

DOKURA NEWS

FALL 2010

WE'RE LATE!

Yes, this edition of DOKURA NEWS was to have been printed in late October. With the elections across the region of October 25th, the Directors of DOKURA decided to hold off on the fall newsletter, until the results of the election were in hand.

We trust our readers will understand.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Yes, the local elections, both Municipal and in our Unincorporated Territories, are now history and both have a number of new faces.

In our Unincorporated Territories of the Kenora District, we have but a single individual returning to the local Kenora District Services Board. DOKURA President, Bill Blower was acclaimed in the Lac Seul riding.

In the Lake of the Woods South area, Irene Kember takes over from retiring Jack McKenzie. Irene has served as the Alternate for this riding for many years, so is familiar with the issues.

In the Lake of the Woods North riding, Penny Lucas, who was the representative for the past two terms, had moved to Thunder Bay, and her alternate, Ken Pride, was not interested in serving full time. This

left the area open, and two individuals filed nomination papers.

The last Mayor of the Village of Keewatin, before it's amalgamation with Kenora, Ingrid Parkes, along with area resident and DOKURA Board Member, Barry Baltessen, both filed nomination papers.

This necessitated a formal election, which saw Barry emerge as the winner. He will represent the riding on the Kenora District Services Board for the next four years.

And, in the Unincorporated Area running east, approximately from Vermillion Bay to the Thunder Bay District – (east of Ignace) – north to about the northern boundary of Sioux Lookout and south to the Rainy River District, voters saw incumbent Ray LeRay challenged by an Oxdrift Local Services Board area resident, Sarah Campbell.

When the vote counting ended, Sarah came out on top and will represent the area on the KDSB for the next four years.

Yes, DOKURA had the contract to run the local election in the Unincorporated Territories, and once nominations closed and it became apparent an election was required in two of the four ridings, the work really began.

It was an education travelling around the Unincorporated Areas, talking to people and trying to figure out just where sites could be established to allow residents to vote.

It should be noted that for the last two elections, ALL the representatives from the Unincorporated Areas have been acclaimed. That made the process easy!

Discussions with area residents and community leaders in the two ridings produced a list of where polling stations might be located. With this list in hand, it became necessary to make a trip to each location and see if there was a hall or some community location where the vote could be conducted.

Unlike the various towns and municipalities of the District, the Unincorporated Territories have few community halls or other facilities in which to establish a polling station.

The trips proved useful in that some of the sites suggested proved unacceptable, upon inspection. Others were fine, but were locked up with no notice on their door as to who to contact for information about using the hall.

If you are involved with any of the local halls, curling rinks, legion halls, volunteer fire departments etc., who have a community building, it might not be a bad idea to post a listing of individuals to contact regarding the facility.

Well, once the locations had been established, and contact individuals chased down and rental confirmed, it was time to find staff who could be hired as Deputy Returning Officers and Poll Clerks, to actually conduct the election on October 25th.

That was easy in some cases, but proved to be quite a challenge in others.

No, DOKURA was not looking for volunteers to do the work, rather had funding available to pay the individuals

not only a wage for the day, but also travel costs to attend a training session and to return the ballots once the election was over.

Some of the areas that we anticipated would be the most difficult to staff – Quibell, Dymont and Ingolf, proved just the opposite. We had local residents quite willing to step forward and take on the task.

Other areas, however, such as Minaki and Clearwater Bay, proved quite a challenge to staff.

In the end, individuals were found for all of the sites and the election went off without any problems.

To those who worked for the day, DOKURA would like to say THANK YOU, even if we had to twist a few arms to get you involved!

VOTERS LIST

Once DOKURA had established places to vote in the two Unincorporated Ridings, it became time to consider who could actually vote.

Thru extensive lobbying with Provincial politicians and their senior staff, DOKURA had been able to change the definition of who could vote, since the last election, four years ago.

Prior to this election, the definition of who was eligible to vote excluded all seasonal residents.

This was not the case in terms of local School Board and Municipal elections. Seasonal Residents were eligible to vote there.

Well, as noted, thur, in part, to DOKURA's efforts, the definition was changed this time around, so that it read the same for not only the School Board and Municipal electors, but also those in the Unincorporated Territories.

The Province, thru it's Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, had promised that they HAD DONE THE JOB and would be able to provide us with an accurate voters list – something they had not been able to do for the last election.

DOKURA had doubts, suspecting a proper enumeration had not been conducted, but were prepared to wait and see.

The first thing provided in the way of a voters list, was a computer disc with the electorate listed.

Once access to the areas applicable to our election was figured out, it became evident that the listing was broken down into school board electoral wards.

No problem. Just get a geographic listing of the Wards, and divide the lists up accordingly.

Makes sense, only no one was able to produce such a list. The Kenora Area School Board should be thanked here, for the time they put in trying to locate a copy of their Wards. In the end, they advised that they no longer had such a list, as their elections were now all conducted by mail. They had last used the Ward system about ten years ago, and any record they might have had had long since been destroyed.

The Thunder Bay office of MPAC indicated that they had the ability to produce a list, broken down into the four wards, and proceeded to send DOKURA a printed list of close to 12,000 names. They were

supposedly broken down into the four areas, but examination revealed that there were thousands of errors.

Lac Seul, as an example, was noted to have but 62 voters!

Some DOKURA Directors, some who had lived in the same location outside of school tax boundaries, for 30+ years, were omitted from the list.

Complaints to MPAC led to their producing yet another list, not much more accurate than the first.

Yes, we used what was provided to run the election, allowing individual who were not listed the opportunity to vote thru presentation of proper identification.

FUTURE ENUMERATION

As noted in the article about the recent vote, the voters list for the Unincorporated Territories is somewhat lacking.

In an effort to improve the accuracy of the list, and to provide DOKURA and other government departments with a more accurate count of just how many people – both permanent and seasonal residents – are in the Unincorporated Areas, DOKURA is pressing MPAC "To get the job done".

DOKURA has offered to meet with MPAC officials and work with them to do the job properly.

From the vastness of the area, it appears that a door to door enumeration will not take place, rather the process will be conducted by mail.

Again, while the request for information may go out to everyone (DOKURA feels it has not) it is up to the individual receiving the form to complete and return it.

At this writing, DOKURA is in touch with MPAC and trying to arrange a date convenient to all, where everyone involved can sit down and plan the next step.

Hopefully this meeting will take place by spring and DOKURA, along with other community groups, can co-ordinate contacting area residents at the time MPAC sends out their request for information.

We'll be in touch and hopefully be able to count on every group that receives a copy of this newsletter, to work with us in getting the message out to their local areas.

LOCAL ROAD FUNDING

The last issue of this publication noted that the Provincial and Federal Governments had finally gotten their act together and advised the Local Roads Boards that they had been included in the extension of the Federal Gas Tax program extension.

From reports received from area Roads Boards, the funding has increased from that received during the initial program.

DOKURA, in it's meeting with Federal MP, Greg Rickford, asked for a detailed breakdown of the funding provided to the local boards. His office provided this for the first five years of the program, and hopefully, they will be able to provide it for this extension. Once we receive it, we'll include it in an issue of this publication.

And, while on the subject of government funding of local roads in the Unincorporated Territories, DOKURA has heard back from the Province of Ontario on it's presentation this fall. DOKURA asked for funding for all the local roads who, for one reason or another, do not qualify for Roads Board Status, and their FAIR SHARE of the Federal Gas Tax rebate. The indication is that while a share of the Federal Gas Tax fund is not available for such roads, other Provincial funding may be available to Road Associations.

DOKURA is following up on this item and once more details are known, we will make them available to those concerned.

One other item while on the subject of government funding of local roads. While in Windsor Ontario at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's annual meeting in late August, DOKURA's representative made contact with an individual from CAA. It appears that organization is in the process of lobbying the Province of Ontario for a return of some of the Provincial Gas Tax to local Municipalities for their use in road repair.

We were quick to point out to CAA that we in the Unincorporated Areas of Ontario, have roads too, and should be included in any such funding.

A follow up has been sent to the CAA on this point, noting that their presentation should include not only the Municipalities, but also the Local Roads Boards AND Local Road Associations.

No doubt this will be a long process, and we need to stay involved.

Who knows what is on the horizon with a Provincial election in Ontario, scheduled for next fall!

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

DOKURA sends out copies of its newsletter, published four times a year, to all the local Roads Boards, Road Associations, Local Services Boards, Volunteer Fire Teams and other community groups in the Kenora District.

Needless to say, the distribution of the publication misses many who might be interested in the activities of the Association.

If you are borrowing a copy of this edition, and would like to be added to the mailing list for future editions, please take a moment to send us an "E" Mail with your name and address.

DOKURA can be reached by "E" Mail at dokuraorg@hotmail.com or by regular mail at Box 1245 Keewatin Post Office, Kenora, On. P0X 1C0

We look forward to hearing from you.