, Housing and Infrastructure—will continue to meet and make recommendations.

The Premier, Mr Wall, said that this was only the start of a long road.

That is for sure. And it is a road that many of our communities in the north are staring down right now. They can see a shimmering mirage.

There is a continuing need to ensure initiatives are community-led, but there is really no substitute for government coming in with money to address already-identified needs; needs that were, of course, identified well before this year.

The announcements touch upon areas that seem so foundational that it is hard to believe they weren't thought of before, or at least not already in place. For instance, we find it difficult to comprehend how there could not be an Adult Basic Education and skills training program in La Loche. The community, remember, is more than 2500 people strong, not including the reserve.

Or a trades program aimed at 18-22 year old youth. Or are these announcements expansions of existing programs? Other initiatives, like 24-hour counselling services and victim services, are responses to the shooting. Those services will need to stay there for a long time. The community's challenge will be filling the positions.

If these are the gaps that have been allowed to grow in La Loche's services, what else are we missing? You can see why we are so keen to press on with our Northern Strategy. A tragedy has brought attention to La Loche. Why wait for a tragedy to make us aware of the needs of the northern communities is a question we ask every day.

### About New North ...

Since 1996 New North has been the voice of the municipalities of Northern Saskatchewan. Our goal, as defined by our mission statement, is to advocate, negotiate and initiate improvements in well-being of the residents of the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District. Organized on the basis of strength through unity, New North partners with all northern stakeholders, from government and non-government agencies, associations and First Nations, to enhance the quality of life, create opportunities and build better futures, for the people of the north.

### New North Executive

Councillor **Al Sayn** (Chair)  
Mayor **Duane Favel** (Vice Chair)  
Mayor **Gordon Stomp** (Treasurer)  
Mayor **Val Deschambeault**  
(East Side Rep)  
**Isidore Desjarlais**  
(Member at Large)

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