

“Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.” *Macbeth, Act 5, V*

We forget to take notes during Minister Harpauer's visit to New North.
Full story inside.

Upcoming

New North Administrators
Conference

September 14, 2017

Saskatchewan Association of
Northern Communities

NEW
NORTH

- AGM Wrap
- Northern Landfill Survey
- RCMP's Communications Improving
- Northern Mayor recognized
- This summer's hottest beach wear

Monthly Newsletter
June 2017

“#Is this Mic On?” Trends at New North's 2017 AGM

Debates on renewable energy, banishment, and alcohol tax feature in Resolutions Session

The New North AGM is traditionally the venue for driving the northern municipal association's direction, and this time it was no different, with lively and passionate debate on crime, renewable energy and the merits of a northern alcohol tax taking centre stage at this year's event.

Ric Richardson, whose village of Green Lake has been the pathfinder on solar energy, spoke to the New North Executive's resolution calling for the provincial government to assist northern communities overcome the many barriers to municipalities adopting renewable energy as an alternative to conventional power.

Ric said that there are very few incentives from the provincial government to help the province reach its target that 50% of all energy come from renewable sources by 2030. He spoke particularly of the limitations of the “100kw cap” that SaskPower has for the amount of electricity it will buy from self-generators.

An earlier resolution from the New North Executive called for the provincial government to consider imposing an additional tax on alcohol sold in the north, the revenue from which could be used to help municipalities fund programs and services to address the impacts of addictions on northern communities. Debate

centred around the kinds of programs that such a fund might help finance, including treatment facilities and public safety initiatives. There was also some discussion about whether the tax revenue would go back to the communities from whence the alcohol was purchased, or whether it would be “pooled” and be made available to everyone, regardless of whether that community has a liquor outlet or not.

The final resolution of the day was by far the most controversial, and generated significant media interest. The resolution, from Ile a la Crosse, called for government to provide municipalities with the power to “banish” convicted drug offenders. Although Mayor of Ile a la Crosse, Duane Favel, who moved the motion, said the word banishment “was there to start a conversation,” it was pretty clear that northern leaders support significantly greater efforts by government, the police and other agencies to help communities deal with the growing levels of violence they are seeing.

This motion, as with all the others, will be presented to the relevant ministries in the coming weeks.

See inside for a more complete wrap of this year's AGM.

NewNorth News & Updates

New North Aiming For September Administrators Conference

Illustrating the power of saying something without thinking then realizing people are actually taking you seriously, New North is now planning to bring northern administrators and clerks together for AdminCon2017 in September. The agenda is tentative, of course, but we are hoping to anchor the conference with a professional development session on dispute resolution, sometimes also known as “interest based negotiation”—although the accuracy of that term to describe what the actual thing is is itself currently a matter of dispute.

New North Member Contribution

Most communities have provided us with their member contribution for this year (thanks!). The New North member contribution is—at least for now—a voluntary membership fee paid by northern municipalities to help fund New North research and development activities, programs, and other things that come up from time to time.

So far, New North has funded research on solar power in the north, bylaw enforcement, the northern alcohol tax and options for dog control.

The member contribution is set by taking a \$300 base fee, and then adding a 70 cents per capita component to it. For a community of 1000 people, the fee would be exactly \$1000. Unfortunately, no one has a population of exactly 1000 people. Or do they?

Nope.

Altogether, the member contribution, when matched with NMTA funding from the same pillar, will yield New North about \$40,000 in operating funding, in addition to the core grant of \$320,000 from, who else?, the NMTA.

If your community has not made its member contribution, please get on that right away. Our effectiveness as an association is not entirely down to how much funding we have, but having adequate funding sure does help get the job done.

New North Financial Statements and Annual Report

Going with our commitment to be as transparent as we possibly not get away with, New North’s 2016-17 Annual Report and Financial Statements will be available on our website fairly soon. The financial statements are highly recommended to anyone who enjoys truly baffling experiences. And as always, if you have any questions about anything in there, please call us on Elephant, 7, Eight Hundred and Six, Taco. Ask for Jenny.

Sask Municipal Awards

Don’t Forget to Nominate Your Municipality!

Is your municipality doing something new, innovative, ahead of the curve...maybe even award worthy? Are you working with neighbouring municipalities? Take the time to celebrate the successes, innovations, and excellence in your municipality through a nomination for the Saskatchewan Municipal Awards. Nominations for these awards are open until September 8, 2017. To learn more about the Sask Municipal Awards and to download the application form, go to: <http://municipalawards.ca>.

From the New North Chair

BY BRUCE FIDLER, MAYOR OF CREIGHTON

With another AGM over, we're looking forward to push ahead with the agenda that the New North members have set for us.

Reflecting on New North's Annual General Meeting a few weeks, there is no question that the issue that dominated was the discussion about what communities can do to deal with drug dealers and other illegal activity happening in the community. It was a pretty passionate debate, with lots of good points raised. The discussion was captured really well in the media reporting, with MBC and CBC running articles and radio interviews. The resolution that was put forward by Ile a la Crosse, and spoken to by Mayor Duane Favel, specifically asked that municipalities be given additional powers to deal with chronic trouble-makers, such as the power to banish people from the community who have been convicted of drug dealing. Duane said that he chose the word "banishment" because he wanted to "start a conversation."

If you look "across the river" at what many First Nations are doing on this, you can see the banishment question has been around a long time. There was a case of a First Nation in Manitoba where they banished someone who was convicted of possessing cannabis. That case went to the federal court, and the judge overturned the banishment. The problem there was partly that the First Nation was using a Band Council Resolution as the authority to do the banishment, instead of a bylaw. BCRs don't need to get approval from the federal government, whereas bylaws do. If the band had tried to put banishment in a bylaw it probably would never have been approved by the government. This leads people to think that banishment wouldn't stand up in court if it was ever contested, on the basis that it violates someone's Charter Rights.

So we know that banishment is probably not a legal remedy, and we know government would

never allow municipalities to banish people, even if, as it was pointed out in the discussion, it is a "traditional practice" in some communities.

The only authority that can "banish" people is the courts. Judges can place certain orders on individuals that restrict their movements, like curfews, and this is allowable under the Charter. Perhaps the discussion now is really about how the courts deal with offenders, and I think this is what Duane, and a lot of the people who spoke up in the debate, were coming back to. It is a belief of many northern leaders (and not everyone agrees) that the courts need to impose tougher sentences to protect residents. Maybe this is where the discussion needs to go now.

But the other direction the discussion needs to go is in the direction of helping those who are victims of drugs, some of whom are also dealers because of their addictions. As Robert St. Pierre said, ultimately this issue is about healing. What I particularly admired about the discussion on the banishment question was that it was not one-sided, and it was not about victim blaming. It was, as someone said, "highly nuanced." We'll see where we go from here.

Laurent Mougeot Retires

You couldn't help but feel very saddened by the news that SUMA CEO, Laurent Mougeot, is hanging up the gloves as the boss of SUMA. I've known Laurent a long time, and worked with him closely in my time as the SUMA Northern Regional Director. I think we've all admired his work for SUMA, and especially for his support for the north. The revenue sharing deal that municipalities enjoy now is very much Laurent's legacy. But he did so much more as well, building that organization into one of the best in the country at what it does. So, happy trails, my friend.

Govt Does Semi-Backflip, Half-Pike on Funeral Coverage

The Ministry of Social Services slashed the amount it would fund funeral services for social assistance and low income earners in the 2017 provincial budget. We wrote letters, other wrote letters. People pointed out that, despite the province's claim that no other province is as generous as they are, everyone is in fact more generous, or less brutal, than Saskatchewan is when it comes to making sure everyone has a decent burial.

Under intense pressure from the funeral industry—who knew they could be so powerful?—the government will now cover expenses for the actual service part of the funeral. Previously, they were hell-bent on covering just the burial or cremation, and other incidentals, up to around \$2700.

Award for Northern Mayor Recognizes 19 Years of Being in Slightly Irritable Mood

One of the nation's longest-serving and therefore longest-suffering mayors, Gordon Stomp, received further recognition of his service to northern Saskatchewan during a special presentation at New North's AGM, where the mayor was recognized for his 19 years as a member of the Northern Municipal Trust Account Management Board, upon which Gord served all 19 years as Chair, and then later as a decorative lamp.

In her written statement, Minister Harpauer praised Gord's "dedicated service," and noted that since his tenure began, the board has "grown to become a valued and meaningful entity leading the development of northern communities."

Since the completely arbitrary date of 2007, the NTMA has provided \$125 million to northern municipal operations, and delivered over \$101 million worth of improvements to northern water and wastewater systems.

The minister also noted Gord's "sound and prudent" management of the NMTA, which she said has "ensured its long-term sustainability, enabling it to continue making investments in northern communities in the future."

The minister concluded by expressing appreciation for the "lively and constructive working relationship [government] has enjoyed with you."



Minister of Government Relations, Hon. Donna Harpauer (left), presented Air Ronge Mayor Gord Stomp (right) with a decorative carved loon (not pictured) in recognition for his 19 years service as Chair of the Northern Municipal Trust Account Management Board (not pictured).

Asset Management and the Gas Tax Fund

Asset management, or AM if you are in the biz, has been slow to come to Canada, and slower to make it to the municipal sector, and the federal government has decided to do something about it.

As part of the reporting requirements of the federal Gas Tax fund, which is administered by the provincial government, municipalities will, by 2018, need to "begin showing progress toward asset management" to stay eligible to receive their share of the grant.

The Gas Tax Fund is an allocation-based capital funding program, which delivers about \$60 per capita to each community a year. Most municipalities put the money towards roads and bridges.

The northern communities are not, for a variety of reasons, the most avid of Gas Tax Fund collectors, and so the new additional requirement will be of no more note to them as any of the other requirements. But for those that do get Gas Tax money, and want to keep it, what will they have to know about asset management? And specifically,

what will the reporting requirements for this particular piece look like?

To begin with, not all communities are being treated the same here. It is recognized by the province that smaller communities have less reason, and less capacity, to be observant of asset management as a concept, and therefore shouldn't be asked to do too much when it comes to meeting the fund's requirements. Communities of less than 500 people will need to show they have an asset assessment done on at one asset class only. From there, the number of asset classes needing assessment increases through the "tiers," so that communities with 500-1000 will need two classes done, and communities in the 1000-5000 population range will need three.

Of course, it is recognized that getting an asset assessment done doesn't actually equate to asset management; it is really just a first step. It is thought that with this first step out of the way communities may actually develop a real interest in putting actual AM practices into ... practice. You've got to start somewhere, right?

Northern Landfill Survey Results Pose Existential Challenge to Very Idea of Either Landfills or Surveys

The next 12 months should see considerable movement on some of the long-standing solid waste issues in the north. The impetus is coming from two different directions. Firstly, the province is currently engaging stakeholders in a solid waste management strategy development process, with consultations having taken place around the province in May this year, and a timeframe for the completion of the strategy looking like around late Winter 2018.

The other direction is the Northern Municipal Trust Account, which has committed \$500,000 for three studies to look at the feasibility of regional solid waste facilities on the north-west side, north central and eastern northern Saskatchewan. This is a considerable amount of money: the last feasibility study New North did on this came in at around \$80,000.

Within all this activity, we've yet to properly engage the communities to find out what they want to do; afterall, they're your landfills, right?

To this end, New North, with the Ministry of Government Relations and anyone else, is putting together an engagement and communication strategy, with a view to making sure no one wakes up one morning and finds their dump is now a Walmart—although, to be perfectly honest, I'm thinking a lot of us wouldn't be able to tell the difference.

I jest, of course; I love Walmart.

Our Survey

So we sent out a survey, and some communities completed it. The first thing we were interested in finding out is whether communities are even thinking about regional solutions, and if they are, what their opinion is. You can see the results below.

Of interest as well is the scrap tire situation. This is a curious one, because communities are either drowning in the things, or they are not. There's no real middle ground. Just on this: New North is putting together a response to the scrap tire dealio, and we should have something on the table by the Fall.

The final major thing we wanted to know about is fee collections. We had to run this particular variable through a special algorithm to filter out the laughing, but you can see the results of that below too.

Next Steps

The major leap forward on this file will happen when the feasibility studies are completed later in the year. Then we can have a proper discussion about whether communities can afford to join a regional system, or stay on their own. Rest assured, no one is going to pressure anyone into doing anything, but communities may actually find it's in their interests to take a long view on this one.

	Landfill Type/Location	Tipping Fees?	Fee on Utility Bill?	Seriousness Of Scrap Tire Issue	Interest or not in regional solution
Air Ronge	Regional	Nope	\$10 a quarter	Not Serious	Interested
Beauval	Municipal	No Sir	No	Very Serious	Interested
Cole Bay	Municipal	No	No	Not Serious	Not Interested
Creighton	Municipal	Non-Residents Only	\$12..26/month	Not Serious	Maayyybe
Buffalo Narrows	Municipal	Get out of Town	No	Serious	Interested
Cumberland House	Municipal	No	No	Not Serious	Not Interested
Denare Beach	Municipal	Construction Material Only		Not Serious	Not Interested
Dore Lake	Municipal	Yes. Wait. No.	No	Serious	Very Interested
Green Lake	No. Just No.	N/A	\$20/month	N/A	Interested
Ile a la Crosse	Municipal	What's the Cree for No? That.	No	Very Serious	Interested
Pinehouse	Municipal	No Times a Million	No	Very Serious	Very Interested
Jans Bay	Municipal	Can we get a No?	No	Not Serious	Interested
Michel Village	Municipal	No	No	Not Serious	Interested
Stony Rapids	Reserve	\$5/household; \$10/business	No	Not Serious	Not interested
Turnor Lake	Municipal	No	No	Very Serious	Very Interested
Weyakwin	Municipal	No	No	Maybe Getting Concerned	Very Interested

2017 New North AGM Wrap

In what could be interpreted as either a potent metaphor, or simply because no one knew how to work them, elected officials and guests continued the time-honoured New North tradition of taking to mics that were not plugged in, had run out of batteries, or were not mics at all, at this year's New North 2017 AGM.

That didn't stop the conversation from flowing though; this year's AGM was particularly notable for the level of intelligent, thoughtful and reasonable discussion on a whole range of matters.

Following opening comments by Bruce Fidler, who updated members on the progress on the resolutions at the 2016 AGM, Mayor Greg Dionne, of Prince Albert, welcomed everyone to his city. Then he took a question. This surprised the mayor. The question was about Prince Albert council's plans for a toll on the bridge. Mayor Dionne said that they have asked the administration to figure out how much a toll might be, but had no plans to implement one at this point. He also noted that the best place for a toll would actually be on the Transcanada Highway, "then millions of people would be paying for it." It's not the worst idea. Greg acknowledged that a toll on the bridge would be a big cost to northern people.

New North's financial statements were then presented, this year by Tanya Ferster, with MNP, New North's long-time auditor.

The formalities out of the way, the agenda turned to the resolutions (see over). Two were from the New North Executive, and one from Ile a la Crosse. A potential resolution on cannabis legalization was tabled for another time—hopefully before the actual legalization of cannabis. We feel we'll be hearing quite a lot about this topic from the leaders in the next few Gatherings.

After the break, Minister of Government Relations, Donna Harpauer, and Minister of Social Services, Tina Beaudry-Mellor spoke briefly, then took questions from the floor. This was planned. The questions, from Ric Richardson, Bobby Woods and others, reflected concerns about the rate of return northerners are getting on the amount of resources that being extracted from the region.

Lunch (provided) was baked ham.

Highways

Minister of Highways Assistant Deputy Minister, Blair Wagar, took to the podium after lunch to provide members with an update on highway's



Mayor Duane Favel speaking at this year's thing

spending in the north and around the province. Of particular note was the ADM's comments on Cumberland House's dog track, which had become mostly impassable with the Spring rain. Blair noted that it had been a particularly wet Spring, and a lot of money was being spent by highways to "pull [roads] out of the water." Blair also noted that Highways would probably overspend its \$53 million northern road budget because of the unexpected jump in O&M related expenses.

Not unexpectedly, questions from members centred around the massive capital investments in highways around Regina, as part of the bypass operation. The bypass outlay this year is around \$500 million, or approximately half the ministry's entire budget.

Ric Richardson noted that the poor state of northern roads was having a particular impact on emergency services. One councillor, who works as an EMS provider, said they'd just spent \$80,000 fixing their ambulances so they could continue to drive on the roads around the smaller communities.

Questions were also raised about the procurement process for brush cutting and tree clearing. The response from the ministry was that sometimes contracts cannot be procured locally because of "trade agreements" (ie, the New West Partnership, which continues to be a disaster for the north). While procurement contracts are tended through Sasktenders, the ministry has said they will monitor the procurement situation, and will provide a comprehensive response to questions around this issue to New North in due course.

2017 New North AGM Wrap

RCMP: Gangs, Fentanyl, Intelligence Gathering

The final sessions of the day were brought to us by the RCMP. Two presentations—on warrants and intelligence gathering, and the scourge of fentanyl, were repeats from the New North Empowering Our Communities event back in March (see New North's March Newsletter).

The third presentation was a very high level discussion on gangs. It was brief, but no less disturbing for being so. Although we've seen plenty of gang presentations in the last few years—

they're a perennial at our Northern Justice Symposiums—what seemed particularly concerning out of this presentation was the apparent rise in female membership in gangs, and even the appearance of all-female gangs. It was also interesting to find out that there is no RCMP “gangs unit” in the north—they operate out of Regina and Saskatoon. Perhaps it's about time we got one.

The next New North Gathering will be in late November 2017.

Resolutions on Renewable Energy, Banishment, Alcohol Tax Supported by Northern Leaders

1. Northern Alcohol Tax

Sponsor: New North Executive

Whereas high rates of violence, mental health and other social issues northern Saskatchewan are the direct result of alcohol

Whereas the Province of Saskatchewan has an alcohol consumption tax

Whereas the Province of Saskatchewan directs its income from the sale of alcohol to the General Revenue Fund

Whereas the municipalities of northern Saskatchewan have limited financial and resource capacity to cope with the direct and indirect consequences of alcohol addictions

Whereas the social and economic costs incurred by municipalities in dealing with the consequences of alcohol addictions are not reflected in the price of alcohol in the north

Be it therefore Resolved that ...

The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Commission and the Ministry of Finance commit to working with northern communities to implement an additional tax on the sale of alcohol within the NSAD, which would be called a Northern Alcohol Tax

Be it Further Resolved that ...

A fund be created from the revenues of the Northern Alcohol Tax to be accessible by communities for programs and services to directly address alcohol and related social issues in northern communities

2. Solar Power Feasibility in Northern Saskatchewan

Sponsor: New North Executive

Whereas northern Saskatchewan receives the vast majority of its electricity from the grid

Whereas a number of northern Saskatchewan communities do not have access to cheaper sources of energy other than that available from Saskpower

Whereas the potential for solar to generate electricity power municipal facilities has not been fully explored

Whereas it is important for the northern communities to show leadership and direction to the rest of province on renewable energy

Be it Therefore Resolved that ...

The provincial government and through the agency of Saskpower work with the northern municipalities to explore the potential for solar power and other renewables to offset the energy cost of municipal facilities

3. Illegal Drugs and other Criminal Activity in Northern Municipalities

Sponsor: Ile a la Crosse

Whereas Mayor and Council have a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and well-being of their community's residents

Whereas Mayor and Council have limited legal capacity to carry out the task of ensuring the health, safety and well-being of their residents

Whereas the criminal code is the responsibility of the the Federal and Provincial Governments

Whereas high crime rates in northern communities have a devastating impact on a community's ability to attract business and economic development opportunities

Whereas northern communities continue to be plagued by high crime rates and high rates of repeat criminal activity by particular individuals

Whereas the RCMP acknowledge that they “cannot police their way out of the problem”

Be it resolved that New North lobby the Provincial and Federal Governments to assist the northern municipalities to combat criminal activity by, in among other measures, providing local governments in the north with more powers to deal with drug dealers, such as banishment of individuals who are convicted of the possession of illegal drugs for the purpose of trafficking in their community.

RCMP Continues to Lift Their Game on Communications

By Chelsea Laskowski

If you've been following news coverage of crime in News North's western region communities for the past two or so months, it would seem that drug-related arrests are on the rise. There have been six reports of significant busts in La Ronge, Buffalo Narrows, Meadow Lake (the RCMP says it's safe to say the geography of the north means some drugs are coming from Meadow Lake), and between Pinehouse Lake and Beauval, with most of the arrests taking place between the end of May and now.

Part of this is thanks to increased communication between the RCMP detachments and the communities they serve; and the attendance of RCMP higher-ups at a number of New North meetings in recent months certainly didn't hurt. RCMP Superintendent Larry Wilson spoke at a Community Police Board event hosted by New North in March, and RCMP Commanding Officer Curtis Zablocki was at the New North gathering in April. At that time, a number of municipal leaders including La Ronge's mayor and a councillor from Buffalo Narrows directly told Zablocki that the status quo on how the RCMP informs them of significant criminal events in their community is not cutting it. He agreed that things need to improve.

And indeed it appears the RCMP heeded that call in at least some areas, with the number of public news releases coming from La Ronge RCMP jumping from only one between January to mid-April to 17 over the past two and a half months (although some of those releases have only come after prodding from the media). It's also worth noting that in mid-May the leaders of the La Ronge tri-community area held a meeting with Wilson to discuss crime reduction.

Meanwhile, Ile-a-la-Crosse's detachment had only one public release in the first three months of the year, versus three in May alone. Mayor Duane Favel says he has felt their talks with RCMP in recent months are proving fruitful. He also notes that there are ways to ensure the community impact of drug use is felt by drug peddlers. This was a major topic at the New North mayor and councillor gathering in June. Those present will recall the conflict a northern community's leadership faces between wanting to denounce and deter crime while also acknowledging that many of those committing crime are relatives. Favel says the village of Ile-a-la-Crosse has

provided the RCMP with a victim impact statement of sorts that is to be read at every drug sentencing in the community. It's meant to ensure the offender is made aware of how his or her actions is affecting the safety, health, and security of the community.



Image from a June 7 drug bust in Meadow Lake. Source: RCMP.

A number of leaders are taking the talk from New North gatherings and putting it into action in their communities. The staff sergeant with Buffalo Narrows RCMP says she's been in regular communication with Mayor Bobby Woods, speaking to him only last week. For Buffalo Narrows, the drug of choice is crack-cocaine. The reason, the staff sergeant says, is due to more residents' employment providing disposable income that allows them to afford the higher costs of crack-cocaine. This is a contrast to other communities like Meadow Lake where Northern Pride reports crystal meth use is a main concern that's been increasing for at least half a year "partly due to the fact that it's so cheap and available," says RCMP detachment Sgt. Ryan How.

Within the past two months, both Buffalo Narrows and Meadow Lake's detachment have specifically put out public releases calling for information on drug dealing in their communities, while accompanying the call for action with information on recent arrests made. These releases hint at the freedom detachment commanders have when it comes to using the media to increase awareness of the steps they're

taking to combat drugs in their communities—something Buffalo Narrows detachment says has been identified as the key priority by local leadership. Comment boards on any news story on the topic show how supportive community members are of these types of arrests. Zablocki has previously stated that there are no limitations keeping detachments from providing information to the media, but in my work as reporter I have - on many occasions - called a detachment for information on a criminal news tip that's come to my office, only to be told to call Regina's communication department. This back and forth means that my request goes in, then the Regina office calls the local detachment for information, then they issue a news release. If I have a question that isn't covered in the news release, I then have to call Regina, who then calls the local RCMP, and then calls me. This adds a lot of time to get an answer to questions that are often quite simple. It is possible that these delays for information are a result of understaffing in the RCMP, however they are frustrating when direct communication could allow the media to use its voice to stem any public confusion and to stop rumours from spreading.

While Meadow Lake is not a New North community, their detachment offers an example of open communication with the public. They

have issued a large amount of news releases this year, and Sgt. Ryan How has sent e-mails to media, without prompting, saying "Meadow Lake RCMP are pushing hard to be open and accountable with the media" and has sent out a list of prolific alleged offenders while saying, "As with most communities, a very small amount of the population is responsible for the majority of criminal activity and RCMP feel it's important for the public to be aware of the identities of the people alleged to be responsible." That same detachment has made major drug arrests within the past few months and has laid out connections between previous incidents, stating "investigators believe that the recent increase in violence is directly attributable to the drug trade and a specific group of people."

When law enforcement follows the principle that a problem doesn't get solved if it stays in the dark, it always gets a positive response from the communities they serve. Here, I've provided examples of detachments that are taking cues from local leadership and while not all are communicating equally, that can improve with a bit of elbow grease and a strong will from the community. It's not that a detachment can't do it, it's whether or not they are doing it.

Community	News Releases from RCMP between January and July 2017	Drug-Related Public News Releases	Quantity/Type of Drugs Seized, Based on News Releases	Arrests on Drug-Related Offences
La Ronge	18 (9 related to past incidents)	1	95g of cocaine, 153g of marijuana, \$3550, weapons	12
Ile a la Crosse	4 (1 related to past incident)	1	Cocaine and cash; no value shared aside from cash under \$5000	1
Beauval	3	0	0	0
Pinehouse	5 (2 related to past incidents)	1	100g cocaine	3
Cumberland House	1	0	0	0
Buffalo Narrows	5 (3 related to past incidents)	1	Drug paraphenalia, cash, crack cocaine	4
Stony Rapids	1	0	0	0
Meadow Lake	More than 26	10	138g cocaine; 22g of meth; weapons, crack cocaine, marijuana	

FROM THE CEO

BY Matt Heley

If there's one thing you could say with absolute certainty about northern municipal leaders it is that they have a very complex understanding of the social issues facing their communities.

This was no better seen than in the discussion around the "banishment" resolution put forward by Ile a la Crosse at the AGM.

No sooner had it been proposed than members began popping up to point out its flaws. Paul Morin, Mayor of Sandy Bay, outright opposed the resolution, but also spoke about the "internal consequences of doing the right thing." He said you have to look at where the "problem" came from, and suggested that banishment is akin to a refusal to take responsibility for the "crisis" that is gripping communities, rather than a solution to it. It was a sentiment echoed by others.

On the question of tougher sentences, Morin said that this was like adding "salt to the wounds." There are always consequences to these initiatives, he said. "Be prepared to bury a lot of our young people."

If Mayor Favel's intent was to "start a conversation," he succeeded.

We couldn't help but reflect on the resolution that was passed at this year's SARM Convention, which comes from their members' frustration with the increase in the rural crime rate. That resolution called for the government to implement a "stand your ground" type law, to expand "the rights and justification for an individual to defend or protect himself, herself, and person under their care and their property."

A similar kind of resolution at a New North AGM would be unimaginable, of course. Even if the anger and frustration that animated the banishment resolution was coming from the same place as the SARM resolution, the final deliberation was very different. Part of this, to be sure, is because the northern leaders are very aware that they are dealing with their "own people," sometimes their own family members, and that always complicates things. But even so, it was hard not to be impressed by the compassion, wisdom, and the sense of the long view with which this "conversation" was—and will continue to be—carried out. As we always say at New North, people can learn from this.

About New North ...

Since 1996 New North has been the voice of the municipalities of Northern Saskatchewan. Our goal, as defined by our mission statement, is to advocate, negotiate and initiate improvements in well-being of the residents of the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District. Organized on the basis of strength through unity, New North partners with all northern stakeholders, from government and non-government agencies, associations and First Nations, to enhance the quality of life, create opportunities and build better futures, for the people of the north.

New North Executive

Mayor Bruce Fidler (Chair)
Mayor Robert St.Pierre (Deputy Chair)
Mayor Gord Stomp (Treasurer)
Mayor Mike Natomagan
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