



# New North 2018-19 Advocacy Strategy Involves Purchase of Combine Harvester

See inside for details

## Upcoming

### April

- New North Waterworks
- Administrators Conference

### May

- New North Northern Justice Symposium

Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities

# NEW NORTH

This month ..

- La Loche Challenges Census
- Northern Justice Symposium
- Around the Traps
- Climate Policies under the Spotlight

## Monthly Newsletter March 2018

### Senator Lillian Dyck Headlines Northern Justice Symposium

Canada's upper house, the Senate, is modelled after the British House of Lords, in the sense that it is appointed rather than elected (unlike in Australia or the U.S., say, where members are elected). Unlike the institution across the ditch, the Senate seems to want to serve a socially useful purpose, the achievement of which comes at least partly by way of the nature of appointments. If reading through the biographies of Canadian senators might cause us to reflect on the extent to which we've truly wasted our lives, there is the additional and secondary thought, depending on how you feel about it, that the Senate either takes some of the most eminent and distinguished individuals that Canada has ever produced and puts their talents to work for a higher collective purpose, or simply takes them out of circulation altogether.

Senator Lillian Dyck, who will speak on the opening morning of the Northern Justice Symposium on May 15, falls into the first category. She has a unique biography. Hailing from Saskatchewan, she is of Chinese and First Nations descent (a member of Gordon First Nation), got her Ph.D and worked as a neuroscientist—where, if her list of academic publications is anything to go by, she did a lot of work with rats—as well as becoming Associate Dean at the University of Saskatchewan. She was appointed to the Senate in 2005, possibly to the relief of a whole lot of rats.

In 2015, Senator Dyck introduced a bill to help protect Aboriginal women and girls through amendments to the criminal code to require, as she said at the second reading, that “a court of consider the fact that when the victim of an assault or murder is an Aboriginal female person, this constitutes an aggravating

circumstance for the purpose of sentencing.”

Senator Dyck is the Chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. The committee recently came through Prince Albert to tour the prison.

Other highlights of this year's NJS includes the Northern Excellence Awards Luncheon, where we get to say a collective “thank you, here's a star blanket,” to people who've been doing excellent work in their communities.

As well, we'll be checking in with the Northern Alcohol Strategy, see how the youth violence reduction initiative is going up in the northeast, and so much more.

See page 4 (inside) for the full agenda.

**To register for the event, go to [www.newnorthsask.org](http://www.newnorthsask.org), or call the office on 306 425 5505.**

# New North

## Advocacy, Capacity Building & Executive Initiatives, 2018-19

### Administrative Capacity Building, Revenue Sharing, Community Justice Initiatives to Feature in this Year's Plan for New North

April would normally be a month for a New North Gathering, where we bring everyone together to sample moods, gauge expectations, and unveil a draft plan for the association for the coming year.

But this year, with so many other events to distract us (and now the provincial budget), we're leaving April open for others to fill. That doesn't mean we don't have a draft plan ready, though.

Following their board meeting in March, the New North Executive has decided to build upon their desire to see administrative capacity building initiatives advance a little bit quicker, which will see us this year unveil our new Administrative Circuit Rider Program. Funded partly from member contributions, and partly from our program revenues, the administrative circuit rider program will make available to communities, at a nominal cost, an experienced administrator to provide

hands-on support, mentoring, training and even sit in while your own administrator is out getting coffee, on vacation, or both. We think this program will have a tremendous impact on closing the legislative compliance gap for many of our smaller communities, as well, we hope, stop the bleeding in some of the larger ones, too.

With the government announcing that revenue sharing will get a "fullsome" review this year you can bet your last Easter egg that the New North Executive will be at that table pushing northern interests forward.

As well, we are very pleased to be continuing our relationship with the Ministry of Justice, who, along with our program revenues, will make available almost \$100,000 in funding for community justice initiatives, including training for community safety boards, community-driven events, and much else.

We also hope to finally have our Administrators Resource Bank finished, as well as a made-in-the-north asset management program well underway.

In total we have well over a dozen programs and initiatives going this year—significantly more than last year. This doesn't include the countless issues that we will advocate on, including our concern about mental health spending in the north, growing alarm about procurement practices, and anything that comes out of this month's budget.

As well, in late May, communities will have the opportunity to contribute to New North's operations, including our circuit rider program, through a voluntary member contribution.

In early June the New North Executive will travel to communities to meet face to face with leaders and residents, and to see and hear about your issues first hand.

And we are very happy to be hosting the SUMA Board in early May—a first for us, at least in recent memory.

And don't forget the AGM in June. ■

### Second Quarter: Calendar

#### APRIL

April 12: **New North Northern Administrators Conference**

April 18 & 19: **New North Waterworks**

April 20: **Water Operator Challenge Exams**

#### MAY

May 3-4: **NMTA Management Board**

May 7-9: **SUMA Executive Visits North**

May 15-17: **Northern Justice Symposium**

May 16: **New North Executive Meeting**

#### JUNE

June 4-8: **New North Executive Community Visits (westside)**

June 11-15 **New North Executive Community Visits (Eastside)**

June 21: **New North AGM**

## From the New North Chair

BY BRUCE FIDLER, MAYOR OF CREIGHTON

This month's provincial budget is reported to be another "tight" one, but not, we hope, as tight as last year's, which saw the province take millions away from municipalities in the south, hike education property taxes for everyone, cut libraries, STC and even funeral expenses for social assistance recipients. Not to mention raising the PST.

The government walked-back some of those decisions, but many of them are still affecting us, including the cancelling of the provincial bus service. In previous budgets, government closed the Buffalo Narrows correctional, and folded the NORTEP/NORPAC program into Northlands. We're waiting to see how the merging of the health regions into a single authority will play out for us.

In the meantime, we've also seen hundreds of jobs go on hold at CAMECO, with no real certainty they'll come back.

While all this uncertainty and budget setbacks can play on our minds, what we are also seeing right now are communities in the north powering ahead. Some of that is because communities are far better positioned than ever before to talk to each other, and to plan regionally, to solve their own problems. Regional opportunities in the next 12 to 18 months will involve converting landfills to transfer stations, creating economic spin-offs in solid waste we've never seen before. Along with that will come better access to recycling, even in small communities.

We think that the current interest in solar and renewable energy will pick up steam, so to speak, as communities see the economic and social benefits of going greener. Energy self-sufficiency in the north is a long way off, but small steps can have a huge pay-off, even now. Just ask Green Lake. We'd also love to see more investments in climate adaptation in the north

as well (see our article later in this newsletter).

Economic development is really the key to driving better social conditions in northern Saskatchewan. Our argument to government continues to be that northern municipal revenue sharing, along with growth in governance and administrative capacity, underpins a lot of that development. On that note, we are very pleased that the MLDP session on strategic planning, delivered by our good friend Malcolm Eaton, had such an impact on helping communities set their goals and priorities. It's no coincidence that the next MLDP session we'll bring to our northern members is on economic development.

At the end of the day, no matter what this month's budget brings, I'm pretty confident that we'll be able to shrug off any setbacks, and grab hold of any opportunities. And quite honestly, what other choice do we have. ■



## La Loche Successfully Challenges Census

The 2016 census was generally a dog's breakfast for northern Saskatchewan, as the reported meagre 1% increase in the NSAD population since 2011 made virtually no sense to anyone, least of all the municipal leaders caught completely unaware that their community had virtually halved overnight.

The problems of taking an accurate census in many northern communities are well known. For starters, workers sometimes don't go into the communities, are unsure where the community actually starts

and finishes, and don't do follow-ups. As well, some residents, perhaps those living in social housing, are reluctant to reveal how many people are living there. Whole extended families can pretty much go missing.

One community whose numbers were very questionable is La Loche. As we pointed out way back in 2016, comparing the health enrolments of the surrounding communities with the census count of each one revealed a deficit of about 400 people. Those could only have been La Loche residents.

Knowing that, the municipal leadership took the time, and paid the expense, of conducting a thorough door-to-door recount.

This month they finally got the good news from Census Canada: their numbers were revised up by, you guessed it, 400.

That 400 people is worth a lot to the community: for the Gas Tax, for example, they get an extra \$24,000 a year. That alone makes their census recount one of the best investments they've ever made. ■

# 13<sup>th</sup> Annual New North

# Northern Justice Symposium

May 15-17, Plaza 88 (888 Central Avenue), Prince Albert

## Tuesday May 15<sup>th</sup>

9.00 - 9.45	<b>Opening Prayer &amp; Opening Ceremonies</b> <i>Master of Ceremonies</i> Simon Bird & Larry Ahenakew <i>Elder</i> Mr. James Burns <b>Opening Ceremonial Song</b> Dave Laroque, CSC <i>Dignitaries</i> Greg Dionne, <b>Mayor of Prince Albert</b> A/C Curtis Zablocki, <b>Commanding Officer, F Division</b> Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte, <b>PAGC</b> Bruce Fider, <b>Chair, New North</b>
9.45 - 10.30	<b>Guest Speaker</b> Senator Lillian Dyck
10.30 - 11.00	<b>Nutrition Break</b>
11.00 - 11.30	<b>Rural Crime Protection and Response Team</b> Bob Cameron
11.30 - 12.00	<b>"Finding Lost"</b> Nancy Lafleur
12.00 - 1.00	<b>Lunch &amp; Entertainment</b>
1.00 - 1.25	<b>Community Safety Officer/Peacekeeper Program</b> Gord Steward
1.25 - 1.45	<b>La Loche Community Safety Initiatives</b> La Loche Community Safety Board
1.45 - 2.15	<b>Aboriginal Shield</b> Cst George Riffel, RCMP
2.15 - 2.45	<b>Crimestoppers</b> Sgt. Rob Cozine, RCMP
2.45 - 3.00	<b>Nutrition Break / Draws</b>
3.00 - 3.45	<b>Onion Lake Gang Presentation</b> Janet Trottier
3.45 - 4.15	<b>Community Safety &amp; Well-Being</b> Gina Alexander, Executive Director, Ministry of Justice
4.15 - 4.30	<b>Day 1 Closing Remarks / Closing Prayer</b>

All lunches are provided

To Register, go to [www.newnorthsask.org](http://www.newnorthsask.org)

Or call the **New North North Office** at 306 425 5505

## Wednesday May 16<sup>th</sup>

8.30 - 8.50	<b>Prayer &amp; Opening Comments</b>
8.50 - 9.35	<b>Cannabis Legalization</b> SUMA Legal Advisor, Steven Dribnenki
9.35 - 10.00	<b>English River Justice Initiatives</b> Janine Dawatsare
10.00 - 10.30	<b>Standing Buffalo's Gang Awareness Walk</b> Minnie Ryder
10.30 - 11.00	<b>Nutrition Break / Draws</b>
11.00 - 12.00	<b>Northeast Youth Violence Reduction Partnership</b> Angie Merasty
12.00 - 1.00	<b>Northern Excellence Awards Luncheon &amp; Entertainment</b>  <i>Masters of Ceremonies</i> Modeste McKenize & Shaylynn McAuley
1.00 - 1.25	<b>Big Island's Soup and Bannock Initiatives</b> Donna Partridge
1.25 - 1.45	<b>Cumberland House Community Safety Initiatives</b> Karen Carrier & Veronica Favel
1.45 - 2.15	<b>Gang Presentation</b> Cst. Jason Roberts, RCMP
2.15 - 2.45	<b>Northern Bootlegging Strategy</b> Sgt. Conrad Logan, RCMP
2.45 - 3.00	<b>Nutrition Break / Draws</b>
3.00 - 5.00	<b>Blanket Exercise</b> Leda Corrigan, Northern Lights School Division & RCMP Aboriginal Policing Services

## Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup>

8.30 - 8.45	<b>Prayer &amp; Opening Comments</b>
8.45 - 9.30	<b>Northern Alcohol Strategy</b> Harold Johnson, Joan Johnson & Carla Frohaug
9.30 - 10.15	<b>Project Hope</b> Jarrett Nelson & Joyce Night
10.15 - 10.30	<b>Nutrition Break / Draws</b>
10.30 - 11.15	<b>Youth Panel</b>
11.15 - 11.45	Chief Cadmus Delorme <b>Cowessess First Nation</b>
11.45 - 12.00	<b>Closing Remarks / Ceremonial Song</b>
12.00 - 1.00	<b>Lunch (Provided) – Safe Travels</b>

## Chelsea Laskowski checks in on what's going on in your neck of the woods ...

# AROUND THE TRAPS

### CUMBERLAND HOUSE

When Mayor Kelvin Mckay came in to leadership in Cumberland House in late 2016, he was enthusiastic to drum up employment for his community.

“You find out real quick, what employment are you going to create?” he asked, saying he realized it doesn't come easy when a community has a limited economy.

Cumberland House is reliant on short-term government programs, Mckay said, and he sees the impact of that as people lose their spirit and turn to drugs and alcohol.

“We have nothing to get up for each and everyday to have a healthy spiritual strong character, a sense of being,” he said.

Mckay's adjustment period is over, and now he has a big idea that he'd like to see across the north. He said he envisions New North mustering up the financing for an economic development corporation that bids for work and contracts all over Canada.

He said New North's session with the former mayor of Humboldt showed him a plan to increase volunteerism that works, but only works when people are economically

sustained. Mckay did say there was big spark in Cumberland House during the school division's Junior Winter Games, where people were busy cooking, cleaning and setting up for everything, and he said he believes a cross-northern economic development piece would bring that spirit back.

The province is currently in the process of doing work on the road to Cumberland House. Thinking of a contract for rock crushing related to that work, which is only 20 km from Cumberland House, Mckay said he'd like to see local people being able to bid on work like that.

### MICHEL VILLAGE

In Michel Village, with its population of 67, the main business is commercial fishing. The village's location on the shore of Peter Pond Lake make it a pristine, beautiful place to live for administrator Allison Janvier, who is married to Mayor Brent Janvier.

“I love it here. I wouldn't trade it for the world,” Allison said.

It's that beauty that has people calling her office “left and right” looking for rental or housing units, but there are none because the rental units SaskHousing used to own in in Michel Village were sold to people from Alberta who mostly use the homes seasonally. In Allison's view, “they could have just hung onto them.”

“Because they didn't rent them out for a couple years they figured ‘oh nobody's going to move back to Michel so we might as well sell them.’ ... they

could have just hung onto them,” Allison said.

She has seen a lot of change in her near-decade in Michel Village, including the community getting a shop and skid steer and major upgrades to the water treatment plant. The plant now has a generator that allows it to run even when the power is out.

Unfortunately, power outages are an all-too-common experience in the region, because “when we get wind here we get really strong winds” that knock over trees into SaskPower lines Allison said. Last summer's plow wind left them without power for three days.

“During the winter, that's a big concern for us because, some, there's community members who have little ones and not everybody has a wood stove.”

What makes the outages truly frustrating for Allison is that Brent has driven along the highway to Buffalo Narrows to take pictures of trees near power lines and sent them to officials, “but they chose not to do anything about it,” she said.

Allison chides slow response times after witnessing a tree fall on a powerline, sparking and lighting on fire around 1 p.m. one day, but the SaskPower crews not arriving until 10 hours later and by then it was too dark to do the work. She said they were without power all day and all night until later the following day.

High-speed Internet is what dreams are made of in the community, which paid

mileage from Canwood in order to get Xplornet set up in their homes. As the only option in many rural and remote areas, the company has free reign to charge as they choose, Allison said.

#### **COLE BAY**

The cost of the Internet is a problem with Cole Bay's population of 170 as well, said Mayor Nadine Couillonneur. Since not everybody can afford it, they have introduced WiFi to the hall so people can visit and use the Internet.

Couillonneur is new to her role and said she's been able to build strong professional relationships in the region, including the nearby communities of Jans Bay, Beauval and Ile-a-la-Crosse. They face similar issues, including dog overpopulation, and have held meetings to discuss their shared priorities and struggles.

A partnership with the Primrose Lake Economic Development Corporation give places like Cole Bay a chance to seek more local post-secondary education opportunities for its young people.

"It's daunting for them to leave a small town such as Cole Bay and get to the big city, it's basically shock and it's tough for them," Couillonneur said.

Tourism is another spot where Couillonneur sees opportunity, and is open to the idea of bringing employment to the area.

"It's crazy how much of a secret this area is kept," she said. "We're more than happy to share it."

#### **BUFFALO NARROWS**

Buffalo Narrows Mayor Bobby Woods has strong beliefs on

what it takes to build a healthy community, and of what his community could and should look like.

He said he would like to see a resident doctor in Buffalo Narrows, a developed beach with slides and amenities around the "beautiful" white sands of Big Buffalo Beach (which lies within the municipality), a massage therapist, more business operating within town, partnerships between the surrounding areas, and investment in the community's available workforce by companies that operate in the area.

However, there are many obstacles to those outcomes. One of the largest is money.

"Without the money for infrastructure we can't do nothing," Woods said.

While exploration and resource companies come through Buffalo Narrows, they don't seem to be asking residents need work, Woods said. He said any talks he's had with Cameco have been fruitless because they deem Buffalo Narrows as out of their impact area, but he disagrees and wants to see agreements.

"When I talk about agreements I'm talking about community benefit impact agreements where they're going to be able to provide us with some opportunities to get contracts at these sites and at mine sites and with exploration companies and then through that we get our own source revenue because then we can start building some infrastructure in our community, using it for infrastructure in community," Woods said.

Recreation infrastructure is a big one for the mayor. He said recreation, either in parks or at upgraded facilities, is an alternative to partying and drinking.

Woods said he knows how deeply alcohol and drugs impact the community.

"It's running rampant and nobody seems to be able to do anything with it," he said.

He has been working hard to do something about it. On April 1, Buffalo Narrows took ownership of the correctional centre facility that was shut down by the province more than a year ago. The municipality had put down a bid during the public tender process several months ago.

"We're hoping to work with health and with corrections, social services to be able to open that facility and use it to target people who are affected by drug use and abuse, and families, whatever it may be and open that facility and have it as a treatment facility for those people," he said, adding that people have been crying out for help.

He said the municipality not equipped to deal with social issues, but he is hopeful for successful lobbying efforts with the province.

Woods said he would like to keep strong ties with his neighbours.

"We can't just just look at ourselves. We gotta be able to share the wealth around us because we can't afford to play one against the other," he said.

Partnering on projects is one of the ways he sees that playing out. ■

In our **We Write a Grade 12 Essay** occasional series, we look into the current issues surrounding climate change policy in Saskatchewan, and ask ...

## Opinion

BY MATT HELEY

# Are Climate Politics Holding Back the Real Debate?

The Premier Scott Moe's expressions of shock and horror that the federal government is pushing through its carbon tax agenda under the guise of a budget omnibus bill pretty much says everything we need to know about the state of the climate change debate in this province right now. Not only is the federal government's placing of the bill in amongst a slew of other unrelated bills an extremely common practice by federal governments (and no where near as bad as in the U.S.), the bill itself contains nothing, that we can see, that hasn't been well-known for a very long time. In point of fact, it is precisely because the substance of the bill has been so well known for such a very long time that we have, as an alternative, the provincial government's anti-carbon pricing climate change policy. If anything, the premier is simply expressing his dismay that the federal government is not paying any attention at all to the province's plan. It's tough being ignored.

### The Legal Challenge

The provincial government's strategy is also well known: they intend to challenge the federal government's imposition of carbon pricing in the courts. Amongst other things, the government will say that because some emitters in this province are actually government-owned entities (such as SaskPower's generating facilities, which are the biggest carbon emitters), any tax on them imposed by the federal government would be unconstitutional, since one level of government is not allowed to tax another level of government (unless you're a municipality, of course, because municipalities are not recognized in the constitution).

The government will also maintain that because natural resources fall under provincial jurisdiction any federally-imposed policy with respect to natural resources—for example, a tax on the extraction of oil and gas—is a federal overreach. The federal government would argue, contra, that because carbon emissions are not limited by provincial boundaries it is well within their authority to make laws about them. The

federal government may also make a big deal out of the fact that because Canada is a signatory to the Paris accord they have a right to ensure the provinces fall into line. As Saskatchewan is, per capita, the biggest emitter of GHGs in the country, we fall clearly in the federal government's sights if Canada is to meet its obligations under its international treaty obligations.

The case of Manitoba's rolling over on a carbon tax shouldn't really deter the Saskatchewan government from continuing on its present path. First of all, it's hard to believe that the government there was all that in favour of going against the federal government to begin with. Their change of heart was driven by the concern that if the federal government imposed a carbon price they'd lose control over how the revenues would come back to them. Additionally, they believed, after seeking legal advice, that a court challenge wouldn't be successful. The Saskatchewan government would be aware, however, that the position Manitoba has taken could still back-fire on them if the federal government decides Manitoba's \$25 per tonne carbon tax, amongst other things, doesn't measure up to the federal plan, meaning that not only will Manitoba have to suck up the imposition of the federal policy, they'll also look very foolish doing so. Ultimately, the government in Manitoba probably thought it had nothing to lose, and now has about \$250 million in additional revenue they can use to keep everyone happy. And farmers got away with not having to do a whole lot to reduce their emissions, which is probably the main thing.

### The Saskatchewan Plan

We're not sure if it's a good sign when, on the arrival of the Saskatchewan government's climate change white paper a few years ago, people were relieved that the government wasn't actually denying climate change. The drafters of the paper were probably well aware of that trepidation—its first words are, quite literally: "There is no denying it." (Although the referent of

the “it” is precisely the subject of the debate we are currently having).

It’s difficult to summarize the province’s plan, partly because it hasn’t been fully revealed yet. There’s also a credibility gap here: it’s a surprise to many, for example, that the government has a kind of carbon-tax like piece of legislation on the books already (whereby emitters who go over certain emission targets are required to pay into a “technology fund”), but it hasn’t come into force.

The province’s plan, called Prairie Resilience, is best characterized as taking a little bit from everywhere. It is underpinned by a concern for how taxing inputs or externalities will impact the global competitiveness of our resource industries.

### Sequestration and Carbon Offsets

Looking about themselves, the drafters of the Saskatchewan plan noticed a fair bit of farm land (and forests), and so carbon sequestration (ie, the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere—something plants do naturally) came immediately to mind. Farmers could look at their tillage practices to enhance the amount of carbon that gets captured, change their crop selection to more drought resistant species, and plant lentils and other pulses, which are nitrogen-fixing plants, to improve agriculture productivity as well as the efficiency of fertilizers. Carbon offsets have definitely caught the attention of farmers. Emitters of more than 25,000 tonnes will be able to buy offsets from farmers and foresters, or pay into a fund. It seems to work a little bit like a cap and trade, and paying into a fund would seem to be like paying a tax, but what do we know.

### SaskPower and Carbon Capture

SaskPower’s CCS project at their Boundary Dam facility is probably the flagship of the province’s climate change plan. SaskPower says that it has captured 800,000 tonnes of GHGs in its first 12 months of operation, doing about 40,000 to 60,000 a month, which is the equivalent of taking 200,000 vehicles off the road (or, if those vehicles were our 2011 Dodge Journey, approximately 3). SaskPower is also moving toward getting 50% of its electricity generation from renewables by 2030, the vast portion of that coming from wind. The province has a draft agreement with the federal government that recognizes the carbon offsets from Boundary Dam, which should enable that facility to carry on using coal without being unduly penalized and everyone to relax a little.

### The Federal Plan

Although we tend to be fixated on the federal government’s carbon tax, the feds are also down with cap and trade. Cap and trade—or an output based system—is where an upper limit or cap on emissions is set for a particular facility, and anything above that becomes subject to either being “traded” for someone else’s emissions credits, or fined. Likewise, entities that operate below their cap can sell their credits to an entity that operates above their cap. Sound familiar? Yep, it’s the same as the province’s thing. It currently operates in Ontario, and is a beautifully elegant system, with perhaps the only thing counting against it is that it currently operates in Ontario.

### Impacts of a Carbon Tax

The carbon tax is so vehemently opposed by the provincial government because it tends to target energy (fuels, gases, oil, etc). And Saskatchewan uses, and produces, a lot of energy. The JS School of Public Policy has run the numbers on how \$50 a tonne on GHGs would affect fuel and other energy prices, and it isn’t pretty. On average, households would pay about \$300 more a year for petrol, about \$350 a year more for natural gas (if you’re lucky enough to have that), and perhaps more seriously, about \$530 a year more for electricity. For northerners, those are serious numbers. In terms of industry-wide impacts, the electricity, oil and gas and agriculture sectors would be hit by about \$2 billion, and in cases where those costs can’t be passed along (because, like farmers, they are “price takers”), will lead to job losses. In agriculture, you are looking at about 1400 jobs lost, oil and gas about 780, and railways about 300. All this is in addition to the impacts on other sectors of the economy where increased costs will need to be absorbed or passed along to consumers.

### The Counter-Argument

In total, a carbon tax would suck about \$2 billion out of the economy, lead to thousands of jobs losses, and make everyone slightly poorer. Or would it? The JS School of Public Policy notes that, because the intent of the federal plan is to redistribute the tax revenue back through the system, the net impact of a carbon tax, particularly on jobs, could be very positive. They argue, for example, using standard multipliers, that sending \$2 billion back into universities, education, health care or social services would add about 56,000 jobs. Alternatively,



government could eliminate corporate tax (about \$700 million annually), lower the PST to practically nothing, halve income tax, or eliminate its own fuel taxes. They could also—and this is a stretch, admittedly—get rid of taxes on cigarettes and alcohol. Or—and this is a bigger stretch—introduce an assured basic income.

### The debate we are not having—yet

Leaving aside the political high stakes game of the current climate policy debate—which we really have no position on—what we are missing out on right now is a reasonable discussion about climate adaptation. Inevitably, climate adaptation and mitigation are tied into the broader discussion about measures to reduce emissions (like taxes and regulations). What we have now is an extreme focus on the latter.

Take Manitoba’s municipal association position on carbon tax revenues, as a contrasting example. A recent poll conducted by the AMM, which they bundled into a press release, showed majority support for municipalities getting half or all the revenue raised by a carbon tax “to help local communities adapt to climate change and respond to its effects.” While we are well aware that you can jimmy a survey to come out with any results you like, the fact they are even discussing climate adaptation is a far remove from where we are in this province right now.

This situation might change in the near future as the Saskatchewan government rolls out its full suite of climate change policies, and more importantly, starts putting numbers on things. This is where the moral economy of climate change policies will really be tested. For example, a virtue of some kind of carbon pricing, like a carbon tax, is that it can not only have the effect of creating economic incentives to change behaviour, it can have a redistributive effect as well, creating a kind of virtuous cycle, to the extent that harmful externalities are monetized to drive investments in climate adaptation in regions particularly susceptible to experiencing the impacts of those externalities.

In the north, for example, climate adaptation measure could take the form of:

- Replacing ice roads with all season roads
- Creating “smoke sanctuaries” in communities to reduce the impact on air quality during summer wildfires, lessening the need for evacuations

- Flood and other disaster mitigation efforts, including helping communities get “fire smart”
- Investing in renewable energy to help residents cope with higher electricity prices
- Investing heavily in northern wildfire response capabilities, and abolishing “let it burn” policies
- Renovating SaskHousing units to make them more energy efficient.

As well as bigger infrastructure projects, such as:

- Extending natural gas up the west side
- The Tazi Twe hydro project

The irony is that all these projects would fit really well into the resilience narrative of the Saskatchewan climate change plan. ■

## How Green is Your Truck?



### RAM 1500

**Fuel Consumption:**  
16.3 (L/100km)  
**Emissions per 10,000 Km:**  
6.4 tonnes  
**Notional Carbon Tax @ \$50/t:**  
\$320 / 10,000 km

### SIERRA 1500

**Fuel Consumption:**  
13.8 (L/100 km)  
**Emissions per 10,000 Km:**  
5.5 tonnes  
**Notional Carbon Tax @ \$50/t:**  
\$275 / 10,000 km



### Ford 150

**Fuel Consumption:**  
11.3 (L/100km)  
**Emissions per 10,000 Km:**  
4.6 tonnea  
**Notional Carbon Tax @ \$50**  
\$230 / 10,000km

### New North 2011 Dodge Journey

**Fuel Consumption:**  
Two bags of Doritoes / 100km  
**Emissions per 10,000 Km:**  
Ranting, occasional obscenities  
**Notional Carbon Tax @ \$50/t:**  
A cherry ripe



### Recent Cases Put Municipal Procedures in the Spotlight

It's not often that the courts in Saskatchewan are called upon to decide municipal issues—nowhere near as often as they should be, at least—but two recent cases, one involving a referendum, another involving a conflict of interest, demonstrate the continuing importance and role of the Queen's Bench in explaining and refining issues related municipal governance.

The first case is something of a rarity: an application to the bench by a municipality to have a councillor removed because of a failure to declare a conflict of interest. *The Council of the RM of Sherwood v Probe* is the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> sequel to a series of events that began way back in 2014, when the RM of Sherwood was the subject of an "inspection" by Ron Barclay, QC, concerning the reeve's involvement in a land deal. The reeve was found to be up to his neck, and subsequently removed from his position by the Minister of Government Relations (itself a rarity).

A number of other councillors from the RM, although not necessarily implicated in any wrong doings, nevertheless lawyered up. When the investigation was over, the councillors, including Tim Probe, passed a bylaw to have their legal bills covered by the RM, which the RM did. Horrified, local residents took the RM to court to have the bylaw quashed, and were successful. That now meant the councillors needed to reimburse the RM; in Probe's case, about \$50,000. A little while later a council meeting was called to decide whether to appeal that decision, and with that defeated, to figure out how to get the fees back from Probe. This is where things get tricky for Probe. At a meeting of the RM council, a delegation of ratepayers brought forward the

matter of why the reimbursement of legal fees hadn't happened yet. A councillor advanced the motion that the RM instruct its legal counsel to seek the reimbursement from Probe. In response, Probe advanced the motion that *that* motion be tabled, on the somewhat absurd grounds that maybe they should get legal advice about *that* instead. The tabling motion—more like a stalling action—which Probe voted on, passed 4 to 3.

Residents complained to the Ombudsman who, after completing an investigation, found that Probe had failed to declare a conflict. Although the Ombudsman has no power to remove anyone, she strongly suggested that Probe should just remove himself. He didn't, which is why the council went ahead with their application to the QB to have the court do it for them. They won.

#### Petitions and Referendums

Our second case is interesting for how council, with or without realizing it, can use even the petition and referendum procedures to their favour. The story begins with the town of Ituna not knowing what to do about the old liquor store building. They put up two options: one, sell the liquor, or two, give it to the local library to move into. They decided on the latter. Presumably not liking that decision, a petition from residents called on council to conduct a referendum, where the matter could be put to voters. The petition read: "Should the Ituna Town Council rescind its motion to relocate the Ituna Local Library and tender the former Ituna Liquor Store for sale?"

The council went ahead with the referendum, but either through carelessness or inadvertence or some other reason, changed the wording of the original petition, to:

"Do you want the Town of Ituna to retain ownership of the former Liquor store and move the Parkland Regional Library Ituna Branch to that location?"

Although on the surface the wording would appear to reflect that of the petition, it's the opposite. As the judge noted, the wording of the "actual referendum was in such a way that those who supported the request would be obliged to vote against the submitted resolution." You'll recall from our discussion a few months ago that council can ignore a "no" vote, so in changing the wording, the council was effectively, and quite cleverly really, tricking residents into voting "no" to a resolution that, in the original wording of the petition, they would have been voting "yes" to, which, being a "no" vote, council could then disregard. It's really quite brilliant.

Or so they thought. As it happened, although the "no" vote won, they went ahead and tendered the property, essentially turning that "no" into a "yes" anyway.

Although the town council maintained their word magic was not meant to trick anyone, the judge was not impressed, saying it was "more than just a technical breach of the law ... Rather, it deprived the petitioners and the electors of the full opportunity, afforded by the *Act*, to test the proposal that was implicit in the petition's request. Instead of encouraging and enabling public participation in the governance process, the Town's actions served the exact opposite purpose."

And no litigation involving local government would be complete without a little character assassination. But that's for another day. ■

# NewNorth Events in Focus

## Waterworks April 18-19

If you've always felt having someone around who could go through the pill bottles in your medicine cabinet and identify the active ingredients would be pretty handy, we've got you covered, as this year's New North Waterworks will allow operators to take the latest Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) workshop, recently updated to include all new pictograms of exploding bombs, dancing flames, and deeply unsettling skulls.

WHMIS teaches operators how to identify hazardous material, and more importantly, how to handle it, which is good because some of the stuff they come into contact with is pretty lethal, really only suitable for widespread distribution through the water system, ingested, then flushed back into the environment, the knowledge of which you should probably go ahead and suppress because, honestly, who really wants to know what's in our drinking water. Also on the agenda is a 6 hour course on filters.

The Water Security Agency will be doing a presentation on how they go about conducting research into developing and adopting drinking water guidelines for the province. As well, they'll be telling everyone about why you have to do downstream use and impact studies before going ahead with a wastewater treatment facility that is specifically and purposefully designed to discharge effluent in fish-bearing water bodies.

The New North Waterworks is April 18-19, at the Prince Albert Travelodge. A full 1.0 CEU will be accredited to everyone who stays the entire two days.

To find out more information—or actual information—about the show, take a look at the New North website, [www.newnorthsask.org](http://www.newnorthsask.org).

## Administrators April 12

One of the things you find about living in rural and remote places is that people tend to like navigating by landmarks. This is especially frustrating if you're asking someone for directions, made even more so by the fact that some of these landmarks are not even there anymore.

We can imagine, then, what it must be like for emergency services when they are told to go to the house that the Carlsson's used to live at; or to turn right at a gas station that is now a vacant lot, because in their mind that will always be where the gas station was.

We're not even sure that's what really happens, but there is enough of a thing here that a special guest at this month's Northern Administrators Conference, April 12, is Cynthia Mamer from the Provincial Emergency Communications Centre in Prince Albert, who will talk about the civic address register. The civic address register (CAR) helps

emergency responders, like police, fire, ambulance and pizza deliverers, quickly find people's homes or businesses without incident. I think we can all appreciate the importance of getting that medium Capricciosa delivered while it's still warm, so this presentation should be fairly instructive.

As well, MNP will be along to present the second instalment in their ongoing financial literacy for CEOs and other dummies series.

The dog control issue is of ongoing concern for many of our communities, so another highlight of this conference is Dr Jordon Woodsworth, from the U of S, who'll update us on some of the activity that's going on to address those concerns, and perhaps, hopefully, help us get our heads around what we need to be doing to move our efforts forward.

To see the full agenda, go to New North's website at [www.newnorthsask.org](http://www.newnorthsask.org).

Everyone is welcome. ■

## FROM THE CEO

**MATT HELEY**

As another year draws to a close (don't check your calendars: we work on a fiscal year at New North), it's useful, and necessary, to look back at what we've achieved, and figure out what we could have done better. It turns out, everything could be.

But we have a saying at New North: don't get it right, get it written. This particularly applies to the newsletter. Occasionally we also like to get things right, but most of the time we just want to get it written.

We have another saying: the perfect is the enemy of the good. Sometimes this is paraphrased as "good enough is better than perfect," but that misses the key insight of the aphorism: what it's really getting at is that the search for perfection can be the very thing that gets in the way of doing anything at all.

None of us operates with the resources we would like to have, or with a perfect understanding of everything. Looking over some of the comments, contained in this newsletter, about the frustrations communities in the north face, it's easy to think no one is getting anywhere. That's not really the feeling we get overall.

Some of the experienced elected officials around us say that the second and third years of a new council are the hardest and most crucial. After a year or two people have figured out that the choices you can make are limited, sometimes by legislative barriers, sometimes because no one has enough money. Sometimes, and this is hopefully rare, municipal officials decide that *now* is the time for them to do what is best for themselves, rather than for their community. You can lose sight of why you got elected in the first place. All that passion and desire for change that drove you there has dissipated. Disillusion sets in.

But this is also a perfect time to reconnect to the people who put you there. We see, for example, many communities right now are engaging in strategic planning, which by necessity involves connecting with local residents in a meaningful way. That in itself can be an exercise in frustration, but it's worth pushing through.

Change rarely happens with an explosive breakthrough. Most of time it is so gradual you never notice it. Sometimes, like when your wife comments on the additional grey hairs at your temples, it takes others to notice it. But we see it. We see it as our job to say it, too. ■

**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 Administration 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**

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Mayor Robert St.Pierre (Deputy Chair)  
Mayor Gord Stomp (Treasurer)  
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