

qathet Regional District

**ELECTORAL AREA 'A' NEWSLETTER
for December 2019
from Patrick Brabazon, Director**

This newsletter is being sent to all residents of *Electoral Area A* of the qathet Regional District. At the end of this newsletter you will find my telephone number and my e-mail address. I welcome your comments.

Connections

Some of us are connected to the internet, many of us are not. Nor to a cell phone tower either. There is a proposal to connect coastal communities via an underwater fibre optic cable but it is far from clear just when this marvel would come ashore here. The Regional District is seeking answers from the proponents and when we know, you will be the next to hear.

Dropping a cable ashore still leaves the problem of the "last mile." It is the cost of connecting an individual home to the mainline that has dashed the several previous ideas for rural broadband coverage. To take advantage of the coastal connection, communities like ours will have to come up with the money, skills, and organization to pull it off.

On the other hand, what if a company like Telus were to put up a facility that would boost local internet and cell phone coverage? Telus has made just such a proposal which would provide service to an area extending some five kilometres out from Lund. Unfortunately, the company chose a site that conflicted with the neighbourhood and created considerable opposition. Telus has since cancelled the project.

So, let's start again. My own research indicates that there may well be several suitable sites in the Lund area. Suitable as in they meet the technical [not my area of expertise] and social requirements. The Regional Board has agreed that Telus should be invited back to conduct a comprehensive survey of several site which may satisfy the company's requirements and meet the concerns of local residents.

Smooth sailing

Not always. The summer population of Savary is continuing to grow and with the people come their boats. The boats need buoys and that means trouble to access the wharf, especially at night. Working with the *Savary Island Marine Advisory Committee*, the Regional District has applied to the federal government for an exclusionary zone covering the approach to the wharf. If granted, this would prevent the mooring of boats from obstructing larger vessels seeking passage.

SIVFD – Thank you Chief Jones

After leading our Savary Island Volunteer Fire Department for over 5 years, Chief Gareth Jones is moving with his family to Ontario. Fire Chief Jones has balanced family and work while overseeing the continued steady improvements in the SIVFD, culminating in the achievement of improved fire insurance grading for the island in 2017. Thank you Chief Jones for your exemplary service and good luck to you in your future endeavours.

NVFD

Indoor, outdoor? That is actually a serious question. Firefighters are trained and equipped according to the standard expected of their commonly provided services. Many volunteer fire departments in rural

British Columbia have “exterior status.” This means that they will confine the fire to the burning building and try to prevent it from spreading to adjacent structures. With ‘interior status” fire fighters train to enter the building and attack the fire at source as well as check for occupants, etc.

Over the past few years, the Northside Volunteer Fire Department (NVFD) has worked hard on training resulting in over half of the department attaining interior status and all of the newer recruits trained up to exterior status. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and qualified service.

It gets better. In January, the Justice Institute of British Columbia’s Live Fire Training Unit will be here and the NVFD has invited other local fire departments to join this intensive experience that only a facility such as this can provide. Have a look at:

<https://www.jibc.ca/programs-courses/schools-departments/school-public-safety/fire-safety-division/fire-service-industry/jibc-mobile-live-fire-training-lab>

New digs for NVFD: with the financing approved, the Regional District will be able to proceed with the replacement of the old fire hall in Lund. The new building will be on donated land a little less than a kilometre down the highway. This new site will afford improved coverage for the service area as well as freeing up the old site adjacent to the community hall.

Plans are underway for the new Lund fire hall to be constructed in 2020. Stay tuned for more updates.

One last note. For the past few years, the Regional District has delivered a wildfire prevention program based on the FireSmart Canada principles. With funding provided through the Union of BC Municipalities, I expect the qRD Regional FireSmart program will be offered next year and will continue to offer free FireSmart assessments of your home and property. Stay tuned for FireSmart 2020 announcements or contact the qRD office for more information.

OK, still with fire. Every fire department in Canada will probably tell you that this is indeed the season to be merry, **and FireSmart**. This is the season for house fires caused by overloaded wiring and lots and lots of fancy flammable material. Have a safe and happy holiday. Happy New Year too!

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