

In Brief

by Matthew Majkut

Land Use

Planning law review

On January 13, 2003, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs released a public discussion paper on the law governing how land is used and developed in Manitoba. The Minister invited the public and municipalities to submit comments on how the law can be improved. Written submissions were welcomed before the end of March; however, the review will take from 12 to 18 months, so the AMM encourages municipalities to direct their comments to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Ethanol enthusiasm

The Minister of Agriculture has announced the creation of an ethanol office. This office will coordinate the growth of the ethanol industry and encourage locally owned and operated ethanol plants with a focus on a cooperative model of ownership. The AMM hopes that the promotion of this industry will help rural communities respond to global realities.

WCB firefighters benefits

The AMM met with the Minister of Labour on March 10, 2003 to discuss the prospect of volunteer firefighters receiving the same Workers Compensation Board benefits as full-time firefighters diagnosed with certain types of cancer. The Minister said that she has circulated a survey on this matter, but few have been returned. The AMM encourages all municipalities to complete these surveys so that volunteer firefighters receive these important benefits.

Protester or freedom fighter

As local politicians, municipal officials are easily accessible and in a position to respond to challenging decisions that have an immediate and local impact. For that reason, constituents can become impassioned by the decisions being made by council. The following tips will help you deal with your protesters.

- Remember that municipal protesters are neighbours and human; they have feelings just like you.

- Focus on the issue not the emotion; respect your ratepayer's views, even when you disagree with them.

- Master your subject matter; remember that it is an issue not a person being debated. Deliver a positive message on the subject without belittling opposing positions.

- Anger comes of the unknown; opposition is usually against change not progress. Respond to uncertainty with certainty; make those you lead feel that you have a firm hand on the helm.

- Don't mystify; make technical issues easy to digest without belittling the complexity of the issue.

- Know your enemy; some zealots and martyrs cannot be pleased – avoid inflexible people and uncomfortable positions.

Lake Winnipeg clean-up

The Province has undertaken an action plan to help protect Lake Winnipeg. The plan includes establishing a new Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board and new regulations to help maintain natural growth along the Red and Assiniboine rivers. The Province has targeted reducing pre-1970 nitrogen and phosphorus levels in the lake by 13%.

Labour Day weekend for the kids

An ongoing issue for municipalities economically dependent on tourism and cottagers has been the opening of schools before the Labour Day weekend. The Province announced that this would not be the case in 2003. Students will return to school on September 2, thus allowing these municipalities to reap the benefits of an extended summer.

Goodbye to an old friend

Few are as familiar in the municipal world as **Roger Bouvier**. Roger started with the LGD of Alexander as the assistant to the Resident Administrator on July 1, 1968, and became the Resident Administrator of the LGD of Park in 1972. He returned to the LGD of Alexander in 1980, where he served as the Resident Administrator. In May 1989, Roger moved to Winnipeg and began his tenure as a Municipal Service Officer. In this capacity, he has been a crutch that many municipal officials and AMM staff have leaned on. His contribution

to the municipal world is significant and his friends at the AMM have appreciated his help over the years. Roger will retire this spring; had he stayed until July, he would have 35 years of municipal service under his belt. Enjoy your hard-earned retirement, Roger.

Tire chain agreement

Wallingford's Inc., North America's largest manufacturer and distributor of logging supplies, and Brandt Tractor, the world's largest independent John Deere dealer, have joined in a major marketing agreement for BABAC tire chains. Brandt Tractor became the exclusive distributor for BABAC tire chains in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The agreement establishes the largest tire chain distribution network in western Canada with 21 full service facilities offering BABAC tire chains for all John Deere and Timberjack forestry equipment, mining equipment, graders and loaders sold by Brandt Tractor.

Paul Breitreuz will coordinate the tire chain program at Brandt Tractor from the company's newly established distribution centre in Edmonton.

For more information, visit www.brandttractor.com.

UMA appointment

Tom Wingrove was recently appointed Vice-President of the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario Region for UMA. Tom has been with UMA for 29 years and has experience in both earth sciences and environmental projects across Canada and abroad.

An employee-owned company with offices in Canada, the US and Mexico, UMA provides consulting, engineering, construction and management services to the community, infrastructure, earth and water, transportation, and industrial market sectors. It has been in business for more than 90 years. For more information, visit www.umagroup.com.

Leadership in sustainable community development

The 2004 FCM Sustainable Communities National Conference is an opportunity for you to talk with forward-looking Canadian municipal leaders about how sustainable development can generate a stream of economic, social, environmental, and health benefits for

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your community and its citizens. The Conference will give you an opportunity to hear key addresses by federal cabinet ministers, visit a trade show featuring innovative Canadian firms, meet federal government partners, and participate in networking opportunities, including an on-line networking forum and virtual tradeshow.

Correction

In the last issue of the *Municipal Leader*, we said that the Leica GS50 GPS/GIS data collection system, "is the only GPS receiver in the industry that displays continuously, in real time, the accuracy of the data being collected." That statement is not true, since all receivers have that capability. We apologize for the error.

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