



# News Release



## Wells Gray Country-Electoral Area 'A' TNRD

January 7, 2010

### Director Pennell's 2010 Priority List

Priorities for the immediate future:

#### Solid Waste:

The Clearwater and Area Eco Depot should be established and running this year. As part of this I hope to see the closure process of the current landfill initiated.

Determine options for an alternate dumping option for septage waste. The current site adjacent the Clearwater landfill will be closed as part of the landfill closure. Jointly with the District of Clearwater and Area B we need to find a financially viable solution. Hopefully we are able to obtain some provincial and federal grant funding to assist with this project.

#### High Speed Internet:

The project to connect Vavenby with 1.5 mb/s service is ongoing. I hope to see this up and running by late spring. Once the system has proven itself as viable we can work with the proponent on future area expansions.

#### Blackpool Community and Fire Halls:

Plans are currently being finalized for the provision of clean potable water to both halls. This work will be commencing in the spring. In addition to the water system, a subdivision process is ongoing. The fire hall location will be divided off from the community hall. All land is currently owned by the Star Lake Women's institute. Once the water system is in place and the subdivision is complete we will be able to start initial work on a community park at the same location.

#### Vavenby Community Hall:

Replacement of the aging boiler to a more efficient model will both save us energy costs and significantly reduce maintenance costs. Grant funding will be used for this project and completion will be by late spring if all goes as planned. Myself and others from the community will be doing an assessment of the Vavenby Community Hall and park. The intent is to establish an all inclusive improvement list. Once we have this established I will be working on grant funding to assist with costs. This is an aging facility with

minimal funding. Improving the hall will also improve the curbside appeal of the Vavenby community.

#### Upper Clearwater Community Hall:

Now that the hall has been relocated to its new home across the road it is time to work on completing some of the major work required to return the hall to a useable condition. Grant funding in the range of \$35-40k will be made available for this project. It will be great to see the hall once again become a focal point of the Upper Clearwater Community.

#### Fire Departments:

Vavenby fire hall should see work done to the east wall. This will include insulation and sheathing. The siding can then be reattached properly. Currently the siding is not attached properly and requires constant maintenance. The insulation will help further reduce heating costs.

Installation of a generator at the Blackpool Fire Hall is on the to do list as well. The fire hall has purchased a large generator and is currently working on obtaining some switching equipment from the old wing of the hospital. When this is in place both the fire hall and adjacent community hall will be able to serve the community well as an emergency evacuation centre.

In addition to this work at both halls, expansions of boundaries is a priority. Initial investigations are now beginning to expand boundaries of Vavenby, Clearwater, Blackpool and Little Fort fire departments. If all goes well we will see continuous fire protection coverage on the highway corridor from north of Vavenby to south of Little Fort. Some adjacent populated areas such as Birch Island should also be able to receive fire protection coverage. This fire protection coverage will put the valley in a unique and enviable position.

Establishing mutual aid agreements with Kinder Morgan which will include joint training and potentially some funding is also just being initiated. Kinder Morgan will be an excellent corporate partner for all local fire departments.

#### Long term priorities:

Establishment of a long term viable industrial operation at the former Weyerhaeuser site. This will provide much needed employment in the valley.

Opening of the Yellowhead copper mine project in the Jones Creek/Harper Creek area. A major economic boom will result from this project.

Increasing the Annual Allowable cut to the Wells Gray Country Community Forest. This has the opportunity to make potential projects at the Weyerhaeuser site more viable and will provide more employment to the area.

Expand the ongoing broadband project to cover Birch Island, Blackpool, Greer and Upper Clearwater areas. High speed internet is a great way to assist small home based business and provides a significant convenience to local residents. It also makes the area much more appealing to people who are considering relocating to the area.

Seeing the development of more residential lots in the area will play an important part in our local economy. With all the new jobs that should be coming to the area we will see an increase in population. These folks will need a place to live. With good planning the development can be done in a manner that fits well with our enviable rural atmosphere.

As the economy and population grows we will have a much better business case to present to cell phone providers. I will be working towards continuous coverage being available from Clearwater to Blue River as well as providing coverage to the Upper Clearwater area. Many reasons abound for this, starting with safety on our roads, making the area more appealing to those who may be relocating here, a necessity in today's business world and at the same time providing greater convenience to area residents.

Last but not least, my personal project of seeing the communities return to the community halls. Enhancing these facilities, increasing usage and volunteerism is a key goal of mine. Our community halls can be a great focal point in the area. This leads to an ongoing community spirit and we are able to accomplish much more working together. You meet the greatest folks in the world at your local community hall!

Sincerely,

Director Tim Pennell