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A newsletter from the
Black Mountain
Irrigation District
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VALLEY WATER NEWS

Okanagan Basin Water Board

Following the recent municipal elections in November, the following persons were named to the Okanagan Basin Water Board for the upcoming three year term

- Brian Given (RDCO-Kelowna) Chair
- Stu Wells (RDOS-Osoyoos) Deputy Chair
- Doug Findlater (RDCO-West Kelowna)
- James Baker (RDCO-Lake Country)
- Rick Fairburn (RDNO-Area D)
- Buffy Baumborough (RDNO-Vernon)
- Gyula Kiss (RDNO-Coldstream)
- Michael Brydon (RDOS-Area F)
- Gordon Clark (RDOS-Summerland)
- Timothy Manuel (Okanagan Nation Alliance)
- Toby Pike (Water Supply Association)
- TBA - Water Stewardship Council

The Board meets monthly and has identified the need for an Okanagan Lake Water Quality Protection Plan. The OBWB will also continue to administer their very effective Small Grants Program to improve water management and water use efficiencies throughout the valley. BMID has received 2 grants in 3 years totalling \$60,000. The monies have gone to improved monitoring and management of Mission Creek with a Water Use Plan to maximize beneficial use of the water resource for all stakeholders (including fish) and for improved instrumentation and monitoring. For 2009, BMID is applying for funding for cattle fencing along the most exposed stretches of Mission Creek to reduce the potential for fecal contamination to the creek.

Website link at www.obwb.ca

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

The council meets monthly. There are many returning members to the council along with some new faces. The primary focus for the Council will be to advise the OBWB and to facilitate the completion of tasks set out in the Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy that was released in October, 2008. The strategy can be obtained from the web at the address below.

www.obwb.ca/water_strategy/

"Some people are making such thorough plans for rainy days that they aren't enjoying today's sunshine" - William Feather

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Booms and Recessions: The economic cycles that we are facing seem to be running parallel with the recent climatic cycles. The extreme events and the variability seem to be increasing. The recent boom in the Okanagan saw construction activity reach new levels. Historically, high growth years are typically followed by substantially reduced activity as the economy requires time to stabilize to more normal levels and values. Stability for a community is perhaps more important than growth. A stable workforce, stable employment and stable community services such as health care and infrastructure, are all part of a healthy community.

The corrective forces of a recession may be part of a longer term balance in society. During a boom, there is on average, much higher consumption of goods and services and there are excesses in many areas of the economy. Housing prices rise as do materials and labor costs. During a recession, excessive community consumption is reduced. The standard of living may also be reduced, however the quality of life for some persons and the community as whole may actually improve. As money is limited, more spending is made on essential rather than desired items.

Federal Programs: The Federal and Provincial governments are currently announcing stimulus packages to stabilize the economy and assist in the building of infrastructure projects. In Kelowna, water quality improvements are of concern to most citizens. Some of the water quality improvement projects are desired works and some are absolutely essential. The timing for the Federal/Provincial program matches in very well with Kelowna's needs.

BMID administers public monies for the water system upgrades and renewal works. Presently, the economic climate is becoming more favorable to receive good value for contracted services. BMID has been fortunate in that we have not been forced to make substantial expenditures on infrastructure to meet the demands of new development. The largest BMID expenditures have been on the purchase and preparation of water transmission pipe for the Black Mountain Reservoir project.



Water Quality Improvement Costs: Improvements are required in four of the five utilities to ensure that there is full protection in place to deal with all known contaminants including difficult-to-kill protozoa such as *Cryptosporidium*. Although our community illness levels have been low, the cost to provide microbiologically safe water throughout Kelowna is anticipated to be \$65,000,000 for all five utilities. *This work is essential for our community.* BMID has \$25,000,000 of this cost which would include the installation of the Black Mountain Reservoir and pipelines plus the installation of an Ultraviolet disinfection facility below the reservoir. To put in full filtration for all 5 water utilities is estimated to be \$225,000,000. The Kelowna Joint Water Committee (KJWC) has agreed on a common approach to have all domestic water quality throughout the City protected from all known microbiological contamination. Funding is an issue as the achievement will be much easier if there is external government funding for this essential infrastructure. Four of the five utilities are Improvement Districts and do not have access to Federal and Provincial grant funds. The City of Kelowna however, has access to grant monies and discussions are taking place with them through the KJWC. (continued on back page)



Water Supply Association of BC

For the last 3 years, the WSABC has been very active in lobbying for revisions to the IHA Turbidity Notification Program. The reasons for the lobbying effort were always to improve how and when to notify our customers of the risks associated with consuming tap water. Literature on the subject is available on the website at www.wsabc.com. The Provincial Health Authorities have all agreed to implement a revised Province-wide standard for making decisions on notification considering a much broader range of factors than turbidity alone. The WSABC is pleased with the revisions and believe it will be of benefit to our customers.

Kelowna Joint Water Committee

Groundwater: The KJWC has made progress on a City-wide Borehole Information Tracking System (BITS) to inventory all subsurface activity that may compromise the integrity of our groundwater sources. This initiative is part of the broader Groundwater Protection Planning work that is underway. All geotechnical boreholes, geothermal wells, groundwater wells and holes into the subsurface will be tracked. It is hoped that recognition and protection of the groundwater resource will be part of the Official Community Plan update that is underway.

Water Quality Project Review: The KJWC retained Associated Engineering to review the current direction for water quality improvements for all five water utilities. The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. The current path of treatment by the five utilities is technically valid and appropriate;
2. The current water quality improvement projects will not compromise future broader water treatment initiatives that may be possible.
3. The use of UV disinfection on the low coloured waters is appropriate application of technology and will provide protection against protozoa such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*.
4. The installation of a separated domestic water supply system in agricultural areas for the larger blocks of land should continue.

The report will be presented to City Council within the next month, complete with a presentation of water rates and water cost impacts.

Job 14:18-19
If he holds back the waters, there is drought; if he lets them loose, they devastate the land

BC Environmental Assessment Approvals - BMID is currently in the early stages of conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Black Mountain Reservoir Project. The process addresses all environmental, health, cultural and societal impacts that would be created by this project and then determines ways in which to mitigate and/or provide compensation for the impacts for the greater good of the community. BMID held an open house at Black Mountain Elementary School on February 10, 2009. The forum was to obtain input from the public on whether or not the terms of the study are sufficiently complete or if any additional issues should be included. The Open House received a great deal of media attention. 114 persons visited the open house. The time period for comments is 30 days and closes March 11, 2009. All of the details of the process are at the website address link at <http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/>

Black Mountain Reservoir Pipe Preparation: Work continues to progress on sandblasting/pipe coating, and the fabrication of the large diameter bends (right photo) for the Reservoir project. Approximately half of the pipe is coated and 40 bends have been manufactured. BMID is planning an open house and tour of the pipe preparation operation in the spring. Watch for dates in our next newsletter.



Three Forks Gravel Pit: The proposed gravel pit at the confluence of Mission and Pearson Creeks is on hold until the pit owner provides a revised design for silt and sediment control works from the site. The original designs were considered inadequate to ensure no additional silt and sediment would be added to Mission Creek for all reasonably foreseeable circumstances. BMID has been in continual contact with the Province on this pit.

Old Vernon Road Water main: BMID is designing and will be installing a small diameter domestic water main for all of the customers along Old Vernon Road so that our Scotty Creek source can be used only for irrigation water. This will eliminate the domestic use of our highest risk water source.

Highway 33 Crossing: The widening of Highway 33 is being designed by the Ministry of Transportation. As part of our Reservoir Project, BMID is completing our detailed design of the crossing of the highway with large 1050mm diameter pipes in the event that the project may be tendered in the near future.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING (CONTINUED)

The Improvement Districts are lobbying the City of Kelowna, Provincial, and Federal governments for access to grant funding to assist for the purposes of improving our water quality. Typically when funding is available, the project costs are 1/3 Federal, 1/3 Provincial, and 1/3 locally funded. In the last 10 years, the 5 City utilities that service 115,000 persons have only received \$3,000,000 in water utility grant funding. This amount is incredibly small in comparison with some of the other communities in the Okanagan. In Kelowna, there are over 50,000 persons within the Improvement District service areas that are ineligible in the eyes of the Province to receive grant funding. With the essential items of the Water Quality Improvement Project foreseen to cost \$65,000,000, the resulting rate impacts would be substantial if grant funding is not received.

The Improvement Districts are lobbying City Council to respect the good work and high level of customer satisfaction provided by the IDs, and to support all residents of Kelowna in the eyes of the Provincial Government. The decision of grant funding awards will ultimately lie with the Province and the Federal Government. The water quality improvement projects identified for the citizens of Kelowna should not be considered as an amenity for our community but rather a necessity.

OBSERVE, RECORD & REPORT
questionable watershed activities to
BMID at 765-5169