

Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs



*For and
About Local
Government
Development*

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Welcome

Welcome to this issue of Community Contact. We especially welcome new council members and mayors who were elected to office last February in communities across Manitoba's unorganized territory.

There was much in the media during the federal election about democracy. The discussion revolved around dwindling participation in elections and a widening gap or "democratic deficit" resulting from growing mistrust of political institutions that seem to be out of touch with the grass roots.

As elected representatives or employees of northern and remote communities you are very much in touch with the people you represent and work for. You have a great deal of responsibility. The health of your community and the quality of life in your community depends directly on the work of council representatives and community employees. You provide services like water treatment, wastewater and solid waste disposal, eco-

nommic development, municipal administration, internal roads and recreation programs and facilities. Such necessities are important parts of the backbone of any community.

This issue of the Community Contact features updates on environmental, public works and protective services programs. It also contains information on water and wastewater operator certification, and of particular note, the recent incorporation of the communities of Nelson House and Seymourville. Our congratulations and best wishes go out to those communities. We also feature pieces on the Canadian Executive Service Organization – a potential resource for councils and a very successful collaboration with the Fire Commissioner's Office.

Whether you are a new or veteran councillor, a staff member, or an interested citizen, we hope you will find Community Contact a useful source of information.

COMMUNITIES INCORPORATE

Seymourville Council with the Honourable Oscar Lathlin, Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs ►

*Left to right: Ken Ellison; John Spence; Audrey Seymour,
Administrator; Fabian Seymour, Mayor; Minister Lathlin;
Ted Seymour*



◀ Nelson House Council and guests

*Left to Right: Wayne Spence; Reg Meade, President
NACC; Bela Leonard, Mayor; Bev Dejarlais, MP for
Churchill; Cecilia Tait; Steve Ashton, Minister of Water
Stewardship and Sheri Tait*



Incorporated communities have greater local authority and greater latitude to conduct business.



On April 1, 2004 the communities of Nelson House and Seymourville were officially incorporated under the provisions of *The Northern Affairs Act*. Upon entering into an agreement with Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA), ownership of community infrastructure will be transferred to the newly incorporated communities.

While still subject to *The Northern Affairs Act*, incorporated communities have greater local authority and greater latitude to conduct business independent of MANA. As legally incorporated bodies, they can pursue opportunities previously not available.

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs has a team in place to assist communities with transition to incorporation. The team includes consultants with extensive experience in municipal development who work with the communities to guide and assist with them as they adapt to their new status.

Community self-governance evolves in a progression from trust status to more independence and funding under the Local Government Services program. The final step is incorporation. Each step recognizes a community's desire and ability to assume greater responsibility and independence for administering its own affairs.

Nelson House and Seymourville are two of 50 communities in the unorganized territory of northern Manitoba designated as communities under *The Northern Affairs Act*. Of the 50 communities, three are now incorporated, 12 are in trust status and 35 are funded by Local Government Services. Forty of the 50 communities are represented and governed by elected mayors and councils, while the remaining 10 communities are represented by local appointees.

Public Works Program UPDATE

The department has acquired global positioning system (GPS) technology and laptop computers for data collection



Equipment Maintenance PWE Workshop

This past February, MANA hosted a regional workshop in Pine Dock for community public works employees. Thirty-six employees and council members from 26 communities attended.

In partnership with Transportation and Government Services, long-range planning and identification of future funding requirements for transportation infrastructure began. Study involves an in-house inventory of transportation infrastructure including internal roads, access roads and bridges. Condition, age and type of construction are being noted. Roads will also be classified according to function – residential, collector or access roads.

Data collection will take place over a two-year period before the study moves to a design phase. The department has acquired global positioning system (GPS) technology and laptop computers for data collection and staff have been trained to use the equipment.

Studies will consider issues of drainage, over-building to extend the life of roads in the north where mobilization and construction costs are high, and the co-ordination of water and wastewater line construction with road construction.

A committee was formed to develop and deliver a workplace safety and health program at the communities level and work developing the program is continuing this year.



UPDATE

Environmental Services Program Update

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and community councils are challenged with increasing costs, more rigorous standards and more complex water treatment technology.

Support for upgrading, operation and maintenance of community drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities and waste disposal grounds continues to be a priority.

A water treatment study, conducted between 2001 and 2003 by consultants for Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA), Manitoba Conservation and Manitoba Water Services Board continues to be used to establish priorities for water treatment plant upgrades.

The MANA capital budget for water treatment upgrades has increased by almost \$4 million over the past several years.

Water treatment upgrades have now been completed in Pikwitonei, Cross Lake,

Camperville and Cormorant. The planning and design phase is in progress for Waterhen and Red Sucker Lake.

Plans also include wastewater treatment facility upgrades. During 2002 and 2003 a consultant partnering with MANA and Manitoba Conservation inspected and reported on 26 wastewater treatment facilities.

To date, wastewater treatment upgrades have been completed for sewage lagoons in Brochet, South Indian Lake, Easterville, Cross Lake and for the Cormorant sewage treatment plant and the design phase is underway for Pine Dock, Manigotagan, and Matheson Island.

Many upgrades are made possible through project funding from the Manitoba Water Power Rental Agreement and the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program (CMIP). Under the last CMIP agreement, northern projects received 20 per cent or close to \$10 million of the \$54 million in the agreement.

The MANA capital budget for water treatment upgrades has increased by almost \$4 million over the past several years.



Protective Services Program

UPDATE

New fire trucks and proud volunteers



A major review of fire and constable programs is nearing completion. The review was done in consultation with the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), Manitoba Justice and the RCMP.

In 2003, a comprehensive review was done by the OFC that looked at issues of liability and risk. Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA) also noted the effect of the increased costs of fire trucks, turnout gear and breathing apparatus, as well as higher standards for equipment, safety and training.

Based on risk assessment, options need to be considered to address the safety of northern communities while making best use of resources and also considering the capacity of each community to sustain effective local services. Increasing costs of equipment and higher training standards are among the challenges faced by the department and community leaders.

With respect to the constable program, RCMP worked very closely with community constables and conducted a two-week training session in February for both First Nation and community constables. RCMP remain very supportive of the program and the role played by local constables. That a number of community constables have gone on to become members of the RCMP is evidence of the program's success.

MANA is working closely with Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) and they are currently conferring with EMO and communities to upgrade emergency plans to ensure compliance with the *Emergency Measures Act*.

Rural and Suburban Water Supplies Pilot Succeeds

By Allan Gray

On April 20 and 22, 2004 Manitoba Emergency Services College (MESC) delivered the pilot of a Rural and Suburban Water Supplies seminar to fire service personnel from several Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) communities. The seminar was developed to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and is part of ongoing efforts to assist fire services organizations throughout Manitoba with updated training opportunities.

Classroom and hands-on experience were used to teach practical appreciation for techniques involved in moving water to fires. Students worked with portable pumps, hoses of various capacities, porta-tanks and mobile water shuttles. They also had opportunities to learn about and use equipment maintained by the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) for use in fighting urban – wild land interface fires. Many ANA communities face this type of fire threat and newly acquired skills will benefit each of the firefighters and their communities.

NFPA is a 75,000-member international non-profit advocate of science-based fire-fighting codes and standards, research, training and education. NFPA standards met by the new MESC program include:

- 1142 Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting
- 1002 Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications (Chapter 10)

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs congratulates graduates from: Barrows, Berens River, Camperville, Cormorant, Crane River, Cross Lake, Easterville, Homebrook, Island Lake, Mallard, Matheson Island, Pelican Rapids, Pikwitonei, Red Deer Lake, South Indian Lake, Thicket Portage and Waterhen.



Photo courtesy of the OFC.



Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Since the Walkerton, Ontario disaster that caused sickness and death when the community's water supply became contaminated, people are much more aware of water quality issues, pollution, the state of the environment and how these all relate to the important work done by water plant operators.

In 1998, Manitoba Conservation began developing an integrated mandatory certification program for operators of water and wastewater facilities. The program is regulated under Water and Wastewater Facility Regulation M.R. 77/2003. This regulation is based on the classification and certification process developed by the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC). Most jurisdictions in North America use this classification and certification process. Manitoba Conservation administers the ABC program and examinations in Manitoba.

Training and mandatory certification of water facility operators and backup operators continues to be a priority for Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA). During 2003-04 the Department continued to work closely with Red River College and Manitoba Conservation to address the training needs of operators in northern and remote regions.

Red River College (RRC) has offered courses with Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA) since October, 2002 to prepare community operators for certification exams.

There are four ABC certification program areas:

- water treatment (WT)
- water distribution (WD)
- wastewater treatment (WWT)
- wastewater collection (WWC).

Each area can have four levels. Operators are required to attain levels covering their facility's classification and the population of the community it serves. Water and wastewater treatment plants are classified on a point-rating system that identifies plant complexity. Water distribution and wastewater collection systems are classified according to population.

ABC examinations in each program area cover four general topics including: basic math and science, administration and management, equipment and support systems and safety. Operators write ABC exams specific to their area of certification.

Operator Certification Program



Water Treatment and Distribution II WTP Operators

Primary operators from these communities have been trained:

Level I (Water and Wastewater) – Baden, Barrows, Bissett, Camperville, Crane River, Duck Bay, Island Lake, Mallard, Manigotogan, Matheson Island, National Mills, Pine Dock, Red Deer Lake, Seymourville, Waterhen, Brochet, Cormorant, Cross Lake Dawson Bay, Easterville, Gods Lake Narrows, Granville Lake, Ilford, Moose Lake, Nelson House, Norway House, Pelican Rapids, Pikwitonei, Sherridon, South Indian Lake, Thicket Portage and Wabowden

Level II (Water treatment only) – Baden, Barrows, Berens River, Bissett, Camperville, Crane River, Duck Bay, Island Lake, Mallard, Manigotogan, Pine Dock, Red Deer Lake, Seymourville, Waterhen, Brochet, Cormorant, Cross Lake Dawson Bay, Easterville, Gods Lake Narrows, Granville Lake, Ilford, Moose Lake, Nelson House, Norway House, Pelican Rapids, Pikwitonei, Sherridon, South Indian Lake, Thicket Portage and Wabowden

Backup Operators from these communities have been trained:

Level I – Baden, Barrows, Bissett, Camperville, Crane River, Duck Bay, Island Lake, Manigotogan, Red Deer Lake, Seymourville, Cormorant, Cross Lake, Gods Lake Narrows, Moose Lake and Sherridan

The RRC – MANA partnership has been successful at job in instruction and course delivery. Community operators participating with this ongoing training program understand their work is vital to the health and safety of community residents and surrounding environments.

Each program area is divided into one-week courses:

Basic Math and Science – This course is designed to assist operators who have been away from school to refresh their basic mathematics and science skills. Participants study and solve problems of water treatment and distribution, wastewater treatment and collection using concepts related to chemistry, microbiology, hydraulics and electricity.

Water Treatment and Distribution Level I – Classroom instruction provides information needed to operate and maintain a class I water system. Topics include treatment processes, operation and maintenance of water treatment plants and operation and maintenance of distribution systems.

Wastewater Treatment and Collection Level I – Classroom instruction provides information on operating and maintaining a class I wastewater system. Water treatment processes, operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants and operation and maintenance of collection systems are covered.

Water Treatment Level II – Classroom instruction provides a review of math and science, operation and maintenance of a Level II water treatment plant. Operators cover topics in surface water treatment, water quality objectives and regulatory requirements.

CESO

Canadian Executive Service Organization

CESO is an organization of retired and semi-retired professionals and technical experts who volunteer their time to work with people in developing nations and emerging market economies. For more than 35 years, CESO volunteers have served as mentors and advisers to a variety of businesses, government and social enterprises.

CESO volunteer advisers have the seasoned experience to help people in Canadian Aboriginal communities do their jobs, strengthen their economies and improve the quality of their lives. They can provide mentoring, practical advice, training and up-to-date information to help achieve almost any organizational goal.

Aboriginal services provided by CESO fall into four main sectors:

- *business support services* – work with entrepreneurs, organizations and communities to prepare marketing and feasibility studies, business plans, land and resource inventories, funding applications and more
- *general administration/organizational development* – work with financial and accounting, auditing, human resource development, manufacturing quality control and other systems
- *community services, planning and resource management* – work with community planning, housing, education, health, land use and more
- *governance/leadership workshops* – work with leaders and administrators of first nations, communities and corporations in areas like conflict resolution, roles and responsibilities, communications, governance.

CESO advisers are volunteers. Clients pay costs such as the adviser's travel, lodging and meals, workshop materials and minimal administration fees. CESO will discuss cost-saving alternatives with clients unable to cover normal costs.

If there are areas in your community where you feel CESO support would be of value, contact their Winnipeg office at 204-949-0177 or call toll-free 1-888-949-0177. Further information is available on the Internet at www.ceso-saco.com

COUNCIL ORIENTATIONS

Training for council members and employees is a priority identified by community representatives during past consultations.

For the benefit of newly elected council members, or as a refresher for those already on council, municipal development consultants are available on request to do an orientation session for council.

The presentation, which can be tailored to meet your council's specific needs, covers topics including the distribution of legislative power, duties of council and administrative staff, services available from Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, meeting management, financial management, conflict of interest, fraud awareness and resource material available to council and staff.

To arrange for an orientation session, please contact your regional office of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.



Ota-Miska Publication

A Where to Find it Resource Manual

The Ota-Miska publication is an annual Aboriginal resource manual, listing federal and provincial government departments as well as non-government organizations that provide programs and services for Aboriginal peoples.

The words “**Ota-Miska**” refer to a Cree phrase meaning “**Find it here.**”

The Ota-Miska publication is administered by the Small Business Branch of Manitoba Industry, Economic Development and Mines. For more information call (204) 984-2272 or 1-800-665-2019 or e-mail manitoba@cbsc.ic.gc.ca

Ota-Miska is also found on the Internet pages of Manitoba Industry, Economic Development and Mines at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/itm/sbcd/otamiska.html>

Prepare! Stay Safe! Survive!

One of the main messages of the Canadian Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program is Prepare! Stay Safe! Survive!

Prepare! – Everything that you do before you head out on the water.

Stay Safe! – The things you do during the water activities to stay safe.

Survive! – The actions you take to ensure your safety and the safety of others if something does go wrong.

Prepare! Stay Safe! Survive! is one of six water safety themes in the Canadian Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program.

For information about Red Cross programs call 1-888-307-7997.

OR

For information and resources for Canadian Red Cross Programs and Services in Manitoba please contact:

Candice Carson
Canadian Red Cross, Manitoba Region
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Community Council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback (comments and questions), suggestions and ideas to the editor.