

Town of Witless Bay

Christmas 2015 Newsletter

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RESIDENTIAL TAXES - MIL RATE REDUCTION

Council has lowered the residential mil rate to 4.5 mils to reduce the burden on taxpayers in response to this year's significant increase in assessments by the Municipal Assessment agency. Municipal taxes for 2015 must now be paid in full. Outstanding balances are being prepared for credit recovery and will be submitted on January 8th 2016.

SNOW CLEARING

Council would like to remind residents once again this year that the snow clearing routes are done according to a priority list, which consists of bus routes first, and all other routes second. If the plow passes your road and does not clear it, please be assured it will return once the bus routes are completed. Council understands the frustration of travelling during snowy weather and we are working with our snow clearing operator to determine the best approach and timing for keeping the roads cleared while keeping costs down.

To aid in snow clearing operations, residents are advised to place highly visible markers on any items such as fences or garbage boxes located within the town's street reservation. Damage to any items not clearly marked will not be the responsibility of the Town's snow clearing operator (Harbour Construction) or the Town. Private plow operators and residents are not to push snow onto public roads or into public ditches, as this can cause issues with safety, visibility & flooding.



REMINDER: THE AVENUE IS A ONE-WAY STREET

A number of years ago, The Avenue was transformed into a full-time one-way street with access only from Harbour Road. There is no access to The Avenue from the Southern Shore Highway at any time – all buildings located on The Avenue (including the Knights of Columbus Building) are only accessible from The Avenue. St. Bernard's Elementary has recently contacted the Town voicing serious concerns about drivers continuing to travel the wrong way, posing a great danger to students, parents & staff. The Town has been working with the Province to improve signage at the upper intersection, and the RCMP have been asked to increase their presence in the area.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE

The Town Office will close for the Christmas holidays on Wednesday, December 23rd 2015, and will re-open on Monday, January 4th 2016.

Merry Christmas

LET'S THANK OUR VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS!

On behalf of the Town of Witless Bay, Council would like to thank the members of Witless Bay Regional Volunteer Fire Department for their services over the past year. It's great to know that the residents of our region have such caring and well-trained women and men ready to respond to any situation at a minute's notice. Have a peaceful Christmas with family and friends!

REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN: ADOPTED IN PRINCIPLE

The Town of Witless Bay has just become the first authority to adopt in principle the ***Shamrock Shore Regional Emergency Management Plan***, which has been a number of years in the making. Once fully in force, this Plan will serve as an operational guide to prepare for, mitigate, prevent,



IS YOUR FAMILY
PREPARED?

respond to and recover from potential threats, emergencies, or disasters for the Town of Witless Bay, the Town of Bay Bulls, and the Local Service Districts of Mobile, Tors Cove, and Burnt Cove – St. Michaels – Bauline East.

Residents can also do a lot to prepare for an emergency. Why not take a few minutes this week to learn about what YOU can do to help ensure the safety of your loved ones? Public Safety Canada's 72-hour Preparedness Guide will help you create your own emergency plan! Here's the link: <http://www.getprepared.gc.ca>

HELP MAKE OUR COMMUNITY SAFER THIS WINTER!

- Have a plan in place in case of power outages and extreme weather.
- If you are equipped with an off-grid heat source (a wood stove, an oil furnace, etc.) let your neighbours know they're welcome to "visit" when the power is out!
- Check in on neighbours (especially seniors) to offer help.
- Respect posted speed limits when driving.
- Wear bright and/or reflective clothing whenever you go out for a walk or a jog.
- Check culverts around your property and help keep them clear of snow and debris so they can handle the rain and snow we will be surely getting in the near future!
- Consider joining the Witless Bay Regional Fire Department, and thank the volunteers who work throughout the year to keep residents safe!

TOWN COUNCIL & STAFF WISH OUR RESIDENTS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

Mayor Sébastien Després

Deputy-Mayor Dena Wiseman

Councillors Kevin Smart, Albert Murphy, René Estrada, Ralph Carey, & Ken Brinston

Town Clerk-Manager Geraldine Caul, Assistant Clerk Barb Harrigan, Grounds/Maintenance Aiden Carey.

Town Infrastructure:

A Quick Update

OUR PUFFIN CENTRE IS UP AND RUNNING!

The Puffin Centre, located on the South Side Track, is now officially opened and fully functional. We are currently taking bookings from community groups and individuals! Rental rates are \$100 for the first three hours (and \$50/hour thereafter), \$200 for a full evening rental (from 5pm to 8am the next morning), and \$300 for a full day (from 9am to 8am the following morning). Officially ratified groups and associations enjoy one free rental per week (for up to 3 hours), and rent the building for their regularly-scheduled weekly or monthly events at a 50% discount. *Please contact the Town Office at 334-3407 for more information.*

THE NEW SLIPWAY & PEERS

The Town of Witless Bay has been working in cooperation with the Federal Government's Small Crafts and Harbours division to acquire the Upper Pond site. The town is now the proud owner of a brand new concrete slipway! Over the coming year, we will work to further upgrade the site.

THE NEW FIRE DEPARTMENT & TOWN HALL

The Town of Witless Bay has now officially begun the process of moving the Fire Department into the former Municipal Garage by building an access to the Southern Shore Highway. Over the coming months, we will be preparing funding applications for the repurposing of both of our main buildings. Residents are invited to stop by the Town Office to see the preliminary designs. We'd love to get input on the designs: please contact Mayor Sébastien Després: sebastiend@mun.ca

THE NEW BUILD-ON ON ST. BERNARD SCHOOL

Council approved the construction of two new modular classrooms for St. Bernard's Elementary School this past summer, for a renewable period of three years. We will continue lobbying the Province for the prompt construction of a Middle School for the area.

THE UPGRADING OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS

Council has submitted a grant application for the upgrading of the town's recreation grounds on the South Side Track. Working in conjunction with ACOA and the Bay Bulls to Bauline Athletic Association (BBBAA), we have developed a two-year plan involving new equipment, horseshoe pits, landscaped grounds, trees, upgraded parking lots, and creature comforts for the dog park.

THE SOUTH SIDE TRACK, PHASE II

The engineering work for the second phase of the South Side Track is now nearing completion, and the Town is preparing for the tendering process. The work is set to begin this Spring. Ninety percent of the project cost (\$770,000.00) has been secured through a grant from the Province.

TOWN OF WITLESS BAY: *AWARD OF EXCELLENCE 2015*



2014 TIDY TOWNS WINNER
2015 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
2015 ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION LEADER



2015 FOUR BLOOM RATING
2015 SPECIAL MENTION:
CONSERVATION EFFORTS

CONGRATULATIONS!

The Town of Witless Bay has been recognized with the ***Award of Excellence*** in Municipalities NL's Tidy Towns competition this year, and was recognized as the province's leader in environmental action.

Congratulations to the hundreds of people who have made this possible: the members of our Community Enhancement Committee, our residents and selfless volunteers, the Heritage Committee, our Town Council and staff, and the many community groups and associations who pitched in and donated their time and energies to this effort (the Kinsmen, The O'Connor 50+ Club, the Girl Guides, the Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, the BBBA, the Puffin Patrol, St. Bernard's Elementary School, Mobile High School, the Witless Bay Regional Fire Department, and all the others!). Credit also goes out to the many businesses who pitched in with the effort, including the Witless Bay Home Hardware, Witless Bay Ecotours, Felix's, Needs Convenience, Independent Consultants Group, Plan-Tech Environment, and Eastern Waste Management. Thanks also the great team at Municipalities NL!