

The Water Cooler

Vulcan County - Staff Newsletter - January 2012

CAO News >>

Welcome to another edition of the Water Cooler. Old man winter finally paid us a visit and from my view he is still not very welcome. Thanks to the crews for keeping the roads open and safe during the extreme cold snap we just experienced.

Also, a big thanks to the staff and volunteers that went out to assist our neighbours to the west as they experienced a massive fire and we were fortunate enough to be able to help them get it under control. This was a prime example that being there for your neighbour is still alive and well.



Council recently approved the 2012 Operating and Capital Budgets so all departments are now busy forming up their work plans and equipment purchases for the coming year. In looking over the budgets for each

department it appears as though we have a very busy and project-filled year ahead of us.

The 2011 Staff Appreciation Night was a resounding success and a great time for us to get together, tip back a few, and swap stories. Thanks to Council for planning this event of appreciation and for budgeting the funds that made it possible.

The end of February 2012 marks my one-year anniversary with the County and time sure has flown by (and no, Brad and Kevin, I don't mean the speed at which I drive back and forth to work). This has been an extremely busy and challenging year but has also been very rewarding. Quite a number of changes have been implemented, in terms of work approach and in methods and internal systems. I want to thank all of Staff and Council for your support and for labouring through the transition of working with another new (to the County) CAO. Hopefully it will be some time to come before you have to go through that experience again!

As always, be and work safe.

Leo

A good party >>

You know you've thrown a good party when:

1. Your extra toothbrushes come in handy
2. You forget what you're drinking. But that's OK, there's alcohol in it
3. Someone cries
4. A fight breaks out
5. Grandma takes the little one home
6. Seven people get in the hot tub just to prove that seven people can fit in the seven person hot tub

7. You wake up the next morning to find that you forgot to clean the kitchen

8. You contemplate taking a bite of the leftover potato salad...sitting on the kitchen table...all night

9. You wake up and chug Gatorade like you just ran a marathon

10. Beer cans are still on the back patio

11. Your friends call and ask when the next party will be held

I could probably keep going...

I think I still have a hangover...



Ag Action >>

The Agriculture Services Department has been working on finding a full time contractor for the summer of 2012 at Twin Valley Campground.

Also we have been working on the 2nd round of the Grazing Lease Contracts, and updating the rental policy.

In the coming months we hope to get a security system and some improvements done on a existing shed

so that we can move all our chemicals and poisons out to our new shop out of town.

Kelly and Avery will be gone from January 31st to February 3rd for the Agriculture Service Board Conference in Edmonton.

If you have and questions or concerns about Agriculture Services please call Kelly Malmberg at 403-485-3103 or Avery at 403-485-3122

Winter has arrived with a vengeance at Vulcan County. Winter work is now fully underway at the Operations Department. The Divisional Graders have been out and about ploughing drifted areas from the recent snow, while the Maintenance Crew has been keeping our chip seal roads clear of snow and sanded for everyone's safety. The new plough truck, a 2012 Western Star has been performing well and our drivers are becoming accustomed to operating their new toy. I would like to thank Warren Stasiuk at Volker Stevin for his assistance in calibrating the sander on our new truck.

Two of the facts of life that come with the colder weather are equipment breakdowns and malfunctions. The Repair Shop has been busy fixing equipment; thankfully it has been mostly in-shop repairs, and not out in the field with the wind and blowing snow. Speaking of the Repair Shop I would like to congratulate Jason Haines ("Blue" as he is known on the shop floor) on his new position at Vulcan County. Jason will now be apprenticing as a Heavy Duty Mechanic under Bill Schmeelke. This is a four year program that will see Jason attending school for 8 weeks per year at Lethbridge Community College. Upon completion of the program Jason will be a licensed heavy duty mechanic.

A new face in the Public Works Department is the Division 5 Grader Operator Ken Kilmury. Ken currently resides in Nobleford. In his spare time Ken dirt track

races his Chev Pick-Up at Bridge County Raceway. In the winter Ken enjoys playing men's league hockey.



Stewart Hurrell dumping material for Devon Belley to repair a soft spot with John Klassen overseeing things. Picture by Rick Beck

Being well into January at the time of this writing, preparations are well underway for spring and the new construction year. Upcoming road construction projects are being engineered and finalized, and maintenance issues are being prioritized. Here's hoping what is left of winter is pleasant with an early spring on the way.

Nels

Craig and Joy's Wedding >>

It was over a year in planning and waiting for the day and was well worth it. The Ceremony took place on January 4th, 2012 at a beach on Disney's Private Island called Castaway Cay.

The weather was overcast and cool but that made for a great outdoor wedding without getting a sun burn. It was short and sweet with some of our family that made the cruise with us.

I have always commented that it is just the guy's responsibility to just show up, but even the Bride had the same feeling for that day. Disney staff on the cruise took care of everything.

The Disney characters could not make it to the ceremony but did give us a hug later on.



Thanks for all the nice comments after I returned I will have more pictures to share soon if you are interested.

Craig



Answer... The Flip-Top Lid from a ketchup bottle



Ok, so I guess I made it a bit too hard last time, (either that or you are all so clean living you don't eat ketchup).

The winner of a Home Hardware gift card was Maxine!

Yay Max!!!

This issue's what is it?

Here's an easy one for you - what is it?



Same rules as last time, all correct answers will go into a draw. **Guesses to Liza please.**

County Employed Volunteer Firefighters >>

On January 18th, 2012 Vulcan County Council approved policy **No. 24-1002** covering Employee Volunteer Fire Fighters, and reads as follows.

PURPOSE

To allow the employees of Vulcan County who are members of any County Volunteer Fire Department to respond to emergency fire calls without loss of remuneration or benefits.

DEFINITIONS

Emergency Fire Call is defined as a wild fire, land fire, house fire or a high risk fire. This policy does not pertain to medical calls or any other emergency call.

PROCEDURE

Vulcan County establishes the following Employee Volunteer Fire Fighter Policy:

1. Approved fire service organizations include the following volunteer Fire Departments;

- a. Vulcan County Fire Department
- b. Town of Vulcan Fire Department
- c. Champion Fire Department
- d. Carmangay Fire Department
- e. Milo Fire Department
- f. Lomond Fire Department
- g. Northwest Fire Department

2. Employees approved to respond to emergency fire calls during work hours will receive their regular compensation and accrual of benefits during the time they are absent from work responding to emergency fire calls.

3. Discretion must be used by the employee for determining whether the emergency fire call overshadows the importance of their current employment obligations.

For further clarification of this policy, please contact your Department Head.



Website Recommendation >>

www.LibriVox.org.

As everyone seems to have either a smart phone, or book reader these days, thought I would do a review of one of my favourite sites.

LibriVox is a site where you can go and download audio books that are free and in the public domain. The books are all read by volunteers, and in the main are very well done. It is very easy to download the books in the format you need for your tablet or smart phone, and then transfer it from your pc onto your

device for listening when on the move. I find it a particularly great way to make a long boring car journey seem that much shorter. You can find most of the classics on LibriVox, public domain books are those written before 1923, or books that have been released with the permission of the copyright holder. I am currently listening to 'Treasure Island' I had forgotten how scary, funny, and exciting this story is!

Liza