



Highlands News



Our office will be closed December 24, 2009 at 12 noon for Winter Holidays and will reopen at 8:30am January 4, 2010.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Council is anticipating the following reports and recommendations, which are in progress, from staff, consultants, committees, and task forces: **Sustainability Report, Groundwater Study Phase 2 Report, Staffing Review for the Highlands Volunteer Fire Department, Heritage Protection Policy, Soil Deposit Bylaw update, Subdivision Bylaw update, OCP Regional Context Statement amendment, and recommendations for a public consultation process regarding construction of a Community Hall. Watch for information regarding all of these topics and more in the New Year - we welcome and value your input.**

The Fire Department continues to seek an increase in its membership. As well, the district is currently seeking volunteers for its annual Advisory Committee appointments (see page 2 for details).

During the office closures noted above, residents are advised to visit the district website for information and are welcome to contact council members for assistance, (see back page).

District staff and Council members wish Highlanders the very best for the holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Mayor Jane Mendum

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **Community Calendar**
- **Public Library update**
- **Addressing Sustainability in the District**



The Annual Winter Craft Fair, held in the School House on November 15th, was well-attended and featured an abundance of local talent .

Photo credit: Allen Dobb

TRAFFIC ADVISORY UPDATE *The anticipated south Millstream Road closure (for one day only) referred to in last month's edition has been postponed until 2010 - watch for notification of the date and time, to be announced.*

NEW: The infilling of the excavation at Millstream Meadows site is scheduled to commence in December. **Anticipate increased truck traffic on lower Millstream Road;** expected duration is several months.

ANNUAL SANTA RUN

The Highlands Volunteer Firefighters' Association will hold their annual Santa Run on **Sunday, December 20th**. Santa will be on board to visit with Highlands children, and his helpers welcome donations of cash or non-perishable food items to aid the **local food bank**. **Watch for posters at the mailboxes for further details, including routes and times.**

CHIEF FORD STEPS DOWN After serving over 30 years as Chief of the Highlands Volunteer Fire Department, Chief Barry Ford has announced his retirement from this role at the end of this year. Barry became Chief of the East Highlands Fire Department shortly after it was registered as a society in 1978; East and West Fire Departments were joined when Highlands incorporated in 1993 and Barry was chosen to be Highlands Fire Chief. His career in firefighting has been outstanding: in 2005 he received the inaugural CFAX 9-1-1 award, given to a member of protective services in the region who has gone above and beyond to serve their community. In 2009 he was presented with an award from the Governor General of Canada recognizing 30 years of firefighting in the District. Chief Ford has led the district's volunteer firefighters organization from humble beginnings to the terrific force it is today - an admirable accomplishment by any measure, and has earned the gratitude and appreciation of Highlanders for doing so. Barry's leadership and dedication to task will be missed, and we wish him the very best in his retirement.



The Highlands News — DECEMBER 2009

District of Highlands Council Newsletter
1980 Millstream Road, Victoria, BC V9B 6H1

Community News

STEPS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE HIGHLANDS

The District of Highlands along with communities throughout British Columbia is taking steps toward sustainability and addressing the critical issue of Climate Change.

- In October 2008, Highlands Council signed BC's Climate Action Charter committing to actions that reduce Green House Gases and planning principles that create livable and sustainable community.
- Earlier this year, Council established a task force to identify and recommend initiatives to help create a more sustainable Highlands. The nine member task force completed its work over the course of 8 meetings, and has put the final touches on a report to be delivered early in December. The report findings will be shared with council and the community at an upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting.
- Under requirements of Bill 27, an amendment to the Local Government Act, every Municipality and Regional District in the Province must incorporate Green House Gas (GHG) reduction targets into Official Community Plans (OCP) by May 31, 2010. A community consultation process is planned for early next year to make the necessary amendments to the Highlands OCP.
- Transportation in the form of personal vehicle trips to work, school and recreation is the largest source of local GHG emissions in the Highlands. Improving the efficiency of transportation from and within the Highlands will be necessary to meet community GHG reduction targets and ensure long term sustainability.
- Improved public transit will be a component in a sustainable transportation network. The planning department at BC Transit has just committed to holding a public consultation process with the District of Highlands to get input for a 25 year vision for transit in the region. A Transit forum is being planned for the spring to coincide with the ongoing discussion around GHG reduction targets for the Highlands and sustainability.

All residents are encouraged to look for upcoming dates for sustainability forums, meetings and presentations in this newsletter's calendar and on the District website at: www.highlands.ca

WINTER STORM PREPARATION Following a community forum held in the fall of 2007, Council and the Highlands District Community Association published a guide entitled *The Highlanders' Essential Guide to Emergency Preparedness For Winter Storms* containing advice from residents, experts, and local government authorities. The publication is currently available to download from the district website's homepage, (see below) or can be picked up from the District office during regular office hours. **Preparation for the winter storm season is strongly advised for homeowners and residents alike** - be sure to obtain your copy soon!

THE WEST SHORE CHRISTMAS HAMPER FUND has moved into the Food Bank at 761 Station Road in Langford for the month of December; applications for the food bank are available at this address. While food donations are always appreciated, this year staff say the best donation is money. Cheques can be made out to the West Shore Christmas Hamper Fund and dropped off or mailed to the Station Road address. The Christmas hamper also provides gifts to children 17 years of age and younger and donation of gifts are also appreciated. For more information please contact 250-391-9627. **The District office will gladly accept any food or gift donations and will ensure that they are delivered to the Christmas hamper.**

SELECT COMMITTEE and BOARD OF VARIANCE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED The District requires volunteers for the Community Infrastructure and Services Committee (2 yr term), the Fiscal and Environmental Committee (2 year term) and the Board of Variance (3 year term). Terms of Reference for these committees are available on the District website: www.highlands.ca.

Anyone interested in serving is invited to submit a letter and a resume outlining details of residency, community activities, qualifications, experience or relevant background information.

All submissions should be forwarded to the District office or email to: tneurauter@highlands.ca by December 18, 2009.



OUTSTANDING PROPERTY TAX REMINDER As of January 1, 2010, all outstanding 2009 property taxes will become taxes in arrears and taxes already in arrears will become delinquent taxes. **Both delinquent taxes and taxes in arrears accrue DAILY interest at a rate set by the Province.**

To confirm today's outstanding amount of taxes due, please contact our office between the hours of 8:30am and 4:00pm at 250-474-1773.

Note: late payments must be made at the Municipal Office located at 1980 Millstream Road. We accept cash, cheque or debit (Remember to contact your bank to arrange for large debit transactions to be processed at point of sale!).

2009 Council Meeting Schedule

December - 7th; 14th
(following the COW, if needed)
NOTE: December 21st meeting is cancelled

If you would like an electronic copy of the Highlands News please visit the District website's homepage: highlands.ca.

Please consider passing this newsletter on to any tenants or other residents who are without a Highlands mailbox.



For updates & information, visit the District website: highlands.ca

Council & District News

CREST Tests conducted by Motorola over the summer have shown that the CREST communications system, which connects all municipal emergency services, as well as BC Ambulance and BC Transit, has been performing to or exceeding international standards after major improvements were made over the past year. Staff has also reported that the system worked flawlessly during the recent Olympic Torch Relay, which required a heavy volume of communication traffic.

A task force has been struck to address concerns raised by the Victoria Police Department, which favours a move to a 700 MHz system, a move that could incur significant extra costs. A report on implications of a possible change in systems will be presented to the CREST board early in 2010.

A CLOSER LOOK AT HERITAGE PROTECTION In October Council and staff began work on a District heritage policy, one of the strategic priorities identified earlier in the year. An opportunity to consider heritage status for the original Gregory House, a recent recommendation regarding Ross Durrance Road received from the Fiscal Environment Select Committee, and updated legislative tools that could provide better protection for places such as the Caleb Pike Homestead are providing rationale to move forward. A staff report outlining heritage conservation tools available to local government led to a Committee of the Whole meeting on November 9. Pam Copley, a regional planner with the BC Heritage Branch, was invited to provide more information. The meeting was well attended by residents, and district staff is preparing a report on next steps.

GREATER VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD The GVPL has presented a draft 2010 budget to its member Councils. In order to keep to its 5-year financial plan, which projects a 6.5% increase in municipal contributions, the Library Board has proposed cuts to programs as a result of provincial funding cutbacks and decreased revenues from fines. Fine revenue is \$187,000 lower since the library began sending out email reminders to borrowers when materials are nearly due. The provincial government has cut back its library operating grant by 5.5%, as well as making significant cuts to other provincially-funded grants such as the BC OneCard program (allowing anyone in the province with a library card to borrow from any participating library), the Literacy Grant (cut by 85%), a Resource Sharing Grant (cut by 25%), and a technology grant (which has been eliminated). These cuts come at a time when public demand for library services, circulation, and programs continues to increase. The average circulation growth rate over the 2nd and 3rd quarters in 2009 was 17% compared to the same periods in 2008.

Cuts recommended by library management staff include a \$225,000 reduction in acquisition of new library materials, Sunday closings to all branches except Central and Goudy branches and reductions in conferences and travel budgets, database subscriptions, strategic planning costs, hardware, and board special events. Initiatives that will be canceled or postponed will include the Writer in Residence initiative and the local history digitization initiative. In addition, surplus funds from 2007 and 2008 will be fully utilized in 2010.

One of the programs cut by the provincial government was Books for BC Babies, a program which began distributing free book kits to parents with newborns in 2006. Books are available in 9 languages, and the book and CD in each kit are tangible ways to encourage parents to read to and sing with their babies right from birth. The program has had impressive results: 91% of recipients planned to attend a library program, 60% of parents planned to read to their babies more often, 48% used the library more often, and 33% joined the library. Costs for the program in 2009 was \$13,540 in the Victoria area. Since the GVPL board considered this to be an important program, efforts were made to find private sponsors. As a result, TD Bank and the Steve Nash Foundation are funding the program at least until the spring of 2010, a ripple of good news in the sea of cuts.

CONSTRUCTION AT MOUNT WORK REGIONAL PARK Construction work is now underway for the new park entrance at Munn Road in Mount Work Regional Park. The target for completion is in December 2009. The site development plan for the Munn Road parking lot upgrades was presented to the District of Highlands Council in August. Regional Parks would like to thank the council, staff and residents for their valuable input. More information is available at <http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks/munnroadupgrades.htm> or by calling 250.478.3344.



COFFEE HOUSE NEWS—DECEMBER 12

Highlands' Coffee House is featuring the immensely entertaining *'The Swing Street Band'*

The Swing Street Band's repertoire is a mix of the old and new bridging Ella Fitzgerald to Bonnie Raitt and Eva Cassidy. The band features well-known and talented performers **Barry Carlson**, singer and guitarist; **David Gartley**, Latin guitarist; **Jack Funk**, drummer; **Erin Stead**, a powerful singer; **Ginny Langham**, vocalist; **Corrine Painter**, trumpeter, clarinetist and pianist; and **Peter Jasmin**, bassist.

We are going to have a great Coffee House this holiday season; come with family and friends for a very enjoyable evening!

For more information call Zhinoos at: (250) 727-9561

Date: Saturday December 12th, 2009 @ 7:30pm

Place: Caleb Pike House, 1589 Millstream Road

Charges: \$5.00 /person - under 15 free (honorary system—you may pay more, or as you can afford) coffee/tea/goodies included

RCMP INCIDENTS REPORT October 16 to November 15, 2009

OCTOBER

Oct 17 - 911-False/Abandoned Call -
Oct 18 - Breach of Peace - Millstream Lake Rd
Oct 19 - Suspicious Pers/Veh/Occur - Millstream Lake
Oct 21 - 911-False/Abandoned Calls - Bukin
Oct 21 - Fraud/Cheque - Woodridge
Oct 27 - False Alarm - Lorimer
Oct 27 - Lost Property - Finlayson Arm
Oct 27 - Suspicious Pers/Veh/Occur - Eagles Lake
Oct 28 - Animal Calls - Millstream Lake/ Munns
Oct 28 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Lorimer
Oct 29 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Crestwood

NOVEMBER

Nov 1 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Millstream /Caleb Pike
Nov 4 - Mischief \$5000 or Under - Twin Flower Park
Nov 4 - Lost Property - Munns
Nov 7 - Collision - Damage Over \$1000 - Millstream
Nov 7 - Collision - Damage Under \$1000 - Millstream/Lost Lake
Nov 8 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Lone Tree Hill
Nov 10 - Breach of Peace - Highland Park
Nov 11 - Unspecified Assistance - Gowlland Tod Park
Nov 11 - Parking Violations - Hazlitt Creek/Old Mossy
Nov 12 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Taylor Way
Nov 12 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Skyview
Nov 12 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Highland Park
Nov 12 - Theft From Motor Vehicle - Skyview /Highlands Park
Nov 13 - False Alarms - Millstream
Nov 14 - Traffic Other Moving Prov - Millstream

POLICE UPDATE There have been a number of thefts from motor vehicles in the west Highlands late in October and early in November. RCMP have informed the district that they have arrested those thought responsible, who were quickly put before a judge and remanded to custody pending a trial date. Apparently the suspects are known to police, and they have been known to take keys and return to properties later. RCMP have indicated that they will continue increased patrols in the area, but are confident that they have apprehended those responsible.

Highlanders are urged to lock their vehicles, even when in their own driveways, and to be especially careful with their

DISTRICT STAFFING The District of Highlands is advertising for the position of Municipal Planner for a one year term commencing January 15th, 2010 during the maternity leave of Laura Beckett, District planner.

YOUTH DROP-IN

Location: Schoolhouse Basement (1589 Millstream Road)
Who: ages 5 and up **When:** Dec 4 - 6:30 to 8 pm, Seasonal crafts - Candle Making; Dec 18 - 6:30 - 8:45, Party and a Movie - please bring a nut-free snack to share.

Join the fun!

Enquiries: Bob (250) 478-4403 or Amy (250) 474-2847

Contacts:

Mayor Jane Mendum— jmendum@highlands.ca /
250-478-9449, 250-893-9440

Councillor Allen Dobb— allendobb@telus.net /
250-391-3998/ Website: allendobb.ca

Councillor Diane Gill— didoll@telus.net / 250-391-8928

Councillor Sigurd Johannesen— Sigurd.johannesen@shaw.ca /250-514-1880

Councillor Marcie McLean— marciemclean@shaw.ca / 250-474-4725

Councillor Karel Roessingh— karel@roessong.com / 250-727-9808

Councillor Ken Williams— kgwmaya@shaw.ca / 250-479-7497

Fire Chief Barry Ford— b.v.ford@shaw.ca / 250-479-5741

Emergency Coordinator Val Fletcher— val.fletcher@shaw.ca / 250-479-1725

District of Highlands Office—250-474-1773

CRD Bylaw Enforcement—250-474-3351

Animal Control (24 hrs) - 250-478-0624

CRD Parks—250-474-2264

Wildlife Violations—1-800-663-WILD (9453)

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH Recognition goes to **Bob McMinn** who organized the well-attended Annual Winter Craft Fair held November 15th at the Caleb Pike Homestead. He was assisted by a talented decorating team, residents **Cathy Trudel** and **Rowan Belanger**, and **Daphne Allen**, who served warm cider and other refreshments throughout the event.

Appreciation also goes to **Ann** and **Gord Baird**, who provided a popular and informative display on cob building and sustainable energy.

Thank you for your contributions to this successful community event!

DECEMBER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

December 3 - Community Centre Task Force, School House, 7pm

December 7 - Regular Council Meeting**, School House, 7 pm

December 8 - Highlands Garden Group, **Festive Table Centrepiece Class, Everyone Welcome**, Cost \$15, must email tandtsmith@shaw.ca or phone Terri 250-474-9905 **by Dec 3** if attending, School House, 7 pm

December 11 - CRD Recycling Blue Box pickup

December 12 - Coffee House*, Pike House, 7:30 pm

December 14 - Committee of the Whole **, School House, 7 pm

December 20 - **Santa Run*** watch for posted details at mailboxes

December 26 - Saturday - CRD Recycling Blue Box pickup

**details elsewhere in the Newsletter*

***please visit the District website, highlands.ca for detailed agenda information in advance of meetings*

HIGHLANDS HISTORY - DID YOU KNOW? An excerpt from the **Victoria Daily Colonist, Sunday December 19, 1897:**The closing exercises at Highland district school were held on Friday last, with a large attendance of parents and others interested in the school and the progress of the pupils. In connection with the closing exercises the children had a well filled Christmas tree, with a generous distribution of gifts by the typical understudy of Sir Santa Claus: and addresses were given by Trustees Simpson and Mrs. Dixon, each of whom complimented the teachers upon the good work accomplished during the term and expressed regret at the absence--enforced by illness--of Trustee Scafe. Before taking leave of school for the holidays, the pupils presented their teacher, Miss E.A. Clarke, with a beautiful album, as a Christmas souvenir.



Beautiful Rocks, a fascinating book about the history of Highlands, is available at the municipal office for \$29.95, or phone Daphne Allen, 250-478-7338.