

New North



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April 2014

2014 New North Waterworks Makes a Splash

Northern Water Operators Get the Drop on CEUs

La Ronge was once again the location for the 2014 New North Waterworks Workshops, held in April.

Almost 80 water operators, industry vendors and government officials gathered at the La Ronge Hotel to talk about stuff that most of us don't want to know about: what happens to water when we are not using it.

The theme for this year's event was "Emergency Preparedness," and the agenda, put together by Environmental Protection Officer **Kerry Seckinger** from the Water Security Agency, included a presentation from an individual at the forefront of dealing with the water emergency in Prince Albert in early 2012, **Andy Busse**.

The discussion of the emergency in Prince Albert, in fact, touched upon one of the challenges of being a water operator: no one notices you until things go horribly wrong—even if it is not your fault.

A point frequently made by presenters at Waterworks 2014 was the crucial role operators play in maintaining the health and well-being of their communities.

This year's attendance was very strong—with operators coming from most of the northern municipalities, as well from a number of First Nations.

Operators require 1.0 CEU (or Continuing Education Unit) every TWO years—in other words, 0.5 every year. New North typically have courses available worth the full 1.0 CEU. As a result, many northern opera-

tors actually exceed their CEU quotas over the certification cycle.

A particular highlight this year was the solid attendance of a number of EPOs from the Water Security Agency.

Formed about 18 months ago, the WSA is a splinter group of the Ministry of Environment with the responsibility of water management in the province.

Their leading role in the organization of the event ensured that Waterworks 2014 was as relevant as it was informative.

CEU presentations this year were provided by a commercial vendor, Enviroway—who have a product that uses microbes found up near Missinipe—and the Saskatchewan Research Council. The SRC provides the lab that does water analysis, and so it was appropriate that the topic of their presentation was water sampling.

ATAP once again provided the day-long CEU, focused on the implementation of standard operating procedures in water plants.

The event wasn't all septic pipes and clogged grease traps, though.

On the Wednesday night operators were invited to a Meet and Greet at the Hotel, an outstanding networking opportunity for the top men and women in the field to mix on a casual basis, where they could talk about ... talk about ...well, they talked about water stuff mainly. Professionals to the core, they don't know when to switch off, these guys.

New North Talks Trash with Various Ministries

New North has met with the ministries of Environment and Government Relations to get the ball rolling (once again) on northern landfills.

The centre-piece of the discussion was the report transmitted to government way back in 2009, *Water, Wastewater and Landfill Issues in NSAD*, compiled by a committee with representatives from New North and the ministries of Environment and Municipal Affairs.

Quite a number of the recommendations in that report are still relevant.

Among the issues discussed in the meeting included one brought forward by communities at recent New North meetings: whether the ministry can, or will, impose fines for elected officials whose communities are failing to keep their landfills in compliance (New North's answer: they won't).

Reference was also made to the 2008 report into the feasibility of implementing a regional landfill system in the north, an idea which, it seems, still has some support in government.

New North will be meeting with the ministries again over the next few months, partly with a view to bringing some of the top people in landfills to a New North Mayor and Councillor meeting for you to ask questions of.

New North Scholarship Launched!

In keeping with our promise to do it, we did it. The New North Scholarship—which we are calling the **New North Public Administration and Leadership Scholarship**—is now live, and is aimed at helping northern students in their studies.

As the name of the scholarship suggests, we are hoping to encourage students to undertake courses that will lead to careers in public administration, or courses which enhance an individual's leadership skills.

Courses of study might include Accounting, Commerce and Economics, or Public Policy, Administration, or even something more generalist such as a degree in Politics or the Arts and even Public Health.

We are very interested in receiving applications from people wanting to undertake the LGA. To find the application form, call our office, or go to newnorthsask.ca.

Sk Liquor and Gaming Will Allow Adjustments to Liquor Hours in NAD

Following up last year's decision by government to maintain jurisdiction over the setting of hours of permitted establishments, the SLGA has written to New North to inform us that municipalities in the NAD can nevertheless apply to have the opening hours of establishments in their communities reduced.

"Notwithstanding the decision to maintain provincial control over hours of operation, SLGA will consider requests from [northern] municipalities ... on a case by case basis, to reduce hours of operation," says the missive inscribed on paper from the Becket Collection.

"This is consistent with other SLGA policies, such as the policy respecting beer bottle bans in northern communities," says the epistle from the Vice President of Corporate Services.

If you have any questions about this, call us on our beer hotline.

Govt's Disability Strategy Consultations Go Public

Done with talking about it amongst themselves, the government is taking their disability strategy consultations to the people, starting right now.

Rappelling from a helicopter in matching jump suits at a location near you*, the Citizen Consultation Team™ will hear your thoughts on identifying issues and solutions specific to your community, future service delivery needs and anything else that is getting your goat about disability services in your area.

*La Ronge

21 May at 1:30pm

La Ronge Motor Inn, Hotel and Suites

Prince Albert

20 May at 1:30pm

Art Hauser Centre in Prince Albert

Meadow Lake

28 May at 6:30pm

Meadow Lake Alliance Church in Meadow Lake

The Lobbying Act is Nothing to be Worried About

If you read the news during April you may have come across mention of this new Act going through the Legislative Assembly.

The Lobbyists Act applies to any “activity taking place within or partly within any area prescribed by the act and which shall include any one or more entrance halls, entry ways, hallways and shall not exclude foyers or vestibules [as well as] any area that has been designated for the purpose of meeting [co-workers] with a view thereby of proceeding together to a nearby pub, [casino], coffee shop [or] reasonably priced restaurant.”

Just kidding. *The Lobbyists Act* was introduced recently by the government to regulate and make public the identities and activities of lobbyists. If you're wondering how it affects municipalities, worry no more. Municipal organizations such as SUMA and SARM are excluded from the act via section 4, as is New North via the non-profit “not specifically in it for ourselves” section. Municipalities, defined as local authorities under our old friend the *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, are also spared from having to reveal their secret identities.

Issues Update:

1. Bylaw Officer Enforcement, Funding/Training/Dog Control

The main issue reported by municipalities in relation to bylaw officer support actually relates to dog control. With that in mind, New North is waiting on a review of policing and alternative enforcement options being undertaken by the provincial government.

2. Northern Economic Development Strategic Plan

A discussion paper is being prepared by New North addressing the lack of a northern-specific economic plan from the province. Our paper will be made available to communities for comment. In the meantime, the CEO **Al Loke** is meeting with senior people from the Ministry of Economy in early May to conduct some preliminary brainstorming.

3. Northern Water and Sewer

Communities have received letters from Saskwater outlining the status of work to be done, or being done, in the next initial round of W&S projects. Everyone is now just waiting on the federal government for the go-ahead to start work.

Upcoming Events

New North AGM/Mayor and Councillor Meeting: June 12 and 13,
Prince Albert Travelodge

From the CEO: Al Loke

The latest round of money announced by the federal government, matched by the provincial government, in the Building Canada Fund stream, will, unfortunately, not solve our municipal infrastructure needs.

The provincial government is busy looking at other ways for municipalities to raise capital.

Traditionally, municipalities have had three paths to raising capital: taxes, government grants, and borrowing.

Many municipalities, though, are just about taxed out; government money, as we see, is in short supply. So, municipal borrowing is now in the spotlight. Raising

money through debentures, bonds or through some kind of “crowd sourcing,” are all options that government is very interested in seeing municipalities pursue.

Of course, shifting debt from senior to junior governments is not an easy task. Senior governments are very debt-averse right now. Municipalities, however, are getting ready to load up. They are the new Crown Corporations. While we can see cities and larger communities having some success with raising money in public offerings of some kind, smaller communities will of course struggle. How much free capital is floating around in the northern municipalities? Can you see this really working?

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.