Work begins on Slocan Valley fibre-optic line

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

More than two years after first being announced, crews broke ground Monday on a project to bring the Slocan Valley into the 21st century world of communication.

Work on the $10-million, 120-kilometre fibre-optic line from Playmor Junction to north of Nakusp began with a crew in Slocan village setting up its construction site.

“Equipment will then be moved to Kennedy Road for the start of the rail trail install heading south to Elliot Creek bridge on Thursday, May 20,” said Delphi Hoodicoff, head of communication for the Columbia Basin Trust, the organization spearheading the project. “Picking up again on Tuesday, May 25, conduit will be installed from the south side of Elliot bridge, at a pace of about one to two kilometres per day.”

She said by the end of the first week, about 10 kilometres of fibre line should be under the historic railbed. The big delay in getting the project started – getting permits to lay the fibre-optic cable being hung sometime in July, depending on when Telus completes its preparation work.

Other prep work began appearing in April. A local Facebook group posted a warning that people with utilities under the heritage rail trail should contact the contractors laying the fibre-optic cable.

“Right now, they are trying to identify all the locations where they potentially may come across a line,” said the post on the Slocan Rail Trail Facebook group page. “They will be digging a narrow trench 18” deep. Most lines are deeper than that and it won’t be an issue. They will be reaching out to adjoining landowners, but we want to make sure no one is missed and that there are no surprises for anyone!”

The post indicated the process of cable installation may take up to two months along the 60-kilometre-long rail trail.

Closure warning

The Slocan Valley Rail Trail has become a popular recreation amenity during the pandemic, and officials warn there could be some small sections closed off temporarily while work is done on the line.

“Initially, they may be hopping all over the place, prepping sites to link cable segment before they drop in the line,” explains the post. “We are hoping disruption will be minimal, but there may be brief periods when the trail will be closed to traffic.”

Both Rec Sites & Trails BC as well as the Slocan Valley Heritage Trail Society will share updates through their communication channels, say officials.

Work on the underwater section of the project, running the line along the bottoms of Slocan and Summit Lakes, isn’t expected to begin until the fall.

Once the main line is in place, the Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation (CBBC) will work with local internet service providers to set up the “last mile” connections, allowing homes and businesses to connect to the high-speed network. That work could take several years as well (see “Columbia Basin Trust picks up ‘last mile’ portion of fibre-optic project,” Valley Voice, February 11, 2021).

Spur line

Meanwhile, officials are waiting to hear if they’ll receive funding to add several other communities to the fibre-optic line. The CBBC applied for funding in March to build a 70-kilometre spur line from Nakusp down the Arrow Lakes to Burton and Edgewood. It’s part of the CBBC’s overall project to connect 79 rural communities with high-speed service.

However, “we may not know the status of our application to this fund for many months,” Hoodicoff warned. They’re also waiting to hear the results of their application for funding from the Universal Broadband Fund, and whether some communities qualify for federal support for better internet access.

The CBBC had asked residents of Slocan, New Denver, and other communities for information about their internet speeds in an effort to build support for their application.

Two years of work

When the project was first announced in March 2019, officials had optimistically predicted work would be completed in a year. That was seen as ambitious even then, and permitting difficulties and other issues prompted officials to recalculate the timeline last fall.

The project is now expected to be completed by spring of 2023. The Slocan Valley line is only half the project, with the CBBC planning to build a fibre-optic backbone between Jaffray and Rossville in the East Kootenay, as well.
The Slocan Valley municipalities have received recognition from FireSmart Canada for their wildfire protection efforts. The Slocan Valley Villages, in partnership with the Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative (SIFCo), have been awarded for their contribution to wildfire mitigation and resiliency work. The Slocan Valley Wildfire Resiliency Program, supported by SIFCo, has helped residents across the three Slocan Valley municipalities to reduce their wildfire risk through various initiatives, including the removal of dead trees and the creation of defensible spaces around homes. This collaborative effort has been instrumental in preventing wildfires and protecting properties.

The award is a testament to the commitment of the Slocan Valley communities, their leaders, and their partners in enhancing wildfire safety. The Slocan Valley Villages, under the leadership of Mayor Leonard Casey, have been recognized for their leadership and support in the program. The award is also a recognition of the dedication of the municipal staff and the hard work of the residents in making their communities safer.

The Valley Voice May 20, 2021

School resumes in Nakusp as COVID case numbers continue to fall

As of May 17, there had been 139,964 total cases in the province, 132,841 people had recovered, and 1,648 had died. 132,841 people had recovered, and 1,648 had died. As of May 6, 43% of all BC adults had received their first vaccine dose, with 21-40% coverage in the Nelson sub-region and 41-60% coverage in the Arrow Lakes subregion. 1,016 reports of adverse events, 60 of which were deemed serious.

Parents and staff can rest assured with the school’s strong COVID safety plans. What they’ve shown is we’ve not only prepared and planned, but that school continues to be a safe environment. The school reopened its doors and welcomed back all the children and staff on May 17, and everyone has been super-supportive of the need to close," says Terry Taylor, superintendent of School District 10 Arrow Lakes.

Eight people in total came down with cases of COVID from the exposures at NES. So many staff and students were on self-isolation – 120 of 159 students – it was impossible for the facility to keep open, officials said at the time. Since the high point in infections, however, the number of cases in the community – and the schools – has gone down, leaving the district on the road to recovery from the incident.

Really COVID cases in schools are a reflection of what’s going on in the community," Taylor told the Valley Voice. “There’s been a steady decline since the high… and the schools are in good shape.” Taylor says the district’s response to the virus’ arrival (which was never declared an official ‘outbreak’ by Interior Health) followed the playbook the district had been working on for months. All that preparation and planning paid off, she said.

“We had a plan in March, had to re-draft them in August, and re-drafted again in November, and again in February,” she said. “We found out plans were really effective in ensuring the safety of kids and staff. “And the Ministry… did a review of our COVID safety plans. What they’ve shown is we’ve not only been compliant with public health and ministry protocols, but also that school continues to be a safe environment.”

The high school across the street was also affected, as many students decided to stay home for the duration. At its low point, half the high school student body was absent from class, says Taylor. While it’s understandable – and because of the many community connections in a small town, some drop was inevitable – Taylor’s message now is for everyone to come back to class. “Parents and staff can rest assured our schools are safe and will remain so,” she said. “I think we’re in a really good place.”

Taylor says the next few weeks will see more outdoor classes taking place as well, as schools take advantage of better weather to reduce the chance of further exposures. Provincial numbers

While the cases in Nakusp made the subdistrict a temporary hotspot for Interior Health, overall the province continues to show a slow decline in the number of cases and an increase in the number of people vaccinated. During the week May 2-8, there were six cases reported in the Arrow Lakes health service area, one in the Kootenay Lake area and 10 in the Nelson area.

From the beginning of the pandemic to April 30, 2021, the Arrow Lakes had had 11 cases, Kootenay Lake 13 and Nelson 157. As of May 17, there had been 139,964 total cases in the province, 132,841 people had recovered and 1,648 had died. On Monday, the BC Centre for Disease Control reported 1,360 new cases in the province over the weekend, and 126 cases in the Interior Health region. The region now has 451 active cases, 14 hospitalizations, and 13 people in critical care. Fourteen people died from COVID-19 in BC between May 14 and 17.

As of May 8, 43% of all BC residents had received their first vaccine dose –84% of those over the age of 70. Estimates for the Valley Voice readership area show a wide range of vaccine uptake: the Arrow Lakes subregion of Interior Health had a rate between 61% and 80%; the Kootenay Lake subregion was at 41-60%, while the Nelson sub-region was estimated at 21-40% coverage.

As of May 8, there have been 2,127,288 vaccines administered in BC and 1.0% of adverse events, 60 of which were deemed serious.
Red hot real estate market: “It feels like the toilet paper panic, but with real estate instead,” local agent says

Mt. Sentinel Green Team students get green light for solar project

VILLAGE OF SILVERTON
NOTICE OF ELECTION BY VOTING 2021 BY-ELECTION

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY given to the electors of the Village of Silverton that a by-election by voting is necessary to elect a Mayor, and that the persons nominated as candidates and for whom votes will be received are:

Surnames

Ferguson Colin
Broughton Donald

Usual Names

Broughton Donald

Residential Address

618 Hume Street, Silverton, BC
116th Street, Silverton, BC

MAYOR – One (1) to be elected

NEW VOTING LOCATIONS will be open to qualified electors of the Village of Silverton on:

Saturday, June 19, 2021
203 Lake Avenue, Silverton, BC
between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm

ADVANCE VOTING will be available to qualified electors as follows:

Wednesday, June 9, 2021
Silverton Memorial Hall
203 Lake Avenue, Silverton, BC
between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm

Mail Ballots

Mail ballots will be provided to all qualified electors that submitted a mail ballot application by the deadline of May 20, 2021. Completed mail ballots must be received at the Village Office (whether by post or in-person) by 4:00 pm, Tuesday, June 8th, 2021, or in-person on General Voting day.

MAIL BALLOTS will be open to qualified electors of the Village of Silverton on:

Saturday, June 19, 2021
203 Lake Avenue, Silverton, BC
between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm

ELECTOR REGISTRATION

Voting will be by post or in-person.

If you are not on the Provincial Voters List you may register at the time of voting by completing the required application form available at the voting place. To register you must meet all of the following qualifications:

[ ] 18 years of age or older on general voting day
[ ] resident of BC for at least 6 months immediately preceding the day of registration
[ ] non-disqualified by law from voting in an election.

Resident electors will also be required to produce 2 pieces of identification (at least one with a signature). Picture identification is not necessary. The identification must prove both residency and identity.

Non-resident property electors must produce 2 pieces of identification (at least one with a signature) to prove identity, proof that they are registered in relation to the property, and, if more than one owner of the property, written consent from the majority of the property owners.

For further information on these matters, please email elections@silverton.ca or contact the following persons by telephone:

Sonya Martineau, Chief Election Officer at 250.352.8234
Hillary Elliott, Deputy Chief Election Officer at 250.358.2472
Chief Election Officer
A short one on COVID
The coronavirus doesn’t give a hoot about your democratic or your constitutional rights, your love for uncensored press, your freedom of religious assembly. The coronavirus doesn’t even spare your child or your grandma, if you don’t hold to the public health measures. If you prefer the risk of going unvaccinated to an infliction with the virus, go right ahead, and please tell us what it’s like afterwards – if you still can. 

Richard Eichenauser
Fauquier

Thank you, Box Mountain
Thank you, Box Mountain
For your beauty and quiet strength
For giving me water from which there is life
For watching over me in the silence of the night
You take nothing from me, only give what is right
The animals have a place to rest and give flight
For allowing the shade that brings coolness to my face, in the stillness of your place
I will not take you for granted or forget
I will defend you, I will not let it rest
Nakusp, please help save Box Mountain.

Craig Pettitt
Kasco South Road
Several years ago, 40 people who live and walk along Kaslo South Road signed a petition to have a section of this road from J Ave. south 1.2 km designated as a 60 km/hour zone. It was sent to the Ministry of Highways in Nelson and later to Michelle Mungall, our MLA at the time. We may as well have barked up a dead dog’s arse, for all the good it did us. Now they are going to pave it this summer. People are already going over 90 km on this section. With it paved, they are going to go faster. This road is not engineered for 80 km/hour. By rights, the whole road should be 60 km/hour.
If you want the speed limit reduced to 60 km/hour on Kaslo South Road, please let our MLA, Brittny Anderson, know. Her email is Brittny.anderson.MLA@leg.bc.ca. Hopefully individual letters will work.

Phil Trotter
Kasco

Craig Pettitt misses the mark
In his zeal to discredit the Centennial Park Plan, Mr. Pettitt then takes aim at the New Denver campground, calling it “a cash cow during summer months, packing as many campers as possible into that confined space, all for the greenback dollar.”

Well, it’s been a while since “greenbacks” have circulated in Canada, but no matter – be they American bills, Canadian loonies, or Japanese yen, I’m pretty sure that each and every one of them is welcomed by council as a significant source of Village revenue. This, of course, in a region where regardless of locally raised finances, the majority of the bill is still footed by the provincial and federal governments.

At the risk of upsetting some of Mr. Pettitt’s peace and quiet, may I also point out how many of those campers and park visitors drop ‘greenbacks’ at village businesses and markets. And that ‘real’ money earned and spent – not the grants and handouts that confuse capitalism with ‘trust’ money shaked from trees.

So before Mr. Pettitt launches his next salvo, I suggest he consider the source of the “hard-earned tax money” he accuses New Denver’s council of squandering in its efforts vis-a-vis Centennial Park: the bulk of all monies spent here originate in Vancouver, Victoria, and the like – prosperous regions that fill the provincial coffers.

When campers come from there to enjoy our beautiful valley, we should be grateful: they’re helping to keep kids in the schools and patients in the hospitals. Surely that’s worth the gleeless noise of children in a playground or people laughing around a campfire.

Chris Dawson
Widlaw

One Time Alliance
The report came out last week that in 2019 Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions went up. Again, Canada has failed in all its commitments to reduce emissions. As long as emissions are going up, we haven’t even started. These are the crucial last years to back away from global disaster, and Canada is still going the wrong way.

It really is an emergency. We need to start acting like it.

To do that, we need better government. Conservative and Liberal governments have failed us. They have not reduced fossil fuel use. They listen to corporate lobbyists more than voters.
Our democracy is broken.
It doesn’t deliver the representation and the climate and security Canadians need. In 2019, the NDP and the Greens received 22.5% of the vote but only 8.6% of the seats. It’s no surprise so many people don’t bother to vote and say all politicians lie.

To help fix this, a national movement is promoting a strategy for the coming federal election to elect more NDP and Green MPs, The OneTimeAlliance.ca is organizing in local ridings for Greens and the NDP to “swap ridings” to avoid vote splitting, so we can get real climate and electoral reform action. The push is supported by climate activists like 350.org’s ClimateAction.ca.
I am seeking the nomination for the Greens in the Kootenay-Columbia riding to promote this strategy. In our riding, the NDP has the best chance of beating a business-as-usual Conservative. Only electing more NDP and Green MPs will give us a chance for real action on climate and democracy.

This alliance movement can give you power.

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Thank you master planners!

I really want to thank the people who put together the two proposals for the Centennial Park Master Plan. I think they did an excellent job of combining both the concerns of the community and to what the community wanted. They waded through almost 250 surveys and 10 written submissions. Thank you Jason Jones of Larch Landscape Architecture from Golden, Petra Hekkenberg of Hekkenberg Public Space Design from New Denver and Fraser Blyth, a community planner from Revelstoke.

The designs are thoughtful and put forward a plan based on what they heard from the community.

James summed up the feedback response at the presentation when he said, “Keeping the park, quiet, peaceful, and natural were reoccurring themes in what people desired for the park.” I was reminded that keeping a park is what a lot of us place a live in. People come here because of its easily accessible natural beauty. It’s travelled a lot. Easily accessible natural beauty is pretty rare. I really like the way the planners tried very hard to incorporate that into a park plan: their use of natural materials, the promotion of natural and people-powered play, returning the southern shore back to the community, being cognizant of not blocking our views of the lake and mountains, creating spaces where nature was highlighted and respected, and leaving room for the community to gather for large and small events and performances without intrusion to the natural landscape. Well done you three!

Crafting a plan like this could not have been an easy task. And, of course, it will be impossible to satisfy everyone. But I really respect them for listening and creating such an innovative and thoughtful set of ideas for the community to explore. Now the hard work begins to do. But I imagine that the future holds something very precious and unique. Let’s be proud!

Imagine a future, in New Denver, where we have embraced our culture and preserved the natural beauty. Imagine the Orchard... slowly turning back into more of an orchard. Walking through the Centennial Park stufing your pockets with fruit. The fruit that we grow here has a unique flavour due to its specific soils. The perfect fruit medicine for our community. We could start turning the soil over with the practice of permaculture and plan for a future of abundance! The cost of good health surely would be worthwhile.

Jones summarized the public’s support for the proposed park redesign as: “We designed a very thoughtful plan to be mindful not to construct what it is that folks want the field back, it’s easy enough to do. But I imagine that the future holds a need for local agriculture and food for sale. It will be here in the centennial years. It will be here in the 21st century. It’s going to be here in the 22nd century. It’s going to be here in the 23rd century. It’s going to be here in the 24th century.

Sinnit issue needs to be resolved completely

Thank you very much for John Boggs’ letter to the Supreme Court decision re Sinnit land use. As noted, this is a very important change but also an incomplete one, and there is obviously legal and human need for the issue to be resolved completely.

Professor Barkley noted that “…[the ruling]...did not recognize Sinnit rights to the land itself, nor to be consulted on what happens to it...” The dissenting opinion excerpt states: “…consolidation protection...does not extend to an Aboriginal group located outside of Canada...the modern group lacks continuity with the pre-contact group’s practices.”

Professor Barkley and the present US location of many of them in the artificially federated Colville Confederated Tribes reservation is a historical artifact of unrestrained colonialism. Over 90% of Sinixt Antifish is within Canada, including most of the Columbia River between Kettle Falls and Nakusp. Traditionally, the Sinixtwintered near Kettle Falls and foraged throughout their whole territory from spring through fall. When the BC/Washington border was established in 1870, the majority of Sinixt were on its south side. Since then, for more than a generation they were illegally prevented from returning to Canada, by force of arms if necessary: this is a violation of their inherent and associated rights.

They were installed, again illegally and without consultation, in the CCT, a creature of the imperialist US Bureau of Indian Affairs, to try to connect related diverse culture groups including the Nez Percé, also originally based some distance away, without respect to their differences. A few families remained here; some died, others were removed about the 1910s to the Okanogan Band, which since then the deaths in the 1950s. Claims that the Sinixt are “Indian” were, and are, in the interests of Native Americans being in close contact with chemicals and biohazardous products, you should be just fine without one (mask) and your immune system can be at a higher function, breathing fresh air. Your mostly creates an ocean of healthy bacteria in relationship to the environment you live and in move and through the foods you eat. Any negative effect can pretty much be a virus is immediately neutralized within your mouth’s environment and prepared for your body’s first point of entry, the stomach.

Please consider: all of us die for spiritual reasons and the only one who really knows what were on them is the one who is leaving this world, where resolve could not be found. Why are they letting go is truly for the one dying to know. Not one of us is beyond this truth and all above this all aspects of life should be free of fear and space for respected. The biological function of our bodies is easily kept well in loving environments within a group harmony conducive to all the life being shared around us! Not one creature neglected or disregarded! So now, how do we grow strong? Is it more of the same?

Brian and Corinne Marsh
New Denver

Our modern culture’s neuroses

How do our men and women grow strong? How do our children grow strong? What is taught to be productive (production) and how to achieve good lives through things and worldly pursuits? Let’s build on top of our entire world with concrete as fast as we can from all the means we obtain from the habitats we destroy as fast as we can, we can use, chemical poisons all over the planet all for the sake of profits of big industries. Big production over its unhealthiness is necessary for global well-being and it’s unsustainable. Modern technology in its simplicity as it is now can truly offer solutions to all these obstacles with a little creative thinking, foresight and organization – truly! We are truly abundant already, just disorganized a little and without leadership with an honest voice!

Hence corrupt drug companies posing as health organizations funded by pharmaceutical companies, feeding upon humanity’s ignorance for profit. A lack of medical awareness and a lack of physical well-being... Is this the great future planned for our children? A healthy life is freedom of thought, expression, and call them medicines and vaccines artificial drugs and now nanotechnology. Our modern neuroses are due to New Denver being situated on the two areas where we have have here very precious and unique. Let’s be proud!

Open letter to Brittany Anderson, MLA Nelson-Creston

Belated best wishes on your election as our representative in the British Columbia legislature. Along with congratulations on your appointment as the Premier’s Special Advisor on Youth. I certainly do not envy you in that position of explaining the youth of the province about the NDP’s failed policy of the Site C Dam, or the zero policy regarding log of old-growth forest or the chopping of our logs to foreign processors.

However, my more immediate concern is in regard to intra- and inter-provincial travel in order to limit the increased spread of COVID-19. I would appreciate it if you could supply more information about some of the glaring inconsistencies of the current government’s travel policies.

I understand the necessity of limiting travel within the province in order to prevent further spread of the virus. Especially from regions that have a much greater number of active cases. Makes sense.

However, the refusal by the British Columbia provincial travel between Alberta and British Columbia is most puzzling. It seems like nothing more than the tried-and-true approach in BC of the Lower Mainland-centric way of thinking. We are going to be okay down here on the coast. What’s an Interior anyway? Surely there can’t be that many people living there?

The rising cases behind a

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continued from page 5

important to ensure people’s health and jurisdictions within Canada and in other to limit highway traffic. It has been to implement controls. Maybe you roads between Alberta and British about how there are so many present time, given the current situation. push came to shove, I would rather have going on about how there are so many government so adamant in refusing to limit travel for only essential reasons?

memories, either yours or mine, these Without the ability flourish among these Freedoms are not paid forward, those freedoms paid forward to us stop paying freedoms forward, none Citizenship requires that we extend the freedoms transmit dangers. This claim is Scientific Methodology justify that logic, reason and asphyxiation, called a crucifixion, in asphyxiation device be worn by all. Big Health decrees an auto-killing childhood to satisfy personal vanity. Big Health demands our demoralization into gratification by lesser Insults. Forget that each one of us are tempted remembrance of Immanuel and all a healer of the Sick, a forgiver of a coronavirus is, oregano oil rounds out a cold or flu or whatever, which is what a cultivator of the Earth, a creator of life, and a teacher of our children.

Modern medicine is not the only road to health. There are practices such as traditional medicine, herbalism, homeopathy, and acupuncture that are gaining recognition as valid and effective treatments for various conditions. Furthermore, fitness, nutrition, and lifestyle choices play a crucial role in maintaining good health.

One of the most important aspects of personal health is preventative care. Regular check-ups, screenings, and vaccinations can help detect and prevent diseases before they become more severe. It is crucial to consult with healthcare professionals to determine the best course of action for each individual's health.

In addition to physical health, mental and emotional well-being are equally essential. Practices such as meditation, yoga, and other mindfulness exercises can help reduce stress and improve overall health.

In conclusion, while modern medicine has made significant strides in treating and preventing various diseases, it is important to remember that a holistic approach to health, combining traditional practices with modern medicine, is key to achieving optimal health outcomes.
Study casts new light on poverty in the West Kootenay

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

An analysis of Canadian tax filings sheds a new light on how widespread poverty is in the Kootenays. The analysis, done by the Rural Development Institute of Selkirk College, was included in the Columbia Basin Trust’s ‘State of the Basin’ report released earlier this year.

“It helps paint a picture of what the status of poverty or low-income is in the community, so we can better support the Rural Development Institute of Selkirk College,” says Jayme Jones, the researcher who wrote the analysis for the RDI.

The Rural Development Institute (RDI) had access to anonymized Revenue Canada data from every tax return done in the Columbia-Kootenay in 2018, and Jones worked up an analysis from that, using a method he uses a measurement called the “Low Income Measure” (LIM), an internationally recognized definition of income poverty, which can be compared across regions and even countries.

A recent tweak to the algorithm by scientists has significantly increased the number of people living below the LIM threshold, which “better accurately represents the true scenario on the ground,” says Jones. The report has some pretty sobering news for people working to support low-income families in this region. Nine communities in the West Kootenay households have more low-income persons than the provincial average (18.1%).

The highest low-income rate was in Slocan village, where two-in-five residents (40.3%) are living below the LIM threshold. Silverton was at 29%, New Denver 24.7%, and Kaslo 23.9%, and Nelson 19.1%.

Areas below the provincial average included Nakusp, at 16.6%, Castlegar at 13.8%, and Rossland at 10.7%. (Could have had Slocan’s low-income rate in 2017 at 17%, Kaslo and New Denver around 8%) The LIM is set by taking the average Canadian after-tax household income and dividing it by half. A person is considered to be in low-income when their after-tax household income is below the LIM threshold, which is a household size.

But Jones cautions that a person living in the median average income doesn’t automatically mean the low-income or that they are poor.

“It’s only one indicator,” Jones is careful to point out. “You have to look at many other indicators of well-being, to determine what true poverty or true prosperity are. Someone may make very low income, but feel very satisfied with their lifestyle and their work environment.

However, the report also points out persons living with a low income may have difficulties accessing safe and affordable housing, nutritious food, adequate child care, transportation, and other necessary goods and services.

The report also highlighted changes to the demographics of low-income individuals and households in the region over the previous four years. Lone-parent households still make up the highest number of families living below the LIM threshold in this area, but that number has actually fallen the last few years. At the other end are seniors, who have consistently had lower-than-average incidence of living on low-income in the Kootenays than the rest of the province. But also unlike lone-parent families, their numbers have gone up, from 11% in 2014 to 15.2% in 2018.

But the numbers only say what is happening; Jones cautions the why these trends are occurring is a lot more complex question, and needs much more research.

Evidence-based decisions

The RDI’s analysis is all part of a larger goal to help politicians and bureaucrats implement policies based on facts, for the best results.

“It’s to help evidence-based decision making, to help inform, to help have these conversations, help spark the why, why is it the Slocan Valley has a higher percentage of folks that are low-income, according to this measure? What does it mean?”

“Is something local governments and communities can do to look at that. It can also be used as a baseline. If actions can be taken, we can compare the LIM before and after to see how well the policies are working.”

There’s another caution to using the study as a guide to current circumstances. The data used is pre-pandemic, and doesn’t capture the economic impact COVID-19 has had on those with low income.

Jones says as newer data becomes available, a better understanding of the impact of COVID on those experiencing low income will emerge.

School District 8, May 11: Hiring process for new superintendent underway

by Jan McMurray

Superintendent hiring

Chair Treneman reported that the hiring committee for the superintendent position is in place, with representation from all stakeholders, including the Lower Kootenay Band. She said people can submit their comments to the board about things they’d like the committee to consider in the hiring process. Trustee Gribbin encouraged school principals in the district to apply for the job.

COVID update

Superintendent Christine Perkins reported that Nelson, Slocan Valley and Kaslo have been impacted by the pandemic, and now there has been a potential exposure in Creston. She said COVID documentation and contact tracing had been daily tasks for schools, and that has been the first quiet day in the last three weeks that we haven’t had to do any of that, and we’re quite pleased,” she said.

She said, “we are still very careful to point out. “You have to...
Upgrades coming to municipal campgrounds in the Slocan Valley

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Villages in the Slocan Valley are getting to see help to improve their municipal campgrounds.

The Villages of Slocan, Silverton and New Denver are each receiving $100,000 to do select repairs and improvements to their camping facilities this year.

The campgrounds have proved an unexpected boon to Valley villages during the pandemic, with officials from each Village reporting one of their most profitable years ever in 2020.

This year, the approved projects must be completed by March 2023.

Examples in other parts of the province include improvement of trail systems throughout a region for hiking, Nordic skiing or mountain biking, self-guided tour signage to highlight agri-tourism areas and a series of Indigenous landmarks throughout a region.

The approved projects must be completed by March 2023.
Nakusp & The Arrow Lakes

Budget passed

After months of hammering out the minutiae, Village council concluded its budget process with a quick passage of its five-year financial plan. Council will take in just under $7 million this year to keep the Village running, and projects an unusual $783,000 surplus. Much of that’s coming from special funding programs pertaining to COVID recovery, however.

Fees and services account for the largest portion of revenue for the village, at 41%, while 21% comes from property taxes – three-quarters of that, from homeowners.

Taxes will rise this year by 3.58%, which works out to about an extra $27,59 for the average household. That doesn’t account, however, for the other levels of government that also piggyback onto the municipal tax bill – including the RDCK, hospital board, and Ministry of Education.

Zoning review

Council ratified the Village’s existing bylaws, and work with council through the OCP bylaw process, and how many people did get involved in that.”

She also noted the Village has had positive experiences dealing with Urban Systems on past projects, and the company is working to apply for funding on behalf of council to support its development projects.

Organic waste collection

Residents of Nakusp are going to be asked for their thoughts on adding curbside organic waste collection for the community.

The Regional District of the Central Kootenay is in the planning stages for expanding its solid waste collection system to include food waste and garden waste. It’s a concept that’s growing in popularity, with diversion projects in Creston, Castlegar and Nelson slated to commence in 2022.

RDCK officials say diverting organic wastes from the main waste stream can help significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions, thus the drive to add the service in Nakusp.

The RDCK is considering building an organics processing facility at the Nakusp landfill if the Village is interested in going ahead with the service.

But first, the RDCK board wants to conduct an online survey to gauge the level of public interest. Council had no problem with the survey going ahead, and the mayor and several councillors spoke in favour of the concept.

Emergency pads

The Village is going to go head and install two concrete pads at the Emergency Services Building – one for the ambulance service, and one for the community paramedic.

Councillors had no qualms in accepting the BC Emergency Health Services’ request for the pads to be built for them. The pads will cost just over $18,500, but the Village can invoice the BCEHS for the cost. Work was to take about three or four days to complete and a few weeks for the cement to cure. The Village is doing the work because it owns the property.

Goodbye to CAO

The May council meeting marked the last for CAO Cheryl Martens.

Martens announced in April that she was leaving to return to her family and friends in Saskatchewan. Mayor Tom Zeleznik thanked Martens for her work in the last two years, and cited a dozen initiatives and projects Martens had shepherded through the system, from bylaw enforcement to the new Official Community Plan.

His comments were echoed by other councillors.

Available for adoption!

Meet our handsome orange kitty, Garfield. He is a short-hair, neutered adult male. Garfield is very timid right now. If you have that special touch, and can give him the attention and care he deserves, give PALS a call at 250-265-3792.

The Hungry Barber

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10 am – 6 pm
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 heleth

Virtual Open House

Wednesday, May 26, 2021
6:30 – 8:00 pm * via Zoom Virtual Conference *

* For more information and to view the Zoom meeting location and password, call the NACFOR office at 250-265-3656 or email info@nacforcommunityproject.com.

A summary of 2020 activities will be presented, along with a look into 2021 and beyond. Members of NACFOR’s Board of Directors and management group will be available to answer questions and discuss the projects.

An update on the Nakusp and area wildlife risk reduction projects will be included in the presentation.

www.nakuspcommunityproject.com
The #BuyBasin Festival was a big success. The #BuyBasin Festival held March through April was a five-week showcase using social media to highlight more than 100 businesses throughout the Columbia Basin – 15 of them based in the West Kootenay. The idea was to build residents’ awareness of the local businesses in their communities and motivate audiences to shop local.

The feedback from the entrepreneurs who participated in the festival was overwhelmingly upbeat with 85% reporting a “positive impact on business” while 96% said they came away from their broadcast with a “sense of renewed optimism.” The festival was put on by the Columbia Basin Trust and FestivalSeekers, while supported by a number of organizations, including the Basin Business Advisors program, economic development offices and chambers of commerce across the region.

COVID has hit small businesses hard, and the festival, which also featured performances by local musicians, was intended to ignite interest and educate people about the passionate artists, creators, business owners and service providers living in the Columbia Basin. West Kootenay businesses that went live in front of the camera during the festival came away happy with the results.

“It definitely met my expectations, and I got a few good connections out of it,” said Brendan Murray-Nellig, owner of Raven Roast in Slocan, which creates and sells herbal coffee alternative beverages. “And it helped me push my social media to the next level with video. I’m seeing it as a very important thing now.”

Prior to their Facebook Live broadcasts, each entrepreneur was given one-on-one coaching by a social media influencer about how to pull off a successful session as well as how to engage with the audience. Each business’s broadcast gave them a chance to spread the word about the products and services they sell.

Breaking down the numbers, the festival featured 112 videos that garnered 122,000 views and over 4,100 comments from a local audience and scored a social media reach of more than 960,000.

Murray-Ellis says the festival helped boost a couple of other initiatives he had already planned for his business, so the timing was perfect.

“It seemed like a pretty great coincidence and a good way to get exponential attention,” he said. “It just really increased exposure.”

Murray-Ellis says Raven Roast is a relatively new business, with a recently launched online sales component. “And now we’re seeing exponential growth.”

Ella Rempel, owner of Opal Dawn Holistic Beauty in Castlegar, also experienced a sales bump, and the timing couldn’t have been better she says, of what she called a “fun” event. “Right now, with economy and COVID, business can be tighter than normal. It’s important to get awareness and support everyone involved in a small business.”

In Chad Bullock’s experience, this is the time of year kids are coming out of winter hibernation and looking for an extra-curricular activity. His Facebook Live broadcast about his school, Ignite Martial Arts in Castlegar and Trail, focused on martial arts for three- and four-year-olds. The cuteness factor engaged the audience he said, while highlighting everyone know what kind of other classes the school offers. He saw instant engagement, which he attributes to all of the organizations involved in the festival. “Two seconds in, people were watching it and commenting.”

All of the businesses said they would definitely sign on to do an event like this again given the chance. “It was a good experience, yes for sure,” said Bullock.

Shauna Roberts of Soul Fire Dance in Slocan Valley agreed with Bullock. She had so much fun doing the live event, she’s now planning to do a virtual dance recital using the tools she learned during the #BuyBasin Festival.

Festival organizer, FestivalSeekers.com, would like to thank the Trust for making the opportunity happen. Organizers are already planning a potential sequel and encourage everyone to #BuyBasin.

Bob Keating reflects on his career in podcast

Kootenay Time is the name of a podcast hosted by Bob Keating, who ran the CBC Nelson bureau until he recently retired from that position.

“I spent 35 years working as a journalist, mostly in the Kootenays, and I didn’t want the work to just disappear into the ether. So I proposed a podcast and the CBC liked the idea,” Keating said.

Many of the episodes are theme based, with discussions with Sheryl McKay of North by Northwest.

“The themes are things such as the importance of contacts, stories that have impact, stories that I couldn’t quite get to the bottom of, etc.” Keating said. “Those chats are interspersed with long form journalism – which was always my favourite kind of work. Stories you really dig into.”

Keating says he’ll continue the podcast for “as long as people will listen.”

“I don’t suppose I’ll ever fully retire,” he said. “Podcasting is a natural extension of what I did for all those years. At the end of their career, a shipbuilder has the ships, a vintage car mechanic has the vintage car, I just have words and stories which I wanted to share and it was a very cathartic exercise.”

Keating said it was “a privilege and honour” to tell the stories of the people of the Kootenays.

# BuyBasin Festival does the trick

With a reach of almost one million people and 85% of participants reporting a ‘win’ in terms of business development, it’s safe to say the Basin’s first-ever virtual small business festival was a big success. The #BuyBasin Festival held March through April was a five-week showcase using social media to highlight more than 100 businesses throughout the Columbia Basin – 15 of them based in the West Kootenay. The idea was to build residents’ awareness of the local businesses in their communities and motivate audiences to shop local.

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Jade Osecki and Carolyn Schramm receive Suzy Hamilton Legacy Awards

May 20, 2021

The Valley Voice

Jade Osecki and Carolyn Schramm are being honored with this year’s Suzy Hamilton Legacy Award.

The cash award is presented annually to a female-identified environmental activist in the West Kootenay region. This year, there is a new extension of the award meant to recognize the enduring dedication of a female-identified champion of the environment.

Hanging only just completed her last high school course, Jade Osecki has already demonstrated a strong commitment to both environmental and social justice actions. She has helped to organize Fridays For Future West Kootenay and has been an engaged advocate for environmental justice in numerous national organizations.

Award nominee Carolyn Schramm is also being recognized for her work on her co-founded organization, Mt. Willet Wilderness Forever (MWWF), in proposing to add Agenta-Johnson Landing to the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Provincial Park.

“I am deeply grateful and honored to receive the Suzy Hamilton Legacy Award as a tribute to Mt. Willet Wilderness Forever. This award provides an opportunity to bring attention to our campaign at this critical time with the imminent threat of clearcut logging on the Agenta-Johnson’s Landing Face,” said Schramm. The area includes habitat for the endangered Mountain Caribou.

Additional nominees for this year’s award were Sally Hammond of the Wild Connection, and Lorna Visser, who stewards the Sink’s Marsh through the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology.

The Suzy Hamilton Legacy Fund continues to grow and with it, the size of the annual award. Donations are warmly welcomed and can be made through the Osprey Foundation.

Suzy Hamilton was a writer and change-maker with an impressive record of successful environmental and social activism in the Nelson area.

With thanks to RDCK AREA H for their support
Alex Berland to step down as chair of Slocan Valley Legacy Society

submitted

2021 marks a milestone and a turning point for the Slocan Valley Community Legacy Society. It's the organization's 10th year in operation, and the final year of Alex Berland's tenure as chair. Alex joined the board in 2011 and he has been board chair for the past nine years. At the upcoming AGM, Alex will officially step down as required by the SVCLS's bylaws.

Why did you start volunteering?

Why volunteer? Living in this remarkable place, I am very aware of my privilege; volunteering is my way of expressing gratitude. A wise hippie told a very young me, “Every day I try to do something for my community, something for my family and something for myself.” I have been volunteering since I was 20, learning so much and meeting so many wonderful people.

Why was the Slocan Valley Community Legacy Society formed?

Community foundations are popular across Canada as a do-it-yourself way for ordinary folks to support programs that enrich and strengthen their communities. The founding board members were all local residents. Since then, several dozen volunteers joined the society board and its committees – a terrific effort by community leaders who love this valley.

The Legacy Society has two jobs: getting money and giving it away. Donations to our endowment fund are like fruit-trees in an orchard because we use only the interest for grants, leaving the principal amount to grow. In the past decade, we have focused on how to do those two jobs through major activities such as Giving Tuesday, volunteer recognition, summer outreach and granting. We not only developed the necessary structures and processes, but also lately we adapted from face-to-face to more virtual formats due to COVID-19.

What have been the Legacy Society’s greatest successes and greatest challenges?

Our success has two components: what we achieve and how we achieve it. Since 2011, we have steadily grown our endowment, raising over $300,000 from individual donors. Our grants have also increased steadily and this year our own funds were doubled from external sources. How we achieve success is also important. Of course, we want to grow our endowment, but building trust and credibility in the community takes time. The board has had many discussions about values such as accountability, confidentiality and fairness.

Our greatest challenge faces most organizations in the valley – recruiting fresh volunteers to replace aging incumbents. We all need to prepare for hand-over and think about how to make that transition attractive and meaningful to the next generation.

How do you see the SVCLS changing in the future?

I expect the Legacy Society will continue slow and steady progress until some future date when the board chair receives a call from a lawyer who says, “I have some good news.” Based on the experience of other local community foundations, this good news will be an inherited bequest from someone with a great love for the valley. Those other foundations then have more money to offer in grants, creating more publicity and a “virtuous circle” of more donations, more earned interest and more grants.

How do you feel about stepping down? What do you plan to do in the future?

Retiring as a director means leaving one of the most productive boards that I have ever experienced. I am certainly going to miss our camaraderie and awesome team-work – this is premium do-goodery. For the near future, I will continue my volunteer work with Mid-Main Community Health Centre in Vancouver and with Oasis for Positerity, a rural education project in Bangladesh.
New Denver council, May 11: Tax increase of 2% approved

by Kathy Hartman

• Municipal property tax will increase by 2% in 2021 – or about $14 on an average home.
• The five-year financial plan and tax rate bylaws after a presentation by Colin McClure, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the RDCK.
• McClure’s presentation showed the average home in New Denver is assessed at $237,000, up $21,000 from last year, when it was worth $216,000. Municipal taxes on that $237,000 home will be $724 this year ($710 last year).

However, McClure said, “there was a lot of work that went to exclusively fund this initiative, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in BC to have dedicated itself to fulfiling a mandate commitment to honour the Japanese Canadian historical wrongs.”

The funding will help these centres enhance their programming for seniors in assisted and independent living, as well as the local community. This will include supports for those with dementia and Parkinson’s disease, community talks about current issues and concerns, and exercise classes to help seniors stay fit and healthy.

“Trauma affects generations, and we have seen this time and time again,” said Mable Elemore, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors’ Services and Long-Term Care. “That’s why today is so important. We must recognize the steps needed for the healing and recognition journey for Japanese Canadians who are now seniors, and ensure we fulfil our promise to ensure that no one is left behind in these historical wrongs.”

The grant is a first step toward fulfilling a mandate commitment of the Ministry of Attorney General to honour the Japanese Canadian community by providing lasting recognition of the traumatic interment of almost 22,000 Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. This grant responds to recommendations from NAJC for targeted funding for health and social care programs for Japanese Canadian survivors.
Winlaw School students inspired by Community Citizenship Film Project

Lye guided the students through the steps of filmmaking, including research, writing interview questions, camera use, storyboarding, editing, recording voice-overs, and incorporating B-roll photos. “The most important and exciting part of this project for me, is that the students are being taught a filmmaking practice that focuses on the importance of creating and maintaining respectful relationships with their subjects,” says Lye. “And that the students can include their personal voice and insight on what they have learned into the films.”

In total, 11 short documentary-style films have been produced, highlighting a vast array of dedicated volunteers and knowledge keepers in the valley. Each film reveals merits of volunteering, the history of how community resources came to be and an appreciation of local ancestors. Stories of how the rail track came to be, housing initiatives for seniors, the Slocan River Streamkeepers and messages from local indigenous Elders Marilyn James and Pat Bruederle are among the series of interviews conducted. The film can now be viewed on the Winlaw school website: https://winlaw.sd8.bc.ca/

SD 8 Kootenay Lake adopts budget, saves money on laptop lease

The School District 8 Kootenay Lake board of education adopted its 2021-22 budget at a special meeting on May 14. The $72,132,770 budget is down almost $2.5 million from this year’s budget of $74,672,580. “This is the tightest budget I have had to do since I started work here at School District 8, with decreasing revenues and increasing expenses,” said Secretary-Treasurer Michael McLellan. McLellan explained that revenues are decreasing mainly because there will be no COVID-related funding next year. This year, the district received $2.3 million in COVID-19 Safe Return to School/Class funds. Expenses are going up next year, McLellan said, because salaries and wages are increasing by 2.4%, as per collective agreements. The district also expects inflation to cause increases in costs of services and supplies.

Creston Trustee Allan Gribbin voted against the budget because he disagrees with the way the procurement of laptops for grades 7 and 10 students was handled. He said the laptop expenditure was “added before the board approved it” and local suppliers were not considered, contrary to school district policy.

McLellan reported that IT Director Nick Howald was able to negotiate a lease instead of a purchase for the laptops for grades 7 and 10 students next year, saving considerably on that line item in the budget. The amount for the computers in the preliminary budget was $750,000, and it is now $200,000. The term of the computer lease is 3 years and will cost about $220,000 per year. However, the plan is to ask the board to consider leasing additional computers every year. After three years, the annual lease payments would be about $600,000 and all students from grades 7 to 12 would have their own computer.

“It seems to me we’re pushing a big debt down the road,” Gribbin commented. McLellan acknowledged that the lease payment would grow over time, “but it would grow to equivalent amounts you have been spending on [information technology]. I think people are happy with the tech investments in the district.”

When Gribbin asked if the computers would always be leased from the same company, McLellan replied that the district would always be looking for more favourable terms.

The budget was given two readings at the board’s regular May 11 meeting, but did not pass third reading because Gribbin voted against it. The budget cannot be given all three readings at the same meeting without a unanimous vote at third reading.

The board reconvened on May 14 and adopted the budget, with Gribbin opposed. This is the second year that the SD 8 board has had to schedule a special meeting to adopt the budget because of Trustee Gribbin’s opposing vote.

Nakusp and Slocan Valley to get Recovery Advisors

Community Futures is among 20 small and medium-sized businesses whose projects will create a total of 30 part-time and full-time Recovery Advisor positions to assist businesses and rural communities in the Southern Interior with COVID-19 economic recovery.

In total, 59 communities in all nine ETSI-BC regional districts are being supported by these RBC-funded projects, including 10 First Nations communities. ETSI-BC’s CEO Laurel Douglas and her team were inspired by the applications.

In reviewing the applications, we saw innovation at the forefront as a key to economic recovery for communities,” said Douglas. “Our team is working closely with the recipients so that the Recovery Advisors can engage and begin providing much-needed economic recovery support.”

Introducing the candidates in the Silverton by-election

Don Broughton

Don Broughton is running for mayor because he feels the community has changed – and not for the better. He’d like to see several improvements to the town and more honesty in council. He attends council meetings regularly. Broughton was born in Silverton and has always called Silverton home, even when he had to move away for work. He ran for mayor in the last municipal election in 2018, and for councillor in a previous election.

Colin Ferguson

Colin Ferguson is running for mayor. He and his wife took up full-time residence in Silverton when they retired in 2018. They had been coming to Silverton for seven years while one of their children attended the Valhalla Summer School of Music. When recently asked to run for mayor of Silverton, Colin readily agreed because he feels that serving the community is a civic duty. He looks forward to getting to know more of his neighbours and learning more about the community and its concerns.

Clarence denBok

Clarence denBok is the only person who submitted papers for the Silverton councilor position. As long as he doesn’t withdraw by end of day Friday, he will be elected by acclamation. Clarence owns Silverton Building Supplies and has taken on various volunteer roles in the community over the years he has lived here.
by Joanne Feenstra

• Council agreed to start the process of a municipal boundary expansion to include properties between Arlington Road adjacent to the cemetery, as well as the Owl Walk, the RV Park, the cemetery, the Outlanders grounds, vacant land, and properties in the town land and two residences. The first step is to hire a consultant, who will prepare a boundary expansion plan for the municipality, and a communication package for residents. The project will be funded by the provincial Rural Resident Assistance and Retention Pilot Program of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, which is offering up to $50,000 to cover the costs of planning for land that might be available for residential housing. The funding must be spent within two years. This pilot program is also available to New Denver, Silverton, Area H, Kaslo and Area D. There are potentially 20 lots on the property south of Arlington Road adjacent to the cemetery. The Slocan Valley Community Complex Society has already provided Village water to the lots back in March, but current bylaws prohibit the Village from providing reduced water connections outside municipal boundaries. The Village will now proceed with a Request for Proposals to hire a consultant. The guidelines of the pilot program suggest that public consultation include information to both property owners and residents with an invitation for response letters, as well as a public meeting where feedback forms could be provided. Once the ministry is satisfied that all criteria have been met, the Village will seek elec toral approval for the boundary expansion. Full program and map details are available at the municipal office.

• Laura Adams applied for a variance to provide a mobile food vendor cart on the waterfront for four months this season. The Grizz’ food truck will provide sandwiches, fries and poutine from 4 to 7 and will be powered by both a generator and propane.

• The WE Graham Community Services Society was awarded $483.50 from Slocan’s discretionary fund for Slocan Community Garden costs.

• Council approved a setback variance in the residential zone from 15 feet to 11 feet on Nelson Street to accommodate a carport.

• A report from the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region Community Data Program indicates that 40% of adults in Slocan have incomes lower than the median for Canadian families, the highest rate in the Columbia Basin. Silverton were at 29% ranks third and New Denver at 24% ranks fourth.

• Resident Dave Fredrickson asked council about the improvement project by the gaucho (Irrig Hawk and parking lot). The joint project of Recreation Sites and Trails BC and the local Slocan Heritage Trail Society which received provincially-owned land in March, requested a meeting for the boundary process. Mayor Lunn directed staff to obtain an update from Daniel Scott, provincial project coordinator. Lunn stated that various community members and council had concerns about the closed parking lot, berms height, and the black plastic coverings and the orange fencing surrounding the berms. Councillor Pelletier commented that this is phase one of a three-phase project, which will in the future include work at the current dog beach and work on more entrances to the beach. He said some clarification from the Province and the trail society would be desirable at this point.

Slocan council, May 10: Boundary expansion process initiated

Fill out your census forms, help your town: Slocan mayor

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Slocan’s mayor is pleading with the village’s population to fill out their census forms and return them to the federal government.

“We want to get the word out: please, please get counted,” says Jessica Lunn. The federal government has launched the 2021 census, and forms are starting to appear in people’s mailboxes. Lunn has put the issue in pretty clear economic terms: filling out the census form is pretty clear economic terms: filling out the census form is an easy way to help the local community. “It provides us with more ability to re-invest in the community,” she says.

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The mayor says. Lunn says the government information about an 8% reduction.

from 296 to 272 citizens, or numbers showed a reduction instead of an increase, their numbers because we had seen a decrease. But if you don’t get counted, that’s who you’re not representing in our community. “It’s not just an academic exercise: a lower population means a reduced amount given in unconditional grants, like the federal gas tax grant. Provincial charts show a $2,000 drop in Village revenues two years in a row recently with that grant alone, because of the lower population figure. “We are very good at working with what we get,” she says. “But if you don’t get counted, that’s who you’re not representing in our community.”

That’s why Lunn posted to Facebook recently to let citizens know it’s important for them to be counted. She says part of the problem may be reluctance to be counted by authorities—“this is the Slocan Valley,” she notes, where a degree of skepticism towards government information-gathering is common.

“But it’s important for people to understand why this matters,” she told the Valley Voice. “It’s not the personal information, that doesn’t matter, it’s the overall numbers that count.”

Looking around town, Lunn says she’s confident the numbers will show the village has grown since 2016. With infilling, multi-family units and commercial rental suites popping up over town, she’s pretty certain it won’t reflect a shrinking community.

As long as people fill out the forms and return them, Lunn says she’s confident the numbers will show the village has grown since 2016. With infilling, multi-family units and commercial rental suites popping up over town, she’s pretty certain it won’t reflect a shrinking community.
Kaslo council, May 11: May Days parade a go

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

May Days parade

If there’s one event Kasloians love, it’s the annual May Day Festival, but it will have to be scaled right down again this year due to COVID. The Chamber is organizing a parade for May Days Monday evening at 6 p.m. and asked the Village to participate.

Kaslo River Bridge

CAO Ian Dunlop reported that construction on the Kaslo River Bridge replacement has begun and will continue to September 10. Work will continue six days a week, with reduced activity on long weekends. The project will see a temporary bridge put in June, which will have one-lane alternating traffic and traffic control.

Pedestrian access to part of the river trail will be blocked off during construction and there’ll be no foot traffic across the bridge during active construction periods.

Council’s plans to piggyback a highway crossing for future sewer expansion while the bridge is being replaced are not going as smoothly as hoped. The Village applied for a grant to cover the cost, but we don’t have grant funding construction periods.

New summer clothes, great grad cards, and lots of new Brazilian crystals have arrived.

Kaslo River Dike

The work plan for the Kaslo River Dike is being developed by the Department of Fisheries. CAO Dunlop says he’s hoping the Village will be granted a permit through a letter of compliance, and have the project avoid the formal review process.

“They’re mainly concerned about how much of the riparian area will be impacted by the construction,” said Dunlop. “In fact, because of erosion there, we have lost a lot of riparian habitat, so we hope we can move forward to preserve what we have left.”

Pride plan okayed

Council approved a request by Kaslo’s local Pride Committee to close 4th Street between A Avenue and Front Street to allow for the painting of a rainbow flag on Friday, June 4. Staff will present the formal application to council in June.

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Kemp Creek dam repairs

Council received a proposal from Kerr Wood Leidal Associates and approved spending $25,000 on engineering and construction management for the Kemp Creek dam, the reservoir for the Village’s water supply that was damaged in heavy thunderstorms last May. CAO Dunlop says they’re still working on the scope of the engineering that has to be done this season. They’re also waiting to hear back from the insurer about covering the cost of repairs. “The Village has been told that engineering costs will be covered as part of the project management.”

The Village put out tenders on the job last year, but all the bids came in over budget. This year, Dunlop says, “they’ve broken up the job into smaller components. The main ones, the concrete blocks would be the largest, but other jobs may be able to be farmed out to small contractors or even done in-house. “We feel confident this is the right approach,” he told council.

New trailhead

Council approved a proposal by Kaslo Outdoor Recreation and Trails Society (KORTS) to locate the new Trail Network trailhead sign and to develop a parking area at the southwest corner of Kaslo West Road and Bjerkness Road. They’ll also close the parking area near the runway.

OCP Montgomery

Brian Montgomery was awarded the contract to facilitate the OCP Review.

Southern Interior of BC. The Trust is governed by a 13-member board of directors, which includes local elected officials and provincial government appointees. Two Regional Advisory Committees of elected officials are also part of the ETSI-BC governance structure, and Columbia-Kootenay regions also provide input. ETSI-BC’s service area spans nine Regional Districts ranging from Hope in the west, Clearwater in the north, the Thompson-Okanagan and Columbia-Kootenay regions and other communities. The Trust was established to create economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and was designed to take a ‘boots-on-the-ground’ approach to economic recovery, Dave said. The strategy is all about “coordinated leadership” and sets out different but complementary roles for the Kaslo and Area D economic development strategy.

“New Trailhead expansion, not long to cost any more money.

Kaslo council approves funding for Recovery Advisor

Submitted

Kaslo is one of the communities in the Southern Interior that will receive funding to hire a Recovery Advisor to help with economic recovery from the pandemic.

The Kaslo and Area Centre of Commerce is receiving a grant of $37,500, which will be used to launch the newly adopted Kaslo and Area D community economic development strategy.

“We are looking forward to putting these funds to work,” said Jeff Davie, treasurer of the Kaslo and Area Chamber of Commerce. “We are very pleased to announce that Pat Brandrick 250-353-2159. Please note: you will need a relative or a friend to act as a sponsor on the application.

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The Village Voice May 20, 2021
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Winning, hand-stretched artisan pizza. THE CARPENTER CREEK LAST WISH SOCIETY Green Burial Ground would like to thank all the enthusiastic and hard-working folks who had a part in the work party on May 8. What fun, and how beautiful it is now! Anyone who is interested, find out more and how to contribute both financially and otherwise by going to: http://carpentercreeklastwishesociety.ca/green-burials/. You would not believe how many hours there are to jump through and how much it all costs.... There is still a lot to be done! And together we can do it.
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THE SILENT SLOMACE MUSEUM is seeking a part-time staff person between the ages of 15 and 30 to work in the museum. The applicant should be a registered full-time student in the preceding year and intend to return to full-time studies in the fall. We are looking for a self-motivated and independent worker. Previous museum experience and computer skills are an asset. Starting date after May 5, end date August 28, 2021. 35-40 hours/week for up to 12 weeks at $16.20/hour. A cover letter and resume must be received before May 24, 2021 at silverslocanhs@gmail.com or Box 301, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0. Inquiries / Call: 250-358-7181.
SUMMER STUDENT positions available at the Visitor Centre in New Denver. Ideal candidates are friendly, personable,
帮íful and knowledgeable about the area’s amenities and tourist attractions. The Visitor Centre is open from the May long weekend to Labour Day. 2 days a week in July and August and fewer hours in May and June. Send resume and cover letter by June 4 to Slocan Valley Chamber of Commerce, Box 448, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0 or email to vic@slocanlake.com.

**PERSONAL MANAGER** wanted for Slocan Valley Chamber of Commerce. The job entails general secretarial and light bookkeeping duties; preparing agendas, minutes, budgets; handling correspondence and publicity; liaising with bookkeeper; website maintenance. The Manager attends board meetings (usually monthly) and takes direction from the board. The ideal candidate has excellent computer and interpersonal skills, project management skills, and enjoys working independently. Please send resume and cover letter by Monday, May 3 at 4 pm to: Slocan District Chamber of Commerce, Box 448, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0 or email to: chamber@victoria.com.

**THE SLOCAN LAKE GOLF CLUB** is currently seeking to hire a full-time Pro Shop Attendant, starting as soon as possible. As an ambassador for the golf club, the incumbent will foster good working relationships with club members, fellow employees and members of the public. The successful applicant will be required to perform a variety of duties. Previous experience working with cash, credit card machines, computer skills as well as a basic understanding of the game of golf is an asset. Wage to be determined based on experience. Please email your resume no later than May 27, 2021 to Shelley Welch at dswelch17@gmail.com or by mailing to Slocan Lake Golf Club 101 Golf Course Rd, New Denver BC V0G 1S1.


**Have you or someone you know** been sexually assaulted and want help? Call the Interior Crisis Line 24/7 at 1-888-853-5544 to discuss your options or go directly to Arrow Lakes Hospital or your local emergency room for confidential care.

**Silverton Lakeshore Inn** is looking for all the things taken from the hotel as follows: all the archive pictures that were displayed in hallway. BA sign orange and blue, grandfather clock, air conditioners in all the rooms, 5 old yellow hockey jerseys in frame with broken glass, and numerous other things. Please return, no questions asked.

**Silverton Lakeshore Inn** is looking for people who have witnessed: heavy machinery piling snow on our septic field, slandering against the hotel or hotel owner. Please email staytitsataseas@hotmail.com.

**Bigfoot Inn** would like to thank you for coming forward with so much information and all the supporting emails. We’re looking forward to serving the area again one day.

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Dry spring cuts West Kootenay river flooding concerns

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The people who monitor the province’s rivers and streams for flood potential say they’re getting less worried about the West Kootenay as the spring progresses.

“On March 1, it was 110% of normal, and I’d say I was concerned about some areas in the southern Interior,” says Jonathan Boyd, a forecaster with the River Forecast Centre. “But by April 1, it was at 100%, or normal, then by May 1 it was 91%.”

“Compared to last year, it was 117% in the West Kootenay on May 1,” he told the Valley Voice. “So that’s a 26% difference.”

It’s a far cry from just a year ago at the height of the spring runoff, or freshet, when the high-altitude snowpack was in full melt and massive thunderstorm hit on May 31. Streams flooded, Kaslo’s water reservoir was badly damaged, the road to Idaho Peak Lookout washed out (and still is), and evacuation orders were issued in several areas.

“It just hasn’t been as wet for the region as a whole,” says Boyd of this year’s weather. “And in the middle of April, we had a high-pressure ridge that resulted in many areas of the province reaching all-time temperature records for those dates. That kick-started the snowmelt in low-elevation sites.

“That will probably be one of the West Kootenay regions, because that got some of that low- to mid-elevation snow out of the way already.”

Of course, any predictions of flooding come with the caution that evergreen conditions. While that’s good news that’s not likely.

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Artists asked to cover forest statues’ naked butts

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A Kootenay artists’ group won’t put pants on some statues they installed on a forest path near Kaslo.

The artists turned down a request from a woman who thought the depiction of children with no pants on might ‘normalize’ pedophilia.

“Nudity does not usually bother me,” Zita Lay wrote recently to the Koots Collective, cc’ing a copy to the Village of Kaslo. “As a mother, I get it’s normal for many preschoolers to run around peeling clothes off or refusing to put clothes on at all. However, the sculpture of the small child, male, alone with an adult in the woods, is disconcerting for me.”

Lay hasn’t seen the statues themselves, just photos and a news article of the installation, which features whimsical human-like creatures playing “Hide and Seek” in the forest along the Kaslo River Trail.

One of the group installations depicts an adult ready to catch a child about to fall. The child has no pants on.

“All given that I have learned about child sexual abuse and how it happens, the naked child, alone with the adult, normalizes risky and concerning behaviour,” she wrote, noting one-in-ten Canadians reported having been sexually abused as a child.

However, the sculpture of the small child, nude, alone with an adult in the forest along the Kaslo River Trail.

Koots Collective member Yvonne Boyd responded to the request. She began by noting the creatures are not human, have no distinguishable sex and are in no way engaging in a sexual activity.

“Our intent is that they represent what is healthy in an adult child relationship, that of an elder caring for the youth in their care, we intentionally did not make a female caretaker as we felt we did not wish to stereotype caregiving, they, were nor are they alone with an elder but all together with each other, we are representing what should be the norm, that elders care for youth, and that sex has nothing to do with it, only safety and playfulness,” Boyd added. “Please note that the elder’s elbow is up to prevent the little one from falling, rather than a potentially inappropriate hand on its bottom.

“It is a sad truth that not all people take the care of children that they should, and do them harm instead, we want to portray what should be.”

Nor are they alone with an elder but all together with each other, “We hope that the children viewing this work, and now you as well, see illustrated in our sculptures what an elder’s proper relationship to a child should be, one of trustworthiness, caring and support,” she said.

Village council received the correspondence exchange without comment.

COMMUNITY

North Kootenay Lake mosquito program discussed at town hall meeting

by Jan McMurray

The mosquito control program in the Meadow Creek and Pineridge areas in RDCK Area D (North Kootenay Lake) was discussed at a virtual town hall meeting on May 13. Dirk Lewis of Morrow Bioscience Ltd, the company that delivers the service, led the discussion.

“Our main goal is not to eliminate mosquitoes,” he said. “That’s not possible and not particularly practical from an ecologic standpoint.”

Lewis explained that the program targets freshwater mosquitoes, which are “the ones that come out in all the kitjillons at once” and not the ones that are “in the environment feeding birds and butterflies.” He said freshwater mosquitoes are not a preferred food source for bats and birds.

The insecticide Morrow uses is the only product registered for use in Western Canada. Bti is naturally occurring soil bacterium, and has a very low toxicity to anything but mosquitoes, Lewis said. The bacterium is digested into corn granules, which are dropped from helicopters in the Lardeau Valley, and spread by hand in both the Lardeau Valley and Pineridge. Aerial treatments are not done in Pineridge because “it would be like using a sledgehammer on a pin,” Lewis said.

The company can treat public land only, and must avoid flying over houses, as per Transport Canada regulations. They don’t treat constructed wetland ponds, which don’t usually harbour enough mosquitoes to warrant it.

Although Morrow doesn’t treat private property, they have tried to help homeowners from time to time, and their ‘mosquito prevention tips’ are available on the RDCK website. Lewis noted that tars, tarpaulins and other barriers were the biggest culprits of backyard mosquito problems.

Last season was “not fun,” Lewis said, with a long high-water season and complications due to COVID. The aerial treatments have covered over 450 hectares more than in 2019. There were three aerial treatments, and there should have been a fourth one in July, Lewis said, but they couldn’t get any Bti because of pandemic-related supply issues. Fortunately, they had some liquid Bti and were able to do some treatments with that.

Another pandemic-related challenge was that Morrow staff couldn’t go up in the helicopter with the pilot last year. “That’s a big deal because we are familiar with where the mosquitoes are on the ground,” Lewis said.

This year is looking good, though with the water still fairly low and snowpack at 91% of normal.

Another positive this year is a change in the aerial contract. “We found a company that is more amenable to coming more frequently,” Lewis said, “so we feel we can be more accurate than we have in the past.”

Lewis said providing prompt information to Tod Poffenroth at the RDCK about scheduling of aerial treatments has been difficult, as the weather sometimes gets in the way. “We try to tell people in advance but sometimes weather causes last-minute cancellation. There were a few false alarms last year, and there will be again this year, I’m sure,” he said. But he promised to try to put updates on the RDCK website this year. RDCK Area D Director Aimee Watson said she sometimes puts updates on her Facebook page, too.

Watson said this year’s program will cost taxpayers in Pineridge $12,903 and in the Lardeau Valley $66,152. Watson subsidizes the Lardeau Valley program with a $20,000 grant “because it’s one of the most expensive services for the Lardeau Valley,” she said, but she is slowly increasing the taxation every year.

Morrow can be contacted at 1-877-906-3363 or 1-800-266-7225.