

FIRE-FIGHTER STAFFING CONCERNS

There have been concerns shared via social media, that reduced staffing at fire stations in HRM may be jeopardizing public safety. As part of normal fluctuations in staffing during a few weeks of the summer, not all stations are regularly staffed with paid firefighters. Targeted deployment of the existing complement of paid firefighters, along with the support of volunteer firefighters, allows for the required coverage to ensure public safety is never compromised. It is a requirement (and an industry standard) that every fire station have a supervising Fire Officer on duty in charge of a crew. The challenge is that for short periods of time – usually during a few weeks each summer – the number of Fire Officers on vacation results in not having enough Officers available to supervise each fire station. As such, firefighters are relocated to neighbouring fire stations to ensure all crews work under an on-duty Fire Officer. Response times are never compromised. The focus is on the human resources available to respond to an emergency – not the bricks and mortar of a fire station. While a fire station may not have paid firefighters physically located in the building, the station may have a volunteer firefighter complement – including a Volunteer Fire Chief and Volunteer Fire Officer. Many of the stations that experience temporary staff reductions are staffed Monday to Friday, from 9 AM to 5 PM. The remaining time – including holidays – these stations are operated by trained volunteers. There are several fire stations throughout HRM that will have varying numbers of paid firefighters and, depending on the type of reported emergency, any combination of these stations (and firefighters) will respond within standard response times established by HRM. These required response times also meet national standards. HRM uses what's commonly referred to as a "dynamic response model" for all emergencies. Firefighter staffing complements must remain fluid 365 days a year to ensure sufficient coverage is maintained at all times. HRM Fire & Emergency Service Division Commanders, in collaboration with dispatch, continually monitor the geographic coverage area of HRM to ensure there is always adequate response for any given emergency.

DEBATES ON WEEKLY GREEN-CART

Since 2005, when HRM initiated its weekly green-cart collection service for the months of July & August within the urban core area, there has been annual debates and calls for expanding the program more broadly throughout the municipality. Although all residents experience similar problems such as foul odor, flies, maggots, and small wildlife critter allurements; we in rural areas have to possibly contend with bigger wildlife creatures such as bears and coyotes. So the debate will continue once again when HRM deliberates over its 2014-15 operating budgets. Here is a link to the previous year's Council staff reports and the initial 2004 test-pilot project consultant's report: www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/130806ca81.PDF. In the meantime, please do your utmost to best utilize your green-cart. Here are some hints and tips for your perusal: www.halifax.ca/wrms/greencart.html and www.halifax.ca/wrms/documents/OrganicTips.pdf Also, I will be advocating for the inclusion of clear bags for waste collection. The use of dark bags conceals those that have not accepted the responsibility of source separating their household garbage. Still too much organic matter is being placed into garbage bags and not being properly disposed of into green-carts or backyard composters.

BACK TO SCHOOL WITH CARE

I would like to welcome all students back to school. Your education is important to your success in life. Our schools can be very safe places if we all follow the hygiene protocols advised by our health care professional. Please take care of yourself, both at home and in school.

HRM SOLID WASTE SYSTEM REVIEW

An independent consultant has examined HRM's entire waste system and provided many recommendations to make it better. HRM wants to hear what you think. Beginning in the Fall of 2013 there will be a series of public meetings to discuss HRM's Solid Waste - Resource Strategy www.halifax.ca/wrms/WasteStrategy/index.html You can also voice your opinion on-line. Send your thoughts to wasteless@halifax.ca.

CURBSIDE GIVE AWAY - OCT. 19 & 20

Curbside Give Away is a bi-annual event that promotes diversion of reusable items from landfill by offering those items for others to claim. Since participation in Curbside Give Away is difficult to track, HRM wishes to reach out to residents via an on-line survey, to find out how the event is being received and if there is anything we can do to make it better. <http://fluidsurveys.com/s/CurbSideGiveawayFeedback/>. It's time to reduce your home's clutter; give someone the chance to reuse things you no longer need, by recycling your clean and working goods. The next dates are Saturday & Sunday, October 19th & 20th. Check the Curbside Give Away web-page for more details on this year's events: www.halifax.ca/wrms/CGAW.html

LOCAL PLAYGROUND ENHANCEMENTS

Over the last few months several local playgrounds have had some improvements and enhancement repairs done. Recently, new playground equipment was installed at the following school sites: Bell Park Academic Centre, O'Connell Drive Elementary, Porters Lake Elementary, and Lakefront Elementary in Tangier. Other playgrounds receiving repairs were the playground in East Preston, Atlanticview in Lawrencetown, and the Peace Park in Musquodoboit Harbour. There were a couple sites where the playground equipment was removed due to its aged state of disrepair: Stoney Creek in Mineville and on the waterfront in Sheet Harbour. We expect to replace this equipment during next year's play season.

INPUT ON PORTERS LAKE A.T. PLAN

The HRM Transportation Planning Department and the local Shore Active Transportation Association (SATA) have been working with a qualified consultant from Genivar to develop an Active Transportation (A.T.) Plan for Porters Lake and its surrounding areas. Like many rural areas within HRM, we face challenges in terms of AT as an alternative to other modes of transportation. Roadways in the area have been developed to accommodate motor vehicle travel, with little consideration for AT infrastructure. The lack of AT facilities (ie: paved shoulders / walkways / trails) in the area is a concern for many residents. HRM with SATA (shoreat.ca) invites the community to attend the first of two public engagement sessions for the Porters Lake Region Active Transportation Plan. Residents of all ages are invited to participate and contribute. We want to hear from residents who are interested in expanding AT options in the community. The first public input session will be on Monday, September 30th at 7 PM in the Lake & Shore Recreation Centre – 40 Inspiration Drive by Exit #20. The second consultation date is tentatively booked for Monday, October 28th at the same location and time. Please participate! In the Spring, HRM hosted several AT Plan Review Open Houses and had an on-line survey. Here is a link to a web-page that summarizes input received at those sessions and through the survey. The updated AT Plan Review is expected to be submitted to HRM Regional Council this Fall. www.halifax.ca/activetransportation/engagementreport.html Thanks to everyone who contributed.

STORMWATER & LOT GRADING INPUT

HRM is seeking public input on a proposed Storm-water Management & Lot Grading By-law. Citizens will have until September 15th to provide their feedback on the subject. Go to: www.halifax.ca/surveys/ or go to this link: <http://fluidsurveys.com/s/hrm-stormwater-management/> Thanks for your input and advice.

HELP NOVA SCOTIA'S WILDLIFE

You can help the Hope for Wildlife Society, a charitable organization dedicated to helping injured and orphaned wildlife in Nova Scotia, win a share of \$100,000 in Jamieson Laboratories' "Call for the Wild". Vote for Hope for Wildlife every day up until September 14th at www.facebook.com/jamiesonvitamins. You don't require a Facebook account to participate.

TERRY FOX 33rd ANNIVERSARY RUN

took his Marathon of Hope through our communities along Highway #7. Now we can keep his dream alive so that cancer can be beaten. There will be 3 local runs on Sunday, September 15th: Musquodoboit Harbour Railway Trail at Park Road from 10 AM – 2 PM, Lake Echo Community Centre from 1-3 PM, or the Sheet Harbour Lion's Centre from 1-4 PM. If you can't make it to a run, please sponsor someone who will be participating. You can also text "terryfox" to 45678 to donate \$5. It will also be Terry Fox National School Run Day on Thursday, September 26th. If your school wants to get involved, check out this link for more info: www.terryfox.org/SchoolRun/index.html

CRAIG'S CAUSE 7th ANNUAL BIKE TREK

Craig's Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society is proud to announce the 7th Annual Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Walk/Run/Bike, in support of Pancreatic Cancer Education, Awareness and Research! Come out to the Porters Lake Provincial Park on Saturday, September 28th. Registration opens at 8 AM and event starts at 10 AM. This bike tour trek event is for all ages and abilities. There are various distances and routes to choose from. Routes consist of: 1) Social Ride- through the Park; 2) 3 km & 6 km walk/run through the Park; 3) a 25km route - half way around Porters Lake; 4) 38km - around Porters Lake; 5) 55km - around Porters Lake and Lake Echo; or 6) 100km - tour of the Eastern Shore. Participants can register as an individual or as part of a team. Last year approximately 15 teams and 100 participants raised over \$40,000 by walking, running or cycling to remember and honour a courageous individual whose life had been touched by Pancreatic Cancer.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT TAX EXEMPTIONS

HRM can help some non-profit organizations reduce their level of property tax through the Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organizations Program. It is available only to actively registered non-profit and charitable organizations located within HRM. Application deadline is November 30th. For details: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/bccgrants/TaxExemptionsforNon-ProfitOrganizations.html>. This is to remind all previously registered entities already enrolled in this program that it is mandatory to re-apply annually in order to maintain their tax exemption status.



*Welcome
Back
to School*



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