

# Spotlight

September 2015

## On the Road Again

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, WKBRHD Board members attended tours of the Slocan Community Health Centre in New Denver and the Arrow Lakes Hospital in Nakusp. The tours were conducted by Suzanne McCombs, Community Health Services Administrator for both sites.

### “The Hub of the Community”

Board members learned that the New Denver hospital is a campus style site; in addition to the acute care facility, it boasts a locums’ apartment; two houses (which accommodate a physician and a nurse); an annex that contains the maintenance department and BC Ambulance; the Pavillion, a long term care facility that is home to 26 residents and offers palliative and respite care; and a gymnasium that serves the community. Community members lovingly maintain the beautiful gardens that surround the facility.

“This site is the hub of the community,” said McCombs.

The New Denver site is unique not only for this set-up but because it has its own sewage treatment plant. Additionally, the site is heated by an electric boiler as natural gas does not service the facility.

The health centre offers 24/7 emergency care as well as a heli pad. X-rays are offered three times per week and a physiotherapist alternates between New Denver and Nakusp. The arrival of a nurse practitioner has helped to take pressure off the two New Denver doctors. The practitioner also travels to Slocan City two times per week to treat patients.

“The commitment of our staff sustains the facility,” said McCombs, noting that the IH’s relationship with the hospital’s physicians is vital. The New Denver doctors have been able to use Rural Emergency Enhancement Fund money to create “a well-stocked ER.”

Jonathan Jinjoe, Plant Services Manager, pointed out that the site requires a new generator as the single current unit poses a risk. This ask for capital funds will likely come before the WKBRHD Board for its 2016/2017 budget deliberations.



Nakusp Mayor Karen Hamling (left) and New Denver Mayor Ann Bunka (right) at the Slocan Community Hospital in New Denver. Mayor Bunka is wearing the mask as she had a cold.

### “The Blood of the Community”

The Board learned that the Arrow Lakes Hospital is a prime example of a multi-disciplinary approach to health care. The departments are very collaborative, meeting each day to discuss patients and programs. “Rural hospitals are the blood of the community,” said site manager Suzanne McCombs.



In addition to offering 24/7 emergency care, the site receives visits from a chiropractor, pediatrician, carpal tunnel specialist, respiratory therapist, psychiatrist, audiologist and internist. Telehealth enables the health care provides to connect with specialists from around BC and the world.

“This building has been well-supported by Interior Health and the WKBRHD and the infrastructure is in good condition” said plant services manager Jonathan Jinjoe. The roof was recently replaced, the heliport is well maintained, the fuel tanks that were buried beneath the parking lot have been relocated, a new generator was installed, new flooring was laid in the long term care facility, and a nurse call system was added.



Plans for the site include a redesigned nurses station, which Jinjoe calls “the heart of the rural hospital.” Improved site lines will enable staff to better serve patients. The trauma room is under utilized and requires more electrical outlets.

“The hospital auxiliary buys us lots of equipment and I’m running around trying to find a place to plug it all in,” laughs McCombs.

The two old operating rooms are also underused so staff are considering repurposing the space for Telehealth and/or specialists’ rooms.



Area K Director Paul Peterson in front of the Arrow Lakes Hospital’s new generator which was partly funded by the WKBRHD.

## 2015 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Oct. 28	Kaslo, JV Humphries School – Lighthouse Theatre	6 p.m.
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At the October meeting, Interior Health staff will make a presentation on how the authority plans for capital projects and how local government can provide input into that planning.

If any community groups or delegations would like to present to the Board at the Kaslo meeting, please contact Anitra Winje at [awinje@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:awinje@rdck.bc.ca) or 250.352.8166.

Agendas and refreshments will be provided at the meeting.

## New Board Members at Table

The Board welcomed new Directors Stephen White of Salmo (*left, below*) and Brett Rakuson of Warfield (*right, below*) to the WKBRHD. Previously, Directors White and Rakuson served as alternate directors on the Board.



The Board thanks former Director Cathy Paton for her contributions



to the WKBRHD. Ted Pahl will serve as the alternate director for Warfield.

## WKBRHD at UBCM

The WKBRHD’s Executive Committee met with Interior Health President/CEO Dr. Robert Halpenny and Chair Erwin Malzer to raise the following three concerns:

- **Paramedicine Initiative** – This program will see 80 full time equivalent paramedic professionals hired into rural and remote communities to assist in hospital, home, and ambulatory care. The WKBRHD asked Interior Health how it determines which communities are identified for these positions and how the involvement of local elected officials and the potential for local input will be considered in this process. The WKBRHD requested that Kaslo and Winlaw be considered for pilot projects.
- **The shift from Acute Care to Home Care** - The shift from acute to home care is one that appears to have support in the Kootenay and Boundary areas. Due to the demographic and the remote nature of our area, the WKBRHD could be a possible area for a test case for some of the initiatives being contemplated by the Ministry of Health. The WKBRHD discussed Interior Health’s plans to implement this program and whether it has considered our region. Interior Health responded that funding is the primary issue currently.
- **Small Water Systems** – The WKBRHD asked Interior Health if small water systems are complying with the requirements to follow the same standards as larger water systems. The WKBRHD also asked about potential alternatives to managing costs to small water systems to comply as well as the consistent application of the regulations. The WKBRHD also requested that Interior Health staff speak with improvement districts in the region to help them understand the regulations and reach compliance. Interior Health responded that it will consider this.

## The Rotvold Report

Chair Rotvold reported that she was asked by Interior Health to participate in the IHA Community Partners Accreditation Survey; she was the only hospital district board chair in the IHA to be invited to participate. She raised the following issues as significant to our hospital district: climate, weather, geography, transportation, isolated rural communities, sustainable health care and recruitment of health care providers.

Chair Rotvold and Secretary Horn will attend the next CAO/Chairs’ meeting in Kelowna on October 21<sup>st</sup>. They will raise these matters: status of the Arrow Lakes Hospital ER; Interior Health’s Rural Strategy; Kootenay Lake Hospital laundry service; carbon footprints of health authorities; and physicians: fee-for-service versus contracts.

### DID YOU KNOW...

**That Interior Health provides services to more than 742,000 people in the BC interior?**