



Accommodations

- MMP Architects, Winnipeg, are finalizing construction drawings for the renovations/construction at 450 Scott Street which will be the new home for the main DSSAB offices. Gerald Wieringa, True-Line Construction of Emo, has been hired as the construction manager for the project. The architect expects to see construction begin this month, once all construction documents have been approved.
- The Construction Manager will provide costing information and work closely with the Architect to establish estimates & maintain the project budget. He will be required to fully tender the project, accepting a minimum of three tenders for each portion of the work.
- Approval for re-zoning required for the Fort Frances ambulance base was received and the purchase of the old Bingo Hall finalized. Ed Kaun & Sons have been retained to begin demolition work at that site.
- The Board has retained its Building Committee to review the plans and discuss matters associated with the renovations/construction at both sites.

Finance

- There was a 0% increase in Land Ambulance for 2006, due to the additional one-time and base funding received.
- The DSSAB budget did increase by 10% for 2006, however, with the receipt of additional Provincial funding, the increase to the Municipalities was held at 0%.
- We have changed the apportionment method to use the prior year tax ratios with the current year assessment, beginning in 2007. This will improve the budget process, as each Municipality will know exactly what their increase will be at that time and will not have to rely on estimates.

Ontario Works

- The Province has introduced a new two-year outcomes-based planning & funding cycle, based upon employment, earnings and increased employability.
- OW staff will now be responsible for providing employment assistance to adult family members in the Ontario Disability Support Program. The service begins this month and will increase the staff's workload but to what extent is not known at this time.

- A 2% increase to social assistance rates will roll out in December, 2006. The clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement is being examined and options are being reviewed by the Province.
- Several changes to the OW Program Directives have resulted from a Provincial review of the program.

Child Care

- Best Start continues to be funded at 100% by the Province. The expansion of Child Care through Best Start is on schedule for 35 new spaces.
- The development of a new Child Care Centre in Rainy River serving toddlers & preschoolers & JK/SK children is on track. The Centre will be temporarily housed at the Evangelical Church until the Riverview Elementary School renovations are completed. 26 spaces will be created.
- The Township of Emo has declined to expand services in their community for a Nursery School Program. We are exploring alternate locations in the District to accommodate the additional 9 spaces.
- In Atikokan, we have established a Committee to plan for the Early Learning & Care Hub at the Rawn Road Centre - they are ahead of many others in the Province!
- Through Best Start, wage improvements have been provided to Early Childhood Educators working in Child Care Centres & Nursery Schools.
- The Best Start Network, whose membership was recently expanded to include a broader range of children's service providers, will be holding a strategic planning session in October to move forward with the Best Start Integrated Implementation Plan.

Social Housing

- One of the biggest issues facing Social Housing across the Province is the inadequacy of the replacement reserve funds. Building Condition Audits were completed on all Non-Profit Housing Providers in this District in 2004/2005. The Audits identified significant shortfalls in capital funding for all Non-Profit Housing, including the two Urban Native Housing Providers. The consultants estimated that the RRDSSAB would require a one-time top-up of over \$4 million dollars to ensure that reserves were adequate for Non-Profit Providers over the coming years. The 301 public housing units transferred to the DSSAB from the Province were not included in the Audits - unfortunately, they too are significantly under-funded for capital reserves. These units were devolved without a reserve fund which further exacerbates the long-term capital funding issue.
- The Province has introduced new funding initiatives, through the Federal-Provincial Affordable Housing Program. The Province was prepared to allocate \$600,000 to the RRDSSAB under the AHP, however, the program design did not meet the needs of our District. Given our local demographics, including a high number of seniors, many who require special physical supports to live comfortably and safely in social housing units, the RRDSSAB had hoped to use the funds to renovate units so that they are more

'senior-friendly'. Unfortunately, the RRDSSAB has had to turn down the \$600,000 and it is likely that this funding will be allocated to another Service Manager. The Programs also impose financial pressures which cannot be funded or sustained by municipal taxpayers.

- Some Non-Profit Providers have voluntarily divested the complete management of their portfolios to the DSSAB. This has resulted in a 13% increase in the number of housing units that the RRDSSAB manages on a 24/7 basis, including all property management, maintenance management & financial management.

Land Ambulance

- RRDSSAB received new funding in 2006: \$125,764 in one-time Federal Medical Equipment funding which was used to offset the purchase of a new ambulance; \$100,164 in annualized base funding for First Nations & \$35,000 as one-time funding; and one-time funding for the unincorporated areas in the amount of \$107,514. Much of the funding was the result of lobbying by the RRDSSAB.
- A surplus ambulance was offered for sale to municipalities - no bids were received and we are preparing to offer the vehicle for public sale.
- A revised tiered response agreement is being prepared for Fort Frances Fire & Rescue & a new agreement is being developed for the Atikokan Fire Dept.
- Deployment plans are being developed to address the entire District, per new directives. These will supplement existing staffing pattern plans.
- The transfer of direct Land Ambulance service delivery to the DSSAB, effective 01 January, 2007 has generated substantial workload demands. Policies & procedures have been developed & submissions for Ministry certification are being prepared. Vendors of record have been established for direct procurement by the DSSAB. The payroll system has been set up & tested for the Paramedics. Trevor Johnson has been seconded from the Atikokan General Hospital (AGH) to assist the Health Services Manager with the transfer, beginning September 1st. The Minutes of Settlement for the unions have been prepared for the transition and the Sale of Business documents filed with the Labour Board. The unions will have the representation vote this fall. First contract negotiations will begin, once the representative union is selected.
- Arrangements have been made to rent the Atikokan ambulance station from AGH - the formal agreement has been signed. The DSSAB is purchasing the the Rainy River ambulance station from Riverside - the transfer will be completed on December 15th. The RRDSSAB plans to lease the Emo ambulance base from Riverside - we are awaiting signature of the agreement. Riverside opted to keep the existing Fort Frances base. The Town of FF has approved a zoning change to permit us to purchase 801 Scott St (the old bingo hall) to convert to an ambulance base. Work has begun at the site.

Respectfully Prepared & Submitted by:
D. Dittaro, CAO