

Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs



May/June
2009

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About Local
Government
Development*

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New Miners Trained in the North



Giselle Ducharme of Wabowden, Manitoba a graduate of the underground core mining program presented through University College of the North demonstrates newly acquired skills. Local mining companies hired all nine graduates who completed the program.

This Issue

Welcome to the May/June 2009
Community Contact newsletter.

The theme for this issue of *Community Contact* is education, training and youth. In this issue we provide information on a variety of education and training programs and events relevant to rural and northern communities. We include articles on the Northern Youth Empowerment Initiative and Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) support for the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation. We also include an article introducing a guide for municipal decision makers called *Understanding Fairness* and describing the role of the Manitoba Ombudsman in handling challenges by citizens about fairness in municipal government.

Our feature article highlights a course in underground core mining, the first of its kind in Manitoba, recently completed through the University College of the North in the community of Wabowden. Nine students from the northern communities of Cross Lake and Wabowden participated in the program. We also provide an update on the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative (NHFI), administered by ANA with the NHFI Management Committee and delivered in co-operation with a variety of community partners.

Along with these articles, we are introducing a new feature that focuses on Workplace Safety and Health titled *A Safe Workplace*. Closing out this issue are profiles introducing new employees within the department and a municipal calendar with reminders for the months of June and July, 2009.

Enjoy this issue and please feel free to contact us with your comments, pictures and article suggestions, or to request additional copies.



UCN

Underground

Nine students in the first underground core mining course offered in Manitoba graduated at a special ceremony on May 1, 2009 at the Kenanow Centre in Wabowden, Manitoba. All of the graduating students are from the northern Manitoba communities of Cross Lake and Wabowden.

This new program is the result of collaboration between the University College of the North (UCN), Crowflight Minerals Inc. (CML), and the Northern Manitoba Sector Council. Generous contributions from Manitoba Education and Training, the Manitoba Metis Federation, and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak also helped make this course a success.

“These graduates are the role models for what is possible and what can happen. This partnership program truly demonstrates the path to the future, where Northerners are helping to bring solutions to northern economic and social development,” says UCN President Denise K. Henning. “UCN is proud of what has been accomplished with this project.”

The Underground Core Mining course took about five months to complete. During that time, UCN students received hands-on training at CML's Bucko Lake Nickel Mine near Wabowden. The mine is just starting production.

“We were very selective in the assignment of the course leader, as well as selective in the course participants,” says Paul Keller, Vice-President of Operations and Chief Operating Officer at CML. “These selections and assignments resulted in a group that is now eligible for employment in the mining industry.”

In fact, local mining companies hired all nine of the graduates as soon as they finished the program. One of them, hired by CML, is Giselle Ducharme. She's a single mother from Wabowden, and the only woman in her class. She was also the class valedictorian.

“I like to be able to work, sweat, and get my hands dirty,” she says. “I always think you have to earn your money. That's how my parents raised me.”

Course instructor Fred Fitzner says he's proud of his students and would be happy to work with any of them. He's been an underground core miner himself for about 30 years. As a resident of Wabowden, he's pleased that this training opportunity came to people in his part of the province.

“They're living in an isolated community and there are not a lot of opportunities to get out into the mining industry – to get into any industry at all. There's not that much for them to do,” said Fitzner.

Glen Settee says he heard about this course at the perfect time. After losing

Produces First Core Mining Graduates

his job, he had been on public assistance in Cross Lake for about a year. He was just about to go to Winnipeg to interview for a job cleaning sewers. At age 36, he's the oldest student in the class, and older than most beginning miners. He overcame his claustrophobia to finish the training.

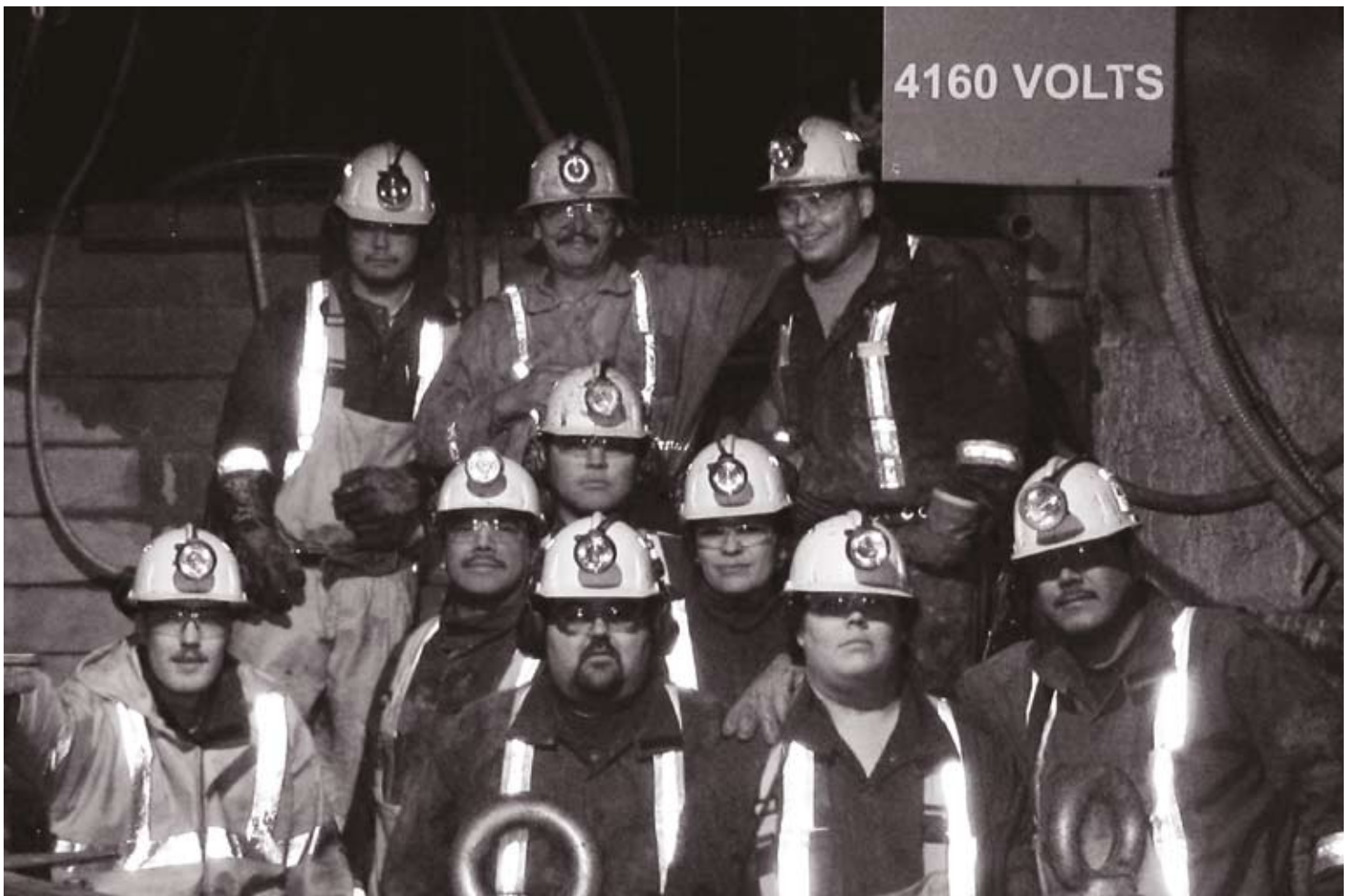
"I'm no stranger to hard work. I was just happy that I got the opportunity to be one of the lucky ones they picked first for this program," said Settee. "On a personal level, it was really uplifting. It made me feel like I belong."

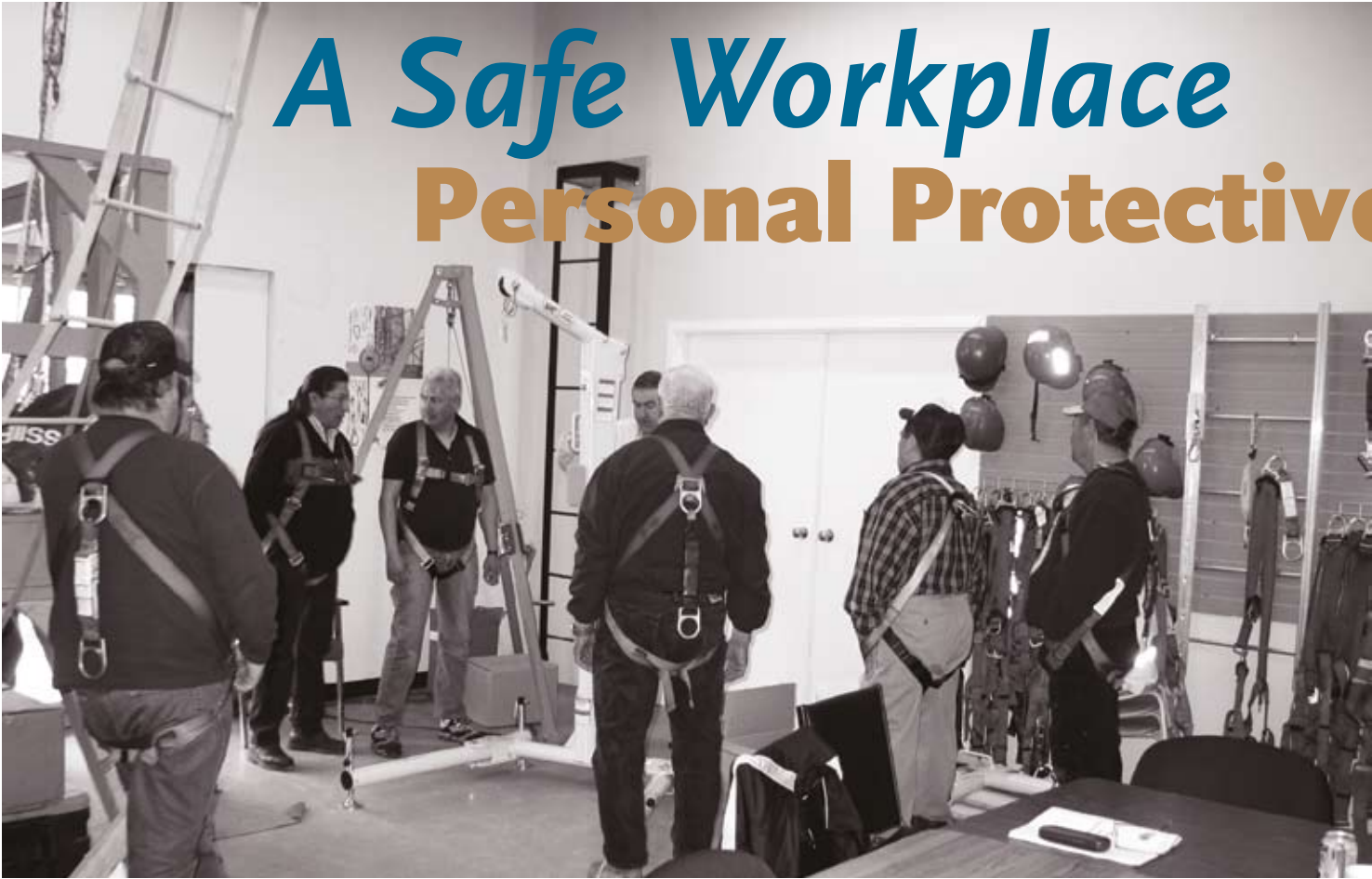

The same partnership resulted in a four-week course on mineral processing. Those students graduated in December, and CML now employs most of them. The Underground Core Mining course is significantly longer because of the complexity

and potential hazards of an underground operation, as well as the variety of equipment used.

Future program offerings will depend on mining industry demand and the effects of the economy on mineral prices. For more information on programs or training offered through the University College of The North, visit their website at ucn.ca or contact them at 1-866-627-8500.

UCN underground core mining graduates pause for a class photo with their instructor. In the front row (left to right) are Dennis Nachbaur Jr, Wayne McIvor, Tyler Nachbaur and Ronald Muskego. In the middle (left to right) are Glen Settee, Stuart Spence and Giselle Ducharme. The top row (left to right) shows Kyle Alderson, UCN Instructor Fred Fitzner and Rio Stoneman.





A Safe Workplace Personal Protective

Having the right safety equipment available is important, but equally important is training employees how to use it properly so they can protect themselves and their co-workers.

As part of Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) requirements, each full time, part time or seasonal public work employees must have access to and use personal protective equipment (PPE) when performing their required duties and tasks.

To help communities meet these requirements, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) prepared personal protective equipment bags and distributed them to all ANA communities. Because this is a one-time purchase by ANA, local councils will be responsible for replacing or purchasing any additional equipment required. A list provided with each bag describes the contents of the bag and details what each full time, part time or seasonal public works employee requires.

Because the bags contain items like a first aid kit and eye wash equipment, each employee will be responsible for taking along a bag when working in the community. If your community has not received PPE bags, please contact the technical and public works consultant for your region.

There are five categories of PPE bags with a different list of items for each category. The number of bags from each category sent to each community was determined by the list of employees on the department's WSH training list and information provided by each community.

Equipment on the Job

The five categories used for the PPE bag distribution include:

- full time (one for each full time employee)
- part time (one for each part time employee)
- seasonal or summer students (one for each employee to a maximum of three per community)
- community garage (one for each community with a garage)

- water or sewer treatment plant (one for each water or sewer plant within the community)

The PPE items included with each category varies. For a list of required items to meet the WSH requirements, see the safe work procedure for personal protective equipment in the *ANA Workplace Safety and Health Manual (Section III-C pages 14-15)*.



Personal protective equipment items required to meet WSH requirements are listed in the *ANA Workplace Safety and Health Manual*

Every community is responsible for making sure employees have access to appropriate personal protective equipment and that they use it properly on the job.



Northern Healthy Foods Supports

Communities and individuals looking for help with gardens or livestock programs can now find support and advice from the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative (NHFI).

Mandated by the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, the Northern Food Prices Report published in 2003 recommended ways to reduce the cost of obtaining nutritious foods in northern and remote Manitoba communities.

Implementation and Delivery

The Northern Healthy Foods Initiative supports priority areas of northern food self-sufficiency, northern food business development, northern community foods programs, northern greenhouse pilot projects and northern garden initiatives.

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs administers the NHFI with the NHFI Management Committee, including representatives from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, Manitoba Conservation and Healthy Child Manitoba.

Service Delivery Model

Community members, community-based organizations and

regional partners that include Bayline Regional Roundtable, Northern Association of Community Councils and Four Arrows Regional Health Authority champion food security projects in northern and remote communities. In addition to the regional partners, the initiative works closely with the Manitoba Food Charter and Frontier School Division.

Communities in the North

The NHFI targets all communities within Aboriginal and Northern Affairs boundaries including First Nations, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs communities and municipalities. It supports a variety of northern healthy food and food security related initiatives with northern regional partners. It establishes program criteria, effective administration and reporting requirements.

While supporting unique community based organizations, NHFI has succeeded in increasing the supply of nutritious food in the north and reducing health risks associated with poor diet. The initiative has supported purchase of gardening equipment such as rototillers, shovels and watering equipment for over 300 individual and community gardens. Regional partners have helped cultivate over 5,000 strawberry, raspberry and Saskatoon

plants. In addition, NHFI has sponsored revolving loans to allow low-income families to purchase about 300 energy efficient freezers for storing locally harvested foods and food bought in bulk.

For more information on this Initiative, please contact NHFI manager Jannell Majeran at 204-677-6677 or NHFI administrator Jessica Paley at 204-945-0569.



A school garden and greenhouse operation set up in the community of Leaf Rapids to teach children about growing nutritious foods right in their own community.

Initiative Northern Food Projects

Veggie Adventures Curriculum Teaches the Science of Growing Food

Since 2006, the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative has provided funding to the Frontier School Division to host three Veggie Adventures Curriculum workshops. The workshops, held in Thompson in 2006 and in Leaf Rapids in 2007 and 2009, provided guidance and tool kits to educators for delivery of a plant, food and soil science based curriculum to students in their home communities. As a result, plants germinated in classrooms were transferred to greenhouses and eventually placed in gardens at schools and homes.

The 2009 Veggie Adventures Curriculum workshop held in Leaf Rapids, Manitoba saw teachers from Cormorant, Grand Rapids, Fox Lake, Norway House, Cross Lake, Granville Lake and Pikwitonei in attendance. Students were also welcomed this year.

The two-day workshop included hands on sessions such as germinating and seeding where participants were taught proper techniques for seeding, germinating, planting and watering. Supplies like potting soil and seeds were provided for participants to take home. The workshop also included a tour of two greenhouses in Leaf Rapids. Plans are to include information about greenhouse operation into the curriculum delivery.

Participants showed enthusiasm for the well-planned and informative gathering, especially appreciating the opportunity to connect with gardening and program experts. The workshops included healthy meals with menus demonstrating the use of foods people can grow locally. Participants requested follow up information and ongoing partnerships to help meet the goals of educating and motivating students and improving the health of their communities.



Teachers who gathered in Leaf Rapids to learn about delivering a plant, food and soil science based curriculum saw examples of healthy foods grown in northern Manitoba.

Plans are underway to develop further gardening projects in communities that have established interest in the Veggie Adventures Curriculum. Supported by NHFI, Frontier School Division has hired a regional co-ordinator to help manage school and community garden projects for the upcoming growing season.

To learn more about the Veggie Adventures Curriculum, call Chuck Stensgard, Regional Co-ordinator at 204-473-2403 or Frontier School Division at 204-775-9741.

ANA Renews HBOMF Bursary Funding

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) has renewed its Civil Technology and Engineering bursary funding with the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation (HBOMF) for another three years from 2009 to 2011. The bursary is funded through ANA with an annual contribution of \$20,000 to help support up to four students in post secondary education.

In 2002, ANA established the bursary to help northern students of Aboriginal descent pursuing an education in Civil Technology and Engineering. The bursary delivered through the HBOMF provides \$5,000 per student. To date, ANA has supported 26 students with this bursary.

About the Awards:

The HBOMF makes it possible for Aboriginal post-secondary students to complete their chosen field of study through the provision of financial bursaries bestowed annually to applicants selected by the independent adjudication panel. The amount of the bursary can range from \$1,500 to \$5,000. Since its inception in 2001, the HBOMF has supported 180 students with \$210,000 in bursaries. **The deadline for applications is August 30th of each year.**

Award eligibility:

- First Nations, Metis, and Inuit residents of Manitoba enrolled in post-secondary studies in Manitoba may apply.

- Students must maintain a minimum course load of 60 per cent to retain eligibility status.

Award categories:

- Civil Technology and Engineering
- Information Technology
- Public Administration/Governance
- Education Champion
- general awards

For more information on how you can apply for a bursary, please visit the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation website at helenbettyosbornefdtn.ca.



HBOMF bursary award winners for 2008. The foundation provides selected Aboriginal post-secondary students with \$1,500 to \$5,000 awards to use in their chosen field of study. Since 2001, the foundation has provided \$210,000 in bursaries.

Civil Engineering Bursary Inspires

Brock Campbell, a civil engineering student who lives in Winnipeg, recently wrote Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs to express his gratitude for the department's support of the HBOMF Civil Engineering Award.

A recipient of the award in 2008, Campbell is a husband and father of three who expects to graduate soon with a bachelor of science in civil engineering. He believes without a doubt that education is a major key to solving many of the problems Aboriginal people face. His dreams include operating an engineering firm that employs Aboriginal people to work on economically sustainable developments in their own communities.

"It is sad when I see an Aboriginal student who can not afford to go to school but wants to so bad," wrote Campbell. "I always tell them that it is not impossible; you just have to work harder to look for money. I point them to organizations like the HBOMF and encourage them to apply," he wrote, admitting there was a time when his own grades and finances were both low, while high debt and stress levels made him consider dropping out. Receiving the civil engineering award allowed Campbell to pay off debt and inspired him to renew his efforts. He has since maintained a B average.

Campbell has watched the numbers of awards from HBOMF grow rapidly in recent years and he thanked ANA for its support of the civil engineering award. He believes the award program growth would not be possible without such support.

Northern Youth Empowerment Initiative

In many northern Manitoba communities, suicide, substance abuse, crime, violence, chronic disease and gang activity have been longstanding concerns, particularly as they affect young people.

Programs that build self-esteem, empower youth and help them with growth and development are essential to address these concerns. But the programs are often not available to youth in northern or remote communities.

The Northern Youth Empowerment Initiative (NYEI) provides a mechanism to fund such programs in northern communities and provides supportive services to communities that require help developing, delivering or evaluating a community-based project.

The NYEI provides financial assistance and program support to youth-focused programs or projects in northern Manitoba with a preference for those that are:

- community-based
- wholly or partially led by youth
- derived from or based on well-established, successful models
- designed to include large numbers of youth

A central goal of the NYEI is to create sustainable opportunities for youth. Promising initiatives showing positive results may be considered for multi-year support depending on the availability of funding.

The NYEI defines youth as those from 12 to 29 years of age. Whether programs involve the arts, sports, traditional activities or leadership and life skills development, one or more of the following objectives should be supported:

- improved health and well-being
- lower suicide rates
- reduced addictions
- less gang involvement
- reduced criminal activity
- increased community safety
- increased life options and opportunities for youth
- improved school attendance and completion rates
- labour force improvements
- enhanced citizen involvement

Overall benefits for participants should include opportunities to build self-esteem, experience success and develop life skills.

For more information, contact Ray Irvine, senior analyst with the Program Planning and Development office of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs at 204-945-5968.



Manitoba Ombudsman

Municipal Fairness Project

As part of their ongoing outreach and education activities, Manitoba's Office of the Ombudsman has recently completed a fairness training tool specifically designed for Manitoba municipalities.

Municipalities operate today in an era of enhanced accountability. Governing is becoming increasingly complex and citizens, embracing the right to expect fair, open and transparent government, often meet complexity with increased scrutiny. It is particularly important for governments to know how to respond when citizens challenge their decisions.

The Office of the Ombudsman investigates complaints from members of the public who believe government has not treated them fairly. When the ombudsman investigates complaints, it has a responsibility to assess and make a determination on the fairness of government's actions and decisions. It is therefore important for the Office of the Ombudsman explain its understanding of fairness and its investigative process, so that everyone can operate from a common understanding in addressing complaints.

Municipal councillors act primarily in a lawmaking or policymaking capacity. Because they wear many different hats when performing the duties that fall within council's jurisdiction, some of the actions councillors take and decisions they make are subject to the requirements of administrative fairness. It is important for municipal councillors to understand which of their actions and decisions have fairness requirements attached, what those requirements are and how they can meet them while ensuring that municipal business proceeds normally.

After consulting with Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the Office of

the Ombudsman produced *Understanding Fairness*, a guide designed specifically for municipal decision makers.

Understanding Fairness, produced with the support and co-operation of Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association, intends to help municipal councillors and administrators achieve fairness in the important and challenging work they do. It also provides municipal leaders with tools to help promote fairness and make it their standard of practice.

The tools in *Understanding Fairness* include:

- a fairness framework that recognizes procedural, substantive, and relational aspects of fairness
- standard definitions of some commonly used fairness terms
- a guide to meeting the requirements of fairness in municipal decision making
- helpful hints for conducting fair public hearings and meetings
- tips for analyzing decision-making processes
- fairness checklists for councillors and municipalities
- case examples of actions and decisions that are considered unfair
- a decision-making checklist
- information on how the ombudsman investigates and analyzes complaints from the public about municipalities

Visit the Manitoba Ombudsman website at ombudsman.mb.ca/oreports.htm and find the *Understanding Fairness* handbook under the Special Reports heading.

Profile

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) Local Government Development Division (Northern Region) introduces three Thompson employees.

Kari Halleux

Moving from ANA Financial and Administration Services to the Local Government Development Division as a new municipal development consultant, Kari Halleux brings experience as a tax clerk and a familiarity with all of the communities served by the Thompson regional office.

Kari is a municipal administration program graduate and has a certificate in human resource management, both from the University of Manitoba. She is currently completing her third level of training in the Certified General Accountant program.



Kari Halleux

Vanessa Nedd

New employee Vanessa Nedd is the manager of engineering services based in the Thompson ANA office. Vanessa is a licensed civil engineer and project management professional. She graduated with her bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Guyana in 1988 and has 10 years of experience designing and supervising municipal projects.

Her work experiences have been in private consulting, government ministries and in the mining sectors in Botswana, Guyana and Canada. In recent years, Vanessa's role also involved mentoring engineers in training, working as a support staff in construction, and planning and forecasting capital budgets.



Vanessa Nedd

Alan Brackman

Alan Brackman is a new municipal development consultant working from the Thompson ANA office. His job involves working with community councils and providing financial and administrative advice.

Alan graduated from the University of Manitoba with an honours degree in commerce and a certificate in education. He brings with him experience in business, public policy, board governance, labour relations and finance. Before joining ANA, Alan worked for two tribal councils and in both private and non-profit sectors.

Alan has lived in several Manitoba communities and spent a year living in Fox Lake Cree Nation before moving to Thompson in 2008.



Alan Brackman

Municipal Calendar Monthly Reminder for June/July

June 2009

- 1 Deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to dept to avoid penalties.

Install Simply Accounting payroll tax updates.

Forward requests for Maintenance Cost Analysis (MCA) revisions.
- 2 Council to act on capital project applications for missing information.
- 3 **Management Maintenance Systems (MMS)** – Wet wells cleaned.
- 4 **MMS** – Dumping of lagoons.
- 15 Deadline for receipt of payment to Receiver General to avoid penalty.

Community:

- Capital project application adjustments – council to continue to act on recommendations for final project submission to the department.

- Submit Municipal Employee Benefits Program (MEBP) form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period.
- If applicable, submit bi-weekly payrolls for the Building Independence Initiative to regional office.

WSH Reminders:

- Council to ensure fire extinguishers and first aid kits inspected.
- Council to action items highlighted as corrective action from inspections.
- Does your bulletin board include: Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) policy, harassment policy, violence policy, working alone plan, names of first aiders and WSH representatives (employee and management)?
- Are first aid kits available in every building?
- Is your community plan to control chemical and biological hazards updated?

Departmental:

- Capital project applications sent back to council requesting missing information.

July 2009

- 1 CANADA DAY

Deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to department to avoid penalties.
- 2 **MMS** - Water treatment plant storage tanks cleaned.
- 13 Submit quarterly GST refund.
- 15 Deadline for receipt of payment to Receiver General to avoid penalty.
- 30 Follow-up with auditor re: audit to meet Aug. 31 deadline.

Submit first quarter financial statements (April to June).
- 31 Deadline for applications for grant-in-aid streets that are not yet approved for the program.

Complete revisions for WCB estimates.

Submit revised capital project applications.

Community:

- Submit MEBP form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period.
- If applicable, submit bi-weekly payrolls for the Building Independence Initiative to regional office.

WSH Reminders:

- Council to ensure fire extinguishers and first aid kits inspected.
- Council to action items highlighted as corrective action from inspections.

Departmental:

- Regional office to forward request for MCA revisions to Program Planning and Development by July 1.

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Community council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, comments, questions, suggestions and ideas to the editor.