

# **DOKURA NEWS**

**SUMMER 2014**

# ANNUAL MEETING

It's that time of year again, when we have to have our annual meeting to approve the actions of the Directors since the last annual meeting; receive reports from some of the Directors on their activities; approve the financial statement; and elect a new slate of individuals to run the organization for the coming year.

So, in keeping with past policies – moving the meeting around the District – with Oxdrift hosting the last meeting in Vermillion Bay, it's the Lake of the Woods South's turn to act as host.

The meeting will be held on Friday evening, August 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Longbow Lake Fire Hall. That's on the corner of Highway #17 and the Longbow Lake Road, just east of the City of Kenora.

Starting time is set for 7:00 PM.

Please mark you calendar and make an effort to attend.

# PROVINCIAL LAND TAX REFORM

The Ministry of Finance of the Province of Ontario appears to be looking at changes to the Provincial Land Tax currently applied to each and every property in the Unincorporated Territories of Ontario. It appears that they are looking for ways of increasing the funding derived from those of us with property in the Unincorporated Areas (more taxes) with the idea of picking up some of the costs incurred by municipalities in serving such property owners.

No, nothing has changed yet, rather DOKURA has been approached by representatives of the Ministry of Finance and asked to meet with them to discuss potential changes in this respect.

That's where you, the property owners in the Unincorporated Areas, come in. DOKURA would like to hear from you with your thoughts on what you might feel fair in the way of change.

As an example, presently property owners in the Unincorporated Areas are taxed at one rate if they are outside a School Board Boundary and double, if their property is within a School Board area. Is this fair or should everyone in Unincorporated Areas be taxed at the same rate?

Or

Should those who reside close to a city or town pay more with such funds going to support the cost of certain services provided by the town?

This is an example of one of the topics that will be up for discussion under New Business at the Annual Meeting. If you have any thoughts you would like DOKURA's Directors to take into consideration when talking to Ministry officials, please make the effort to attend the August 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting and join in the discussion.

Can't make the meeting, but would still like to have your concerns taken into consideration? Put your ideas down on paper and send them to DOKURA by snail mail at Box 1245 Keewatin Post Office, Kenora, On. P0X 1C0, or by "E" Mail at HYPERLINK "mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com" [dokuraorg@hotmail.com](mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com). Your comments will be taken into consideration by Directors who will be meeting with Ministry officials.

## NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

The District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association (DOKURA) tries to send copies of it's newsletters to more than one individual on the various Local Roads Boards, Local Road Associations, Local Services Boards, Volunteer Fire Departments and other organized community groups it has been able to identify in the Kenora District. Unfortunately, we are not able to identify everyone who might like a copy, so PLEASE help us out. If you are the only individual in your organization receiving this publication, we hope you will make copies available to others in your area. If you would like extra copies sent to you for distribution, every time we publish a newsletter, please let our Secretary know and we'll be happy to send you the number required.

That goes for this issue too. If you would like additional copies, please call our Secretary, Irene Kember at 807-543-2128 and she'll be happy to send them along.

## OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup> PROVINCE WIDE LOCAL ELECTION

2014 is an election year across Ontario - at least at the Municipal level.

And, although the District of Kenora is not a Municipality, they too are included in this province wide election. The residents of the Kenora District who reside outside the boundaries of the nine Cities, Towns and Municipalities - the area referred to by the province as "TWOMO's", (Territory Without Municipal Organization) have to elect four individuals to represent them on the Kenora District Services Board. The successful candidates will serve for a four year term commencing January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

No, unlike the individuals who make up the Board of Directors of DOKURA, the positions are not filled by volunteers. The successful candidates are paid for their service. The pay is not excessive, just \$2,000.00 per year plus \$125.00 per meeting attended, plus a per kilometer travel expense. If an overnite stay is required, that, plus a meal allowance is included too.

The seats are divided into four electoral wards, namely The Lake of The Woods North, the Lake of The Woods South, Oxdrift and Lac Seul. Anyone who is a Canadian Citizen, age 18 or over and a property owner, tenant or partner of either, is eligible to stand for office. This includes seasonal residents.

No, there is no cost to run, rather if you meet the qualifications briefly outlined above, you can put you name forward by completing a short self nomination form.

DOKURA is responsible for running his election - under contract indirectly from the Province of Ontario. The province provides the majority of the funding to cover the

election costs, with any overrun being picked up by the KDSB.

The closing day for nominations is 6:00 PM on Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>.

SO, if you would like to let your name stand for office in any one of the four wards, you can obtain nomination papers from DOKURA's Vice President, Jack McKenzie, who is the Returning Officer for this election. He may be contacted by phone at 807-548-4069 for details.

Oh yes, blank nomination papers will be available for interested individuals to pick up at the August 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting. One more reason to attend!

## DOKURA FUNDING

Readers familiar with the operation of DOKURA are well aware that all of the activities of the organization are carried out by the efforts of the volunteers who serve on it's board. Outside of the elected officials who sit on the Kenora District Services Board, no one is paid for this work.

DOKURA has been successful in building up a small bank account, thru the generous donations of a few. The need continues for funds to cover the cost of travel to and from meetings with various government officials, as well as the cost of printing and delivery of this newsletter.

That's where you come in, as an individual or community group.

DOKURA has no formal membership fee, rather membership is open to all in the Unincorporated Areas of the District of Kenora. What DOKURA does, however, is ask for a voluntary donation. If you feel DOKURA is doing something worthwhile, consider sending a check. Donations can be sent to;

DOKURA  
Box 1245 Keewatin Post Office  
Kenora, Ontario  
POX 1C0

## VOTER ENUMERTION

DOKURA has spent many hours and written numerous letters to the provincial corporation responsible to the Province of Ontario for providing a meaningful voters list - MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation).

Unfortunately, MPAC either does not care or lacks the will and/or funding to do the job correctly in our area. A copy of the names as they appear on the Provincial Land Tax rolls is not sufficient.

So, for the October election, if you are one of the majority who is not listed on the list of eligible voters provided by MPAC, you will still be eligible to vote by simply completing a short declaration at the poling station on election day.

# LAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

Eight of the nine municipalities within the Kenora District have at least one land ambulance base located within their municipal boundaries. Sioux Narrows – Nestor Falls has two sites, while Vermillion Bay has but a local, volunteer staffed, first responder team. No ambulance.

The bases located within the municipalities are paid for, staffed and operated by the Kenora District Services Board. They are there not only for the benefit of the resident of the municipalities within which they are located, but also the residents of the surrounding Unincorporated Territories.

Supported by a resolution passed at the annual meeting in the fall of 2012, DOKURA formally asked the Kenora District Services Board to expand their emergency ambulance service to include a base in Vermillion Bay. Presently resident of that community, and the surrounding Unincorporated Territories, have to wait for an ambulance to arrive from either Dryden, Ear Falls or Kenora.

This request prompted the Services Board to undertake a complete review of the ambulance service currently provided within the entire District. Unfortunately the result of this study suggested that there was not enough demand to warrant a base in Vermillion Bay.

DOKURA does not agree with this decision and hopes the members who are to be elected to the new KDSB Board will re-open the question. The Unincorporated Territories four representatives supported the proposal, however they make up but four of the thirteen votes who made the decision.

# FEDERAL GAS TAX REBATE PROGRAM AND FUNDING OF LOCAL ROADS

Have you talked to a Province of Ontario MPP or a Federal MP about continuing the Federal gas tax rebate program beyond it's December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014 scheduled ending for Ontario's Roads Boards?

Well, DOKURA certainly has and although we've heard nothing formal at the time of the writing of this newsletter, we understand unofficially that the Province and the Federal Government have agreed to extend the program beyond December 31<sup>st</sup>, of this year.

That's great news, assuming it is correct. Unfortunately, for the many many local roads that serve area property owners that are not a Roads Board, they appear to be, once again, left out of this government funding. DOKURA had lobbied hard with numerous provincial and federal politicians and while many appear responsive to our request for the expansion of the program, they either lack the power to do anything about it or lack the interest to do so.

DOKURA did host a meeting in the Keewatin Curling Rink a while back, in which

representatives of Ontario's Ministry of Transportation explained what was required for local Road Associations to apply for non-roads board funding - known as 50-50 special roads funding. Approximate 25 Local Road Association representatives were on hand for the meeting. Several took the information gained at the gathering and worked further with the province in the hopes of getting funding. Unfortunately, to date we do not know of any who have been successful.

## DOKURA's DIRECTORS

The following is a list of the current Directors of DOKURA. Please feel free to contact them if you have any comments on what they are doing or you have any concerns on local issues that you would like to see DOKURA become involved in.

President	Bill Blower	Lac Seul
Vice President	Jack McKenzie	Lake of the Woods South
Sec/Treasurer	Irene Kember	Lake of the Woods South
Director	Ray Leray	Oxdrift
Director	Colin Hodgson	Lake of the Woods South
Director	Gord Dingman	Lac Seul
Director	Ken Pride	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Josh Johnson	Oxdrift
Director	Barry Baltessen	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Ron Cooke	Lac Seul

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**LOOKING OUT FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE RESIDENTS FROM THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS IN THE DISTRICT OF KENORA**