

KELOWNA

Water usage reports streamlined

Valley water purveyors will better track how much water is used by different sectors of the community

By RON SEYMOUR
The Okanagan Sunday

A new reporting system will provide a more accurate and timely measure of how much water is being used by Okanagan residents, farmers and businesses. Dozens of the Valley's water purveyors will use the web-based

tool to provide monthly reckonings of total usage, rather than the once-a-year reporting scheme that's currently employed.

"What we're talking about today is a great step forward in the Okanagan (and) it's really a first in British Columbia," Anna Warwick Sears, executive director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, said Friday at a press conference.

The new program, dubbed the Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool, will help to better manage total water supplies and prepare the Valley for shortages that may arise in the future because of

population increases and climate change, officials say.

"It's really about preserving this beautiful environment we all share," Sears said.

Information on water use is relayed to the provincial government, which is responsible for allocating the permitted amounts among the different, independently run irrigation and domestic systems.

In the past, there have occasionally been conflicts between the two dozen water systems concerning the allocations and usage limits.

"There used to be a lot of parochialism, everybody

protecting their little bit of water. But it's coming together now," said Kelowna-Lake Country MP Ron Cannan.

As well as reporting water use once a year, managers of the different systems are often asked for similar information by a variety of government agencies. The new computerized system will eliminate such duplication, said Bob Hrasko of the Black Mountain Irrigation System.

"And just as importantly, we'll be able to see what other water utilities in the valley are extracting, helping us work together and manage our common water

resource," Hrasko said.

There was a suggestion at the press conference that purveyors may not always have been providing detailed records on water use. Wenda Mason of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Operations said provincial officials sometimes saw exactly the same figure recorded year after year in the annual filings submitted by water purveyors.

Devising and implementing the SWURT system cost \$250,000, with the federal government covering two-thirds and Valley taxpayers, through the OBWB, providing the balance.

VALLEY IN BRIEF

Falcon to fly into South Okanagan

B.C. Liberal leadership candidate Kevin Falcon will make a swing through the South Okanagan on Monday.

Falcon, the MLA for Surrey-Cloverdale, will be meet with B.C. Liberal Party members at the Oliver Community Centre from noon to 1:15 p.m., at the Best Western Sunrise Inn in Osoyoos from 1:45 to 3 p.m., at the Riverbed and Bistro in Keremeos from 4 to 4:45 p.m. and at courtyard ballroom of the Ramada Inn and Suites in Penticton from 6 to 7:15 p.m.

This is Falcon's second visit to Penticton since he announced his intent to run for leader. He was previously in the city Dec. 15.

Oliver moves ahead with airport plan

Oliver town council has decided to direct funds to create a strategic plan for the regional airport improvement project.

Council made the decision after initial attempts to secure a \$26,000 grant for the planning portion of the project was declined in January. However, councillors agreed with the airport advisory committee's position that establishing an airport can be an economic benefit for the community.

The advisory committee's next objective is to conduct a competitive bidding process to secure a consultant with the right combination of expertise and experience in airport strategic planning to come up with a feasible plan.

The consultant will work under the direction of the airport advisory committee to develop a plan and present it to council for review and approval.

Tough as Nails at Prospera Place

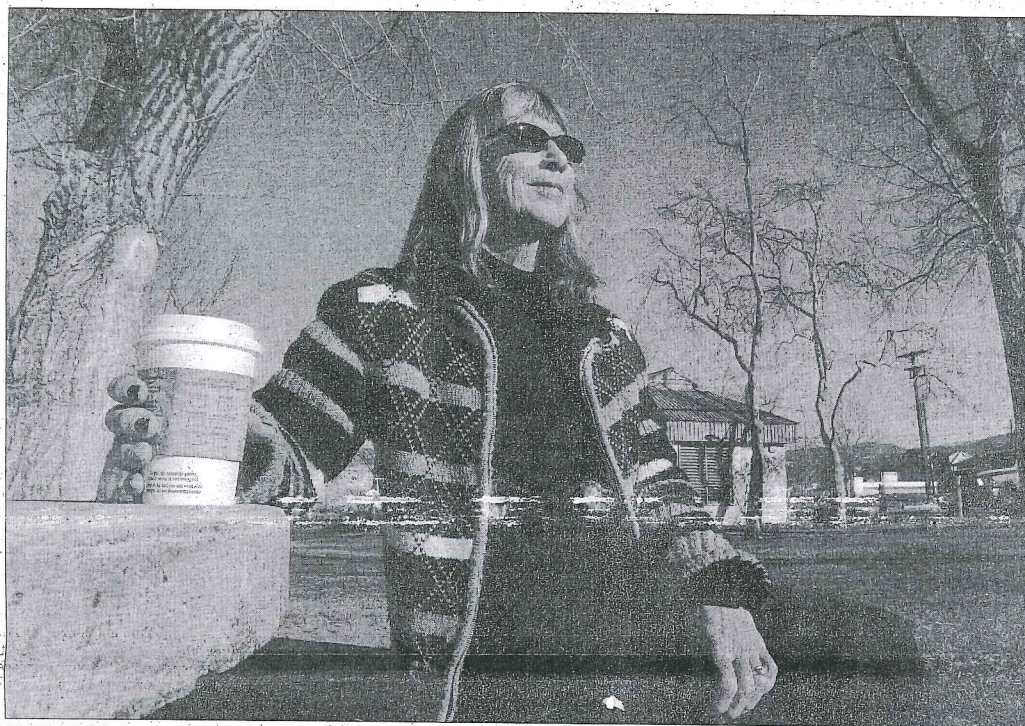
Local contractors are invited to the Home Hardware Stores Tough as Nails tradeshow and competition at Prospera Place in Kelowna on Monday.

The show runs from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. and features more than 70 building materials manufacturers displaying and demonstrating their wares.

The show is expected to attract 1,000 professional contractors.

The contractors are also welcome to take part in the skills competitions such as nail driving, saw by sight and driver drill.

— The Okanagan Sunday



GARY NYLANDER/The Okanagan Sunday

Mercury rising

Elaina Dolbel of Kelowna enjoys a coffee and muffin while at Gyro Beach Park, Kelowna, on Saturday. A blown-weather forecast brought smiles to the faces of Okanagan residents on Saturday. The mercury rose well past the forecast high of 1 C, reaching 8 C by late afternoon in Kelowna. Though pleasantly mild, that was still a fair piece off the Okanagan record for the day, set in Penticton in 1991 when the temperature reached 13. The extended forecast calls for daily high temperatures to be a degree above the seasonal average of 3 C for most of the next two weeks.

Taste of Penticton shelved

By Okanagan Sunday Staff

A Taste of Penticton, which was to feature a variety of food and culinary delights from cafes, pubs and restaurants in the South Okanagan, has been shelved.

Lori Dunn of CLC Productions and one of three people involved along with Chris Boehm and Cindy Nelson, said although the public appeared to be "chomping at the bit for this," they needed time to attract more businesses.

It had been planned for Feb. 19 at the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre.

"We didn't give it enough lead time," said Dunn, noting they be-

gan planning last October. "We're pulling back and re-evaluating. We still have a website up (www.tasteofpenticton.ca), we have a Facebook group and we're going to sort of continue to garner interest, we're going to pick another date ... we're hoping to get into people's marketing plans."

Dunn estimated they'd need about 35-40 participants to make it feasible and to create a fun environment. In addition to the food and drink samplings they also planned to bring in live entertainment and offer door prizes.

In total, only seven restaurants registered for the event. However, there was interest expressed from

several wineries.

Dunn said they wanted to make certain they had a sufficient variety of eateries participating in order to attract all members of the public.

"We were going to have a licensed area, but it was going to be a family event during the day," she said.

She noted that it's not a "vending event" and they're interested in creating a venue for restaurants, pubs and other food-related businesses to promote themselves and create interest during the winter.

Penticton used to have a similar event many years ago, however, Dunn is uncertain why it was cancelled.

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Lori Dunn

Taste of Kelowna, which is run in conjunction with the B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association, has been a welcome event for more than 20 years.