

VILLAGE OF VILNA NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2014

**BELATED MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR
3 Різдвом і 3 Новим роком**

IMPORTANT MEETING

JANUARY 22, 2014 – 7:00 P.M. MEDICAL CLINIC X-RAY AND BLOOD TESTING EQUIPMENT

Losing our x-ray machine as well as the blood testing equipment is hitting the Vilna community harder than first suspected.

- *If you go to the clinic and you need blood work done or an x-ray you now have to go to Smoky Lake or St. Paul.*
- *If you go to Smoky Lake or St. Paul to get the blood tests done or an x-ray, chances are you'll pick up your prescriptions there in Smoky Lake or St. Paul;*
- *And while you're waiting for the prescription you might as well pick up a few groceries.*

It's a slippery slope which could have drastic economic effects on the Village.

The first impact will be on the patient.

- *You now have to travel to another community. Some of you don't drive so you need to arrange transportation. Of course, Greyhound doesn't stop here anymore, so you are now dependent on friends and family.*

The next impact will be on our businesses:

- *Pharmacy, grocery store and restaurants,*
- *Gift shops and hardware,*
- *Banking.*

If you're going to be going to Smoky Lake or St. Paul for the blood tests or x-rays, you might even change doctors.

- *We could lose the clinic!!!!*

There's another indirect impact that we have to look at.

- *Highway driving. If you're not well and have to travel to Smoky Lake or St. Paul, considering all the heavy equipment traveling up and down Highway 28, are you putting yourself at risk? Or others?*

We've written letters and made phone calls, but the appeals seem to be falling on deaf ears.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A MEETING!!!!!!

We're going to become pro-active. The x-ray machine will cost approximately \$ 125,000.00 and the blood testing equipment will cost approximately \$25,000.00. We're a strong and determined community. We'll fundraise and buy the equipment ourselves.

***COME WITH YOUR ENTHUSIASM AND
FUNDRAISING IDEAS, WE ALL NEED THIS!!
JANUARY 22, 2014, 7:00 P.M. at the
CULTURAL CENTRE***

On January 22nd, 2014 there will also be an open-house forum for a development strategy policy.....

The Councils of the Village of Vilna and Smoky Lake County invite you to a Public Open House to discuss the Village and Town's future Intermunicipal Development Strategy.

An Intermunicipal Development Strategy is a tool shared between the Village and County that will facilitate cooperation and communication on decisions relating to land use planning, servicing, and economic development. This Open House is the first step in preparing a draft Intermunicipal Development Strategy.

The Open House will be an opportunity for residents to learn about land use planning, and to share ideas with project staff.

The ideas gathered at the Open House will help guide the document's vision and policies.

2013 IN REVIEW

WATER

- *In January, 2013 the upgrades to the Water Treatment Plant were completed at a cost of approx. \$170,500.00 to the Village. The three pumps were replaced with variable speed pumps. These only come on when the demand increases. This upgrade has reduced the cost of electricity for the plant by about \$2,000.00 per year.*
- *The well pump at the water plant quit in January 2013 costing about \$7,000.00 to replace.*
- *We had three major water breaks in 2013 costing about \$21,000.00 for repairs, not including the road surfaces still have to be finished.*
- *The Regional water line from Waskatenau to Spedden has been completed. It was constructed in three phases. Our share of the 1st phase was \$55,000.00 what has been debentured, the 2nd phase cost us \$231,390.00 which we paid with a grant, and the 3rd phase cost to the Village will be approx. \$228,711.00 which will also be paid by using our Municipal Sustainability Capital Grant. By using the grants we will not have to include the waterline costs in the cost of the water, except for capital replacement. We anticipate the water to be turned on before summer.*

SEWER

*Over the two years of 2012 & 2013 most of the sewer mains were camera'd and inspected. The majority of the problems we've encountered is **grease build up in the lines**. We encourage everyone to collect grease into a disposal container, not pour it into the sewers. Taking care of the sewer line at your sink will save you money in the long run.*

GARBAGE

Carmen Shankowsky was hired to operate the Waste Transfer Station and she does a great job. We realize that garbage collection has been a bit frustrating. Our garbage truck has broken down, so garbage has been collected using a pick-up truck. This takes a little longer. Kevin was taking his water treatment courses which often took him away from the Village on Wednesdays. We are confident that the Wednesday routine will again be applied. We pay a share of

operating the regional site, and the cost may need to be increased to meet the increase in disposal costs. We are hoping that this increase will not affect the bi-monthly bills. Recycling also reduces weight and therefore costs. Please remember to store your outside garbage bags in cans with tight fitting lids **AND** an enclosure to resist pests.

SNOW REMOVAL

We bought an older grader that we've been using to clear the snow from the streets. The 2013/14 winter has given us more snow than years before, but we are hoping to stay ahead of the drifts. Removal of the snow is the challenge we are facing this winter. We have also purchased a used sweeper/blower/brush trimmer.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Vilna and District Fire Department has been voluntarily protecting us from emergencies and because of their generosity, we all sleep a little safer each night. Remember to support them by attending the Firemen's Dine and Dance on January 25th, 2014.

The floods in southern Alberta and the freezing rain in Ontario have made us more aware of the need to be prepared. Each family should have an emergency kit in their home that contains food, water and materials to sustain you for a period of at least 3 days.

SMOKY LAKE FOUNDATION

Vilna is in partnership with Waskatenau, Smoky Lake and Smoky Lake County through the Smoky Lake Foundation to provide affordable housing for our seniors. The Foundation is currently building 40 supportive living units in Smoky Lake, construction started in fall 2013.

DOGS

If you own a dog older than six months, you require a license annually for your pet. License fees are due as of January 1st each year. You **MUST** keep your dog confined to your property and not roaming free to dig in garbage and defecate on your neighbor's property. You risk losing your pet for good.

PROPERTY TAXES

2013 taxes were levied without an increase in the tax rate. Although operating costs have gone up slightly, we were able to cover this increase with the increase in the Electrical Franchise fee. We still have \$138,000.00 of uncollected taxes.

It is hoped that 2014 will again hold the rate without an increase.

MUNICIPAL DEBT

One debenture (\$8,029.00) for the 2004 electronic upgrade to the Water Treatment Plant will be paid in full on March 2014. The 2001 Main Street Waterline debenture (\$13,478.67 per year) will be paid out in 2021. (82,471.00 outstanding). A 2006 loan through ATB for main street repairs costs \$19,112.00 per year and will expire in approximately 10 years (187,925.00 outstanding). Another in 2006, a general ATB loan with payments of \$34,683.00 annually has an outstanding balance of \$165,000.00.

At year-end 2013 we owe \$443,425.00 (1,529.00 per capita). It's coming down.

ROADS AND STREETS

We are able to purchase some gravel and cold mix at the end of 2013 summer. Unfortunately, we were low on the totem pole and it was not delivered until October. Some repairs were done, the remainder in the Spring once the frost is out of the ground.

TRAIL WASHROOMS

The trail washrooms have been a vandalism target for several years and have cost a few thousand dollars to repair. We are looking at ways to reduce this destruction. The Citizen's On Patrol committee has agreed to monitor the facility in hopes that the extra scrutiny will reduce the desire to deface and vandalize. We wish to provide a clean facility for our visitors who come and spend time and money in the Village.

BONNIE LAKE CAMPGROUND

Council opted to contract the operations and maintenance of the campground this year to Allan Marsh. Our revenues increased considerably. Except for the \$4,000.00 spent getting the site cleaned and painted, we actually realized a surplus of \$251.00. Thank you Allan!

ELECTION 2013

2013 was a municipal election year. Your Council has seen one change. Councillor Ron Farmer stepped down citing his very busy work schedule. Thank you Ron for your years of dedication. We are very fortunate to have Stephen Klassen step forward as our third member of Council. You are now represented by Mayor Donald Romanko, Deputy Mayor Frank Barry and Councillor Stephen Klassen.

GENERAL ITEMS

The next Council Meeting will be held at the Village office at 7pm on January 20th, 2014 at the Village office.

Please stay away from Snow Clearing Equipment while it is in operation!!!

Firemen's Dine and Dance-January 25th 2014 at the Cultural Centre.

X-Ray/Bloodwork Machines Fundraising Strategy Meeting – January 22, 2014 7pm-Cultural Centre

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