



Land Ambulance

- RRDSAB staff have been working very hard to ready us for the direct delivery of Land Ambulance across the Rainy River District, effective 01 January, 2007.
- Following the representation vote between CUPE and CAW held in October, CUPE was declared the successful Union to represent all Paramedics in the District.
- Dan McCormick, Health Services Manager, Joanne Spence, Personnel & Policy Officer, and I met with five Ministry representatives for our Certification Interview; those present repeatedly complimented the RRDSAB's policies and thoroughness. Dan and Joanne represented us well by successfully completing a demanding 'scenario' interview, as part of the certification process. Overall, the entire team was impressed and confident in the RRDSAB's abilities and readiness to accept the transfer of service in the new year.
- Unfortunately, despite all of our best efforts, it looks like the Fort Frances Base will likely not be ready for a January 1st occupancy. I have contacted the Riverside CEO to inform him of the likelihood we will need to remain at the Riverside base beyond the January 1st transfer date, with a request that they indicate their support for us to do so. To this date, I have had not had a positive response.
- We did forward Riverside a draft lease for the Emo base in July, 2006. Riverside has created a new lease which they forwarded to us at the end of September. That version has been reviewed by our legal council who has recommended several revisions, in our best interest; we will re-submit to Riverside for consideration. Our intent remains to occupy the existing Emo base under a lease agreement, effective 01 January, 2007.

Social Housing

- Cathe Hoszowski, Social Housing Manager, has been working diligently to bring our issue of under-funded capital reserves to the Province's attention. Cathe recently met with several members of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs &

Housing (MMAH) to discuss the threat to the viability of existing housing stock in our District, given the inadequacy of the replacement reserve funds. Cathe specifically cited capital concerns for the two Urban Native Housing Providers, the Township of Atikokan Non-Profit Housing Corporation and the Public Housing portfolio of the RRDSSAB. The latter has not had a formal Building Condition Audit to date and has been funded on the lowest band per unit funding, since devolution. Given the Province's intent to complete a Municipal Service Review over the next 18 months, we are optimistic that this funding mechanism will be reviewed. Cathe will be preparing a *Business Case* for the Ministry's consideration based upon the eroding tax base, the requirement to perform specific capital repairs and the impact on Provider mortgages, should the capital work not be complete and units be deemed unsafe.

- It is our understanding that the \$600,000 originally offered the RRDSSAB for the Affordable Housing Program is still available to us. As stated earlier, Cathe will prepare a *Business Case* which may allow us to access some or all of those dollars for needs specific to the Rainy River District.
- As reported in the last *CAO Report*, Minister Gerretsen did indicate at the Northern Ontario Municipal Association meeting in September that we should not "hold our breath for capital funding in any form right now." We are hopeful, however, that the RRDSSAB can access our original Affordable Housing Allocation.

Child Care Services

- Jeannette Cawston, RRDSSAB Best Start Coordinator, and Anne Anderson, Network Chair, will be presenting the Rainy River District's Best Start approach to a Provincial Conference next week. The RRDSSAB and Network are being recognized as leaders in the Province for this initiative. Jeannette has prepared an excellent presentation which you can find on our website at www.rrdssab.ca. This recognition is well deserved, given the tremendous amount of work that has gone into this project. The Rainy River District has a long-standing tradition of working together to provide excellence in service for families & children. Well done!

Integration & Centralization of Administration

- Three teams have been created to work on various aspects of service system integration, including further centralization of administration. One team is looking at an *Integrated Intake* system for Child Care, Ontario Works, Social Housing, National Child Benefit Strategy, and Homelessness Initiative. A second team is looking at an *Integrated Information Technology* support system and a third working group is conducting an analysis of specific job functions as they relate specifically to social housing, intake, finance and information systems support. Each team's findings will affect the other so this is a major

project which will have significant impact on the way we do business. We hope to accomplish all of this, including implementation of various recommendations, prior to year end.

- Our reality is this - we have a declining tax base, increasing senior's population, and an already burdened municipal funding base. We have people in our communities who face multi-faceted challenges, many requiring comprehensive & integrated responses which traditional program management approaches do not provide. In planning for service delivery approaches, we have to consider funders and interest groups and be aware of our accountability to various parties including the government, consumers and partners. Service system integration is a way of addressing the complex needs of people, while increasing organizational efficiency.
- Integration and further centralization will require changes in responsibilities, reporting relationships, job descriptions, financial systems and technology systems. Reallocation of resources will move us toward our vision of integration, while ensuring quality of current programs. Unified delivery of these essential programs means new ways of doing business and new partnerships in service delivery. Given the rapidly increasing responsibilities being forced upon our current staff, particularly in Social Housing, it is necessary for us to move forward and stay focused. The payoffs from integrated service delivery and centralized administration are significant and well worth the effort.

Thank You & Best Wishes

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Board, on behalf of all of the staff at the RRDSSAB. Your advice and support over this past term has been valuable; the RRDSSAB was able to make significant strides under your leadership. Special thanks to Russ, Gary and Val for accepting the responsibility of Chair over this term - you are to be commended for all of the extra work you put in, while ensuring that the RRDSSAB runs efficiently and remains transparent & accountable. For those of you running in your respective Municipal elections, good luck. To Michael, Wade and John, our unincorporated reps, Welcome Back!!

Respectfully Prepared & Submitted by: D. Dittaro, CAO