

Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs



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2006

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For half a century, isolated northern Manitoba communities have relied on more than 2,000 kilometres of winter roads built annually during the coldest weeks of winter.

This Issue

As the New Year begins, we at the Local Government Development Division of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs look forward to working with elected representatives and employees of northern community councils to help you provide good government and services to your communities.

Beginning the new calendar year means we are also in the last quarter of the budget year, which ends March 31. Many of you are working on plans for the next budget year, measuring the accomplishments and progress made over the past year, and setting your priorities for 2006-07.

On the topic of budgets, we hope this issue's article on locally generated revenue will stimulate some thought on the subject. Revenue generated locally is important because it represents your community's contribution to the cost of providing local services and affects the capacity of your community to maintain those services.

Winter roads are on some people's minds at this time of year and, if you are one, you may want to read this issue's cover article on the topic to refresh what you know about winter road safety and learn what government is doing to make winter road construction and travel a safer experience.

Also in this issue, congratulations go to the people of Wabowden on the opening of their new community health centre and we offer information about Communities in motion, a new initiative in support of physical activities that promote health and are important to the prevention and management of chronic diseases. If your community or school is getting active, we would really like to hear from you and share your story with our readers. What works for your community might just inspire another community.

We wish everyone a healthy and prosperous 2006.



A WINTER

Many communities in remote areas of central and northern Manitoba depend on winter roads to provide them with goods they need to get through the year. During a roughly eight-week period, usually beginning in mid-January, winter roads are employed to ship bulk supplies of gasoline, fuel oil, food, building materials, major appliances, heavy equipment and whatever else might be needed throughout the remaining ten months. Shipping such items would be physically difficult or too expensive without winter roads.

Resourceful northerners have always taken advantage of the direct travel routes made possible as water bodies freeze over and snow covers the land. Dogsleds and snowshoes were once the only way to get around during winter.

But during the middle of the 1900s, dogsleds began giving way to newer methods. One of them was the cat train. The name came from the Caterpillar bulldozers often used to pull long strings of sleds overland and across frozen lakes in the absence of roads. By the 1950s, cat trains using winter roads built by private contractors were helping build and sustain many northern communities.

In 1971, Manitoba Northern Affairs assumed responsibility for construction and maintenance of a winter road network that could accommodate truck transportation. In 1978, winter roads came under supervision by Manitoba Transportation and Government Services. Today, the federal government and the province fund winter roads jointly. They play an increasingly important role in overcoming social and economic challenges facing remote northern communities in Manitoba.

But while winter roads provide a big boost for northern communities, they can also be extremely hazardous if precautions are not taken. Manitoba Transportation and Government Services advises winter road users to familiarize themselves with all safety issues, routes travelled and general road information.



ROAD PRIMER

Use Caution on Winter Roads:

The following information is from the web pages of Manitoba Transportation and Government Services. Visit www.gov.mb.ca/tgs/hwyinfo/winterroads/index.html for more complete and updated information.

Winter Road Safety Procedures for the General Public (updated February 16, 2004)

Use of the winter road system prior to an official opening or during a closure is not approved as there is no inspection or maintenance provided. The road surface can deteriorate rapidly as it is subject to changes in weather. There are also unexpected delays that may occur in this remote, isolated area. Please be prepared for extended trips.

When using the winter road system there is always the possibility of being stranded. Unless you are absolutely sure of your location, remain with your vehicle, make a camp nearby and start a fire. This will be your first step in preventing hypothermia, which is the exposure to cool air or water. Wet or damp clothing, wind and exhaustion accelerate this condition. Avoid overexertion. The following are suggestions of supplies that should accompany every vehicle on the winter road system:

Clothing

- winter boots, pants & socks
- parka or snowmobile suit
- two piece underwear
- mitts, toque or cap

Food

- chocolate or granola bars
- freeze dried food
- nuts and raisins
- sugar and salt
- tea bags, soup, hot chocolate
- k rations
- hot pac meals
- water purification tablets

Fuel

- Carry enough fuel to reach your final destination, as there are no service stops provided.

Survival Equipment (always carry any personal medication with you)

- blankets, pillow, sleeping bag
- first aid kit, map
- flashlight, flares
- cutlery, multi-tool with knife
- hatchet, axe, saw, rope ,wire
- mirror, newspaper, watch



In recent years, about 600 kilometres of winter roads in northern Manitoba have been relocated away from lakes and rivers to avoid the uncertainty of ice crossings.

A WINTER ROAD PRIMER *continued*

- matches (waterproof)
- small metal can, plastic jug
- sunglasses, survival booklet
- toilet paper, paper towels

Vehicle Equipment

- extra belts, fuel filter
- booster cables, ice scraper, brush
- methyl hydrate, anti-freeze
- shovel, extension cord
- snow tires, jack, satellite phone
- tools, come-along, fire extinguisher
- tow chain or nylon rope
- candles, supplementary heat source

Winter Road Information

- Winter road inspectors provide regular coverage, weather and road conditions permitting.
- Inspectors use red reflectors to mark hazardous curves, hills and bumps.
- Due to the slippery road conditions, the stopping ability of all vehicles is greatly reduced.
- The road alignment follows the natural terrain of the land. Please drive with caution.



Carrying the right equipment can save you if you're stranded.



A delay for road repairs is better than risking valuable cargo.

- Drive close to the centre of all ice roads, not by the snow storage banks.
- Use channel one on citizen's band radios. Satellite phone communication is recommended.
- Winter road conditions are available on the website at tgs.gov.mb.ca/roadinfo.
- Please call highway information services at 945-3704 or toll free 1-877-627-6237 for a recorded announcement of winter road conditions.

Transfer Companies (for all trucks with a maximum gross vehicle weight of seven tonnes or greater)

- Do not park your semi-trailers, loaded or unloaded on the ice as it encourages others to do the same and the constant weight could create an ice failure.
- The recommended ice road speed limit of 15 km/hr must be strictly followed. Exceeding the speed limit causes ice pop-outs, cracking, wave action and complete ice failures.
- Stagger your loads approximately one kilometer apart when travelling across an ice road.

Winter Road Safety

Working Group Launched

On November 28, 2005, Transportation and Government Services Minister Ron Lemieux announced a plan to establish a working group that will oversee implementation of all 11 recommendations of an inquest into the 2002 death of Calvin Wood, 28, of Waasagomach, who died when the snowplow truck he was operating broke through the ice during construction of a winter road near the community of St. Theresa Point.

The working group, to include representatives from Manitoba Transportation and Government Services, Workplace Safety and Health, Manitoba Hydro, the private sector and First Nations, will also conduct a review of all winter road construction guidelines and regulations so it can make recommendations to government for mandatory regulations.

“We are committed to promoting the highest levels of safety for travellers on Manitoba’s winter road system due to factors such as remoteness, weather and geography,” said Lemieux. Recognizing safety as a highest priority, government is already involved in:

- continuing to move winter road routes off the ice where feasible. More than 600 kilometres have been relocated away from lakes and rivers

- requiring ice thickness reports and moving the sites for testing ice thickness closer together to improve monitoring accuracy
- strengthening safety compliance through immediate issue of improvement or stop-work orders if conditions or procedures don’t meet approved standards
- using ground-penetrating radar units for improved evaluation of ice thickness
- hiring internationally-known local consultant Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht to provide cold-weather training and ice-failure emergency survival techniques for construction workers
- providing satellite phones to improve emergency communications between remote work sites and operational offices

Other steps in place or in development include upgrading existing transportation policies and training programs, creating a winter road-specific web page and engaging private-sector consultants to assist with improving ice and ground condition assessments.

Don Kuryk, technical services manager for Manitoba Transportation and Government Services, says guidelines for winter road contractors have now been made into regulations that are written into contracts reflecting government concern with keeping things safe for workers. Companies working on winter roads must comply with all the stipulations of their contracts.

About 2,200 kilometres of winter road are built each year to serve 38,000 residents in 28 remote communities. Each winter, the roads allow about 2,000 shipments, primarily fuel, construction materials and general freight. Local contractors build and maintain the roads, creating local employment opportunities. The province and the federal government share the \$5.8 million annual cost for winter roads.



A winter road construction crew inches toward Tadoule Lake.

New Wabowden Health Care Centre Officially Opened



Mayor Reg Meade joins health unit staff to display artwork presented by the BRHA to commemorate the opening. Left to right are Grace Jonasson, Gary McIvor, Mayor Meade, Winnie Shlachetka, and Jonne Lutz.



Elder “Granny” Florence Hamilton (centre) and community members ready themselves to enjoy the cakes baked for the opening ceremony.

The November 25, 2005 grand opening of the new \$1.6 million community health center in Wabowden was a proud celebration for local residents and the realization of a dream many years in the making.

Constructing the new health centre designed to meet the specific needs of people from Wabowden and the surrounding region was a joint effort by the community, the Burntwood Regional Health Authority (BRHA) and the provincial government. Part of the funding for the project came from Manitoba’s \$20.8 million share of the federal government’s Primary Health Care Transition Fund announced in 2000.

Staff of the Wabowden Community Health Centre provide excellent front line health care services, focusing on health education, illness prevention and timely treatment of disease. Health Centre staff are also called upon in emergencies to provide patient triage and make initial contact with the doctors at Thompson General Hospital.

Assisting seniors and those with chronic care needs, understand medications and care instructions, working with expecting and new mothers, organizing home care and more are included in the many services health unit staff provide in the community. The new building not only recognizes these essential roles, but also provides for privacy when a doctor or service provider visits the community, allows for expanded services for seniors and is a cheery bright place to visit.

BRHA chief executive officer Karen McClelland provided introductory remarks. Steve Ashton, Manitoba Water Stewardship minister, represented the provincial government at the event. Speakers also included Wabowden Mayor Reg Meade, Elder Florence Hamilton and BRHA board chairperson Lloyd Flett.

Contact thanks Kendi Clearwater for help in preparing this article.

Manitoba in motion

In August 2004, Manitoba Premier Gary Doer announced creation of an all-party task force called Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures. The purpose was to ask Manitobans how to help children and young people enjoy the best possible health now and into their adult lives. The task force was particularly interested in factors that affect child health in the areas of nutrition, physical activity and injury prevention. One of the recommendations from the task force report was for the province to introduce Manitoba in motion in the fall of 2005.

On October 5, 2005 over 50,000 Manitobans from across the province celebrated the launch of Manitoba in motion by participating in a 10 minute walk at noon.

Manitoba in motion is a strategy designed to help Manitobans make physical activity part of their daily lives for health and enjoyment. It signals Manitoba's commitment to join with community partners, health, healthy living, recreation, sport and education to raise activity levels and reduce barriers to physical activity. The provincial vision is to increase physical activity in the province by 10 percent by the year 2010.

Most of us already know the importance of active living. Physical activity increases energy, reduces stress, strengthens the heart and lungs and helps us reach and maintain a healthy body weight. The result is a better quality of life. Yet less than half of all Manitobans get enough physical activity to gain these healthy benefits. How much physical activity is enough? One good place to find an answer is Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity on the web at www.eatwellbeactive.gc.ca.

Manitoba in motion has four key components:

- building partnerships
- increasing public awareness



Staying active doesn't require special facilities.



Learning to dance is a great year-round activity.

- developing strategies for target areas
- measuring success.

Manitoba in motion strategies will focus on children, youth, adults, older adults and families in communities, workplaces and schools. Communities in motion and Healthy Schools in motion are two program offshoots.

Communities in motion encourages all parts of the community such as local governments, health services, recreation services, schools, workplaces and neighborhoods to do their parts to increase physical activity opportunities for everyone.

Healthy Schools in motion are schools working toward the goal of 30 minutes of physical activity every day for every student. This can be achieved by any combination of physical education, activity breaks, physical activity programs, intramurals and special events. Since the fall 2005 launch, 290 schools have registered. Schools receive a resource manual and a bin full of physical activity equipment.

Manitoba in motion held regional workshops throughout the province in the fall of 2005. Enthusiastic representatives from a variety of sectors including health, recreation, sport, education and municipal governments attended the workshops.

Manitoba in motion can provide support, training and Physical Activity Grants to help community partners get in motion. Community leaders and individuals interested in partnering with others to increase physical activity in their communities can find out more about grants or workshops at www.manitobainmotion.ca or call toll free 1-866-788-3648 or 945-3648 in Winnipeg.

By December 2005, 11 communities had registered as communities in motion.

Locally Generated

Do you want more for your community?

A reality all community councils face is the rising cost of providing services. Locally generated revenue represents the contribution from community residents to the cost of services received and is important to maintaining both services and balanced budgets.

Community councils, staff and residents can all play a part by understanding and supporting the need to raise a portion of the community's budget locally. There are many ways to do this. Here are some ideas and suggestions that can make a difference for your community:

- timely collection of water and sewer fees
- improved municipal tax collection
- setting fair rates and fees for services like:
 - garbage collection
 - facility rental
 - snow plowing
 - garden cultivating
 - equipment rentals
- fishing derbies
- sporting events
- fiddle festivals
- campground fees
- poker derbies
- canteens
- silent auctions
- socials
- bingos



Locally generated revenue helps communities afford better services that improve safety and security.



Assets like the Brochet-Barren Lands water treatment plant are expensive to operate and maintain, but essential to community health.

Revenue

Each January 31st, community councils supported by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA) are required to adopt and submit a community management plan (CMP) to the department. Part of that plan includes preparing an annual operating and maintenance budget. In preparing the budget, council needs to consider what services it wants to provide in the following year and how it is going to pay for those services.

Typically, councils receive operating funds from the following two sources:

1. MANA grants – each year MANA provides an updated funding schedule to community councils. This schedule identifies the various municipal components (ex: administration, fire protection, water and sewer) and the estimated cost to run those components. MANA provides 80 per cent of the funding required in this schedule in the form of a grant to the community council.
2. Locally generated revenue – each year the community council reviews and sets rates for the services it provides to its residents. This locally generated revenue makes up the balance of the funds the council needs to provide municipal services to its residents.

While preparing the budget, council needs to identify all revenue opportunities and set appropriate rates for services. This ensures that councils have enough funds to provide uninterrupted services to residents throughout the year. A municipal development consultant from MANA can help develop local revenue plans.

Some of the items that would typically contribute to locally generated revenue are:

- water and sewer fees
- garbage collection fees
- rental fees
- bank interest
- municipal taxes
- other user fees

Typically, user fees for a service offset the cost of providing that service. It is important that fees are reviewed and adjusted annually to reflect the increased cost of providing a service.

Questions council and administration should ask when reviewing rates are:

- Are rates charged fair for all users?
- Are there customers such as businesses that use more than others and should be paying more?
- Should council consider increasing user fees?
- How much should rates increase?
- Can the community support an increase?
- If a substantial increase is necessary, should it be phased in over a longer term?
- How will council communicate this to the community?

As a governing body, council's challenge is to provide the services expected by residents while maintaining a balanced budget. Determining the actual cost for any community service and comparing it to the amount of revenue received from the province, plus the amount raised locally, helps council determine rates for local services based on the cost of services provided.

For more information on locally generated revenue, council and administrators should review their Local Government Development Manual of Policies and Procedures. Municipal development consultants and technical and public works consultants can also provide helpful information.

Community Places Program Reminder

If you missed the last deadline, you may want to begin thinking about the next one now.

Community Places Program applications become available in November each year. The deadline for submitting applications is February 15 and the program announces approvals in spring.

The Community Places Program provides funding and planning assistance to non-profit community organizations for facility construction, upgrading, expansion or acquisition projects. Eligible projects provide sustainable recreation and wellness benefits to communities.

Non-profit community organizations can apply to the program for up to 50 per cent of the first \$15,000 in project costs and up to one-third of project costs over that amount. The maximum grant is \$50,000.

Applications are available in the Community Places Program office in Winnipeg, in Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism regional offices or by visiting www.gov.mb.ca/chc/grants.

If your non-profit community organization is planning a project that will provide recreation and wellness benefits in your community, contact the Community Places Program office to discuss your project and arrange for application materials.

Community Places Program
3rd Floor - 213 Notre Dame Ave.
Winnipeg MB R3B 1N3
Phone: 204-945-0502 in Winnipeg
or toll free 1-800-894-3777
Fax: 204-948-2086
E-mail: mcpp@gov.mb.ca

Hometown Manitoba 2006 Project Deadline Approaching

Northern and rural Manitoba communities interested in applying for community improvement project funding through the 2006 Hometown Manitoba support program are reminded all applications must be received by the program no later than March 15, 2006.

Rural and northern communities are encouraged to enhance their streets, buildings and community environment by taking advantage of the Hometown Manitoba program, Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Rosann Wowchuk said recently. The minister noted applications for the 2006 program are now being accepted.

Through the Hometown Manitoba program, the province provides funding under two categories: Hometown Main Streets Enhancements can fund up to 50 per cent of total eligible project costs to a maximum \$1,000. Hometown Meeting Places can fund up to one-third of total eligible costs to a maximum of \$5,000.

Hometown Manitoba provides financial support for rural and northern community projects initiated by local governments, non-profit community organizations, co-operatives and businesses. The aim is to promote unique identities and themes that define a community through projects that enhance main street public places and building exteriors.

"A community that looks attractive and well maintained reflects the pride of its citizens, enhances tourism and encourages business investment," said Wowchuk. "A strong base of local economic activity is the heartbeat of vibrant communities. Through Hometown Manitoba, we support community-driven projects that enhance local amenities using local products and services and creating long-term benefits."

In 2005, Hometown Manitoba program approved funding for 191 projects representing program commitments of more than \$350,000. Since the program began operating in 2004, it has helped attract over \$3 million in community investment to complement approved provincial funding.

Some examples of projects assisted by Hometown Manitoba:

- construction of a viewing deck with wheelchair access for the Souris suspension bridge with a garden and walkway along the Souris River linking the bridge to Victoria Park
- construction of a new deck and sign for Care-a-Lot for Tots Inc., a non-profit organization in Fisher Branch
- development of a Memory Garden in Miniota providing a picturesque park-like green space in the community
- beautification projects for Ste. Rose including park benches, planters, flag poles, picnic tables, trees, siding and canopies, decorative lights, window boxes, new business signage and interlocking paving stone
- green space development at east and west entrances to the Town of Minitonas
- Benito Meats storefront enhancements, west wall mural and landscaping work

The Hometown Manitoba 2006 application guide is available from GO Centres and GO Team offices of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) as well as the local and regional offices of community and regional development corporations, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, municipal government offices and chambers of commerce. Information on the program is also available by calling 1-800-567-7334 or visiting the MAFRI website at www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/ri.

Understanding

Your Water Sample Analysis Reports

Water treatment plant operators regularly take water samples at various points in their systems. Source water, such as water from a well or reservoir, treated or disinfected water and an end use water sample, such as water from a household faucet are shipped to a lab for analysis.

In about a week, the lab sends back a report summarizing their findings. These findings are used to ensure the water is safe for human consumption. They can also be used to determine the effectiveness of water treatment processes and to set up a maintenance schedule.

The first test result shown is for total coliform. An acceptable result would be expressed in short form as <1 CFU/100ml, meaning less than one colony forming unit per 100 millilitres of water. A number higher than one indicates the presence of bacteria and a failure in the disinfection process.

Water operators who receive results showing higher than one colony forming unit per 100 millilitres need to discuss the results immediately with the drinking water officer (DWO) and the technical and public works consultant (TPWC). Good communication is extremely important because it leads to action that is quick and correct.

Resampling must be done immediately and sent to the lab without delay. Test for free and total chlorine at your sample points and adjust your chlorine dosage accordingly. Keep a logbook indicating chlorine pump setting changes, date, weather such as heavy rains or extreme heat, sample results, water meter readings, chlorine dilution and free and total chlorine readings. At certain times of the year, especially with surface water, the chlorine demand will increase. Referring to the logbook for previous years may help determine what settings to use. Having a starting point for adjustments will save precious time.

The second lab test result shown is for heterotrophic plate count (HPC). This is the number of organisms present that feed on organic matter. It should read <500 CFU/100ml or less than 500 colony forming units per 100 millilitres. HPC detection is more common in surface water supplies, but in wells, distribution lines or reservoirs, may also indicate the presence of biofilm, or micro organisms surrounded by the slime they secrete. As with total coliform detection, responding to high HPC counts may require adjusting the chlorine pump.

If coliforms are detected in a raw well water sample, schedule a shock chlorination treatment. If the treated water has a high reading, schedule a reservoir cleaning and consider ways to prevent high readings from reoccurring. For surface water systems, check and adjust the filtration system and coagulant as needed.

If the end use test, normally taken from the last household on the water distribution system, has the highest readings, schedule water line swabbing. If no swabbing ports are present, superchlorinate and flush the lines. Your DWO or TPWC can assist you with the guidelines for the above procedures.



Certification Corner

Manitoba Conservation distributed the following certification program notice contents in fall, 2005 to water and wastewater facility operators in Manitoba. If you are involved with operating a water or wastewater facility, this is important reading for you.

Owners and Operators of Water or Wastewater Facilities

The Province of Manitoba recently registered Water and Wastewater Facility Operators Regulation, amendment M.R. 162/2005 to update the original regulation, M.R. 77/2003.

The following is a brief summary of key requirements for water and wastewater facilities and operators. Full regulation and regulation amendment text is available on the program website:
www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/envapprovals
Facility classification application forms and operator certification application forms will be made available on the website November 15, 2005.

Owner Requirements:

1. Owners must employ only provincially certified operators by September 1, 2006.
2. All facilities in operation on or before December 31, 2005 must make

application for facility classification on or before January 3, 2006, unless item a (below) is applicable.

- a) Facilities voluntarily classified prior to May 1, 2004 by the Manitoba Water & Wastewater Association may submit copies of the original completed classification application form and certificate of voluntary classification to Manitoba Conservation. If submitted to Conservation before January 3, 2006, the voluntary classification will be deemed valid until May 1, 2007.
3. Owners must file a table of organization with the director prior to March 31, 2006. Sample tables of organization are provided on the website for small operations.
 4. Owners must ensure that records are maintained documenting the operator-in-charge of the facility, facility operational details, operators on duty, date, shift etc. Reference clause 33, M.R. 77/2003.

Operator Requirements:

All operators are required to obtain a Manitoba Conservation issued operator's certificate or conditional operator's certificate in order to be employed after September 1, 2006 at any type of water or wastewater facility.

Three types of certificates available are:

1. Operators that have completed all requirements for full certificates may apply for an operator certificate, which is valid for five years.
2. Those operators with Manitoba Water & Wastewater Association Voluntary Operator Certificates may apply for a five-year conditional certificate, which is not renewable. Applications for this type of conditional certificate must be received by Manitoba Conservation no later than January 3, 2006. Applicants are required to provide a copy of the application submitted to MWWA, and a copy of the classification certificate issued by MWWA.
3. Operators (not holding a voluntary certificate) seeking conditional certificates due to employment must be employed in a facility before January 1, 2006. This type of conditional certificate is valid for three years, is not renewable, and proof of employment is required to be provided with the application.

For questions dealing with these programs, please contact Cory Graham, certification co-ordinator:
telephone: 204-945-7065
fax: 204 945-5229
e-mail: cgraham@gov.mb.ca



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Community Council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, comments, questions, suggestions and ideas to the editor.