

Hello! It was a very busy month so I apologize for the lack of a February newsletter. However, it makes for a lot of info to share with you this month.

Let's start with our plans to hire a Journeyman mechanic. We did not get as much response as we hoped for with our advertisements. Council is still evaluating this situation and deciding how to move forward.

We are exploring the option of engaging a custom spraying operation to eradicate Bull Thistle in the RM gravel pit area. This is a big problem in the RM and we feel we need to get aggressive with this noxious weed especially around our pit where it is hard to maintain. We are also encouraging property owners to control Bull Thistle on their lands.

Council has spent a lot of time coming up with a plan to handle road maintenance agreements. We have struck a committee to deal with RMA's and we are still working out the bugs in this system. What you need to be aware of is that council has decided that hauls of a yet to be determined quantity will be required to tarp their loads and their speeds be reduced to 60 kph.

Many of you have probably notice that many rocks are starting to poke their way through some of our main grid roads. We have started an experimental project to pulverize these rocks up with a rather large grinder. Watch for this machine in the RM as it will likely be demonstrated on the Mine road between Blucher road and 316 Hwy. We are also going to be testing some new road compaction and dust control products in 2021

On March 9 & 10 Me, Francis Boehm, Robin Wilson, and our CAO Doran Scott attended the Annual SARM Convention, virtually. In my view, it was a very good experience. Some delegates did have problems with internet connections, but most were rectified rather quickly. The convention was only a day and a half long, compared to the usual 3 days, but a lot of very good information was shared, and interaction with provincial politicians was interesting and informative. The big downside was the lack of networking with our fellow reeve's and councillor's. This convention is always a great opportunity to talk to people about the similar issues and successes that we are all dealing with and potential solutions that we may not have thought of.

Our Foreman, Scott McDonald, has proposed an ambitious five-year road improvement program for the entire RM. Council is considering his recommendations so if you have any suggestions, for road upgrades, that you feel the council should be considering please contact us. I personally am quite excited about this program. For many years the RM has had to allocate many resources to simply repair roads so with drier conditions, we have an opportunity to do some extensive upgrades.

I also have the privilege of Representing this RM on the Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance (SMHI) Board of Directors, so I would like to share a couple pieces of good News from this organization. First SMHI had a good year with a profit of about 13.1 million dollars. Claims were down from last year and coverage was up, which led to the profit. The other bit of good news is that SMHI has decided to make another one million dollar donation to Stars Air Ambulance spread over a four year period. This is a follow up to the one million we donated as part of our one hundred year anniversary celebration four years ago. Stars is very important to Rural Saskatchewan and SMHI's profits come from rural Saskatchewan so we think it is appropriate to put a little back. If you ever have any questions about SMHI please contact me.

The RM's of Aberdeen and Blucher feel there is a need for a bulk water tanker to service both RM's. Blucher has a gravel truck that is available so we are in the process of evaluating whether it would be feasible to outfit this truck for that purpose. It will be housed at the Blucher Aberdeen Emergency Services building.

You should also be aware that 2021 is a Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA) Revaluation & Physical inspection year. You can expect some updated assessment numbers in 2021 and all ratepayers will be receiving an assessment notice.

One more item, Council is meeting in person again. We are renting the Bradwell hall for our regular council meetings. It is large enough that we can have everybody in the same place and maintain proper social distancing. That is all for now. Stay healthy and we will talk soon.

Reeve Blair Cummins