

FRAUD

RCMP investigating mysterious letters

**Fake city notices
warning of jets'
chemical trails
prompt angry calls**

By JOHN MOORHOUSE
Special to The Daily Courier

Letters circulating in West Kelowna warning residents about jet aircraft "chemtrails" are frauds, the District of West Kelowna advised on Wednesday.

Just like letters distributed Monday in Penticton, these use the municipal letterhead and claim to be from an environment department official named Susan Smith. But West Kelowna does not have an environment department, nor an employee named Susan Smith, and is not distributing letters regarding chemtrails.

Penticton officials were angry after dozens of leaflets were found on windshields of vehicles parked along

Lakeshore Drive and in motel parking lots on Monday. In addition to showing the city logo, the "alert notice" was signed by Smith, allegedly the city's environmental department manager. Chuck Loewen, the city's general manager of recreation and facilities, said Tuesday there's no such position or person.

"There is no environmental department. There is no Susan Smith. That is all false," he said.

The Penticton and West Kelowna cases have been turned over to the RCMP to investigate.

"We take it very seriously because, first of all, they are utilizing city property — city letterhead — for their own means, and those are fraudulent," Loewen said. "We are very concerned that a very wrong message is going to the public — a false message — that can cause alarm in some cases."

Loewen said City Hall received dozens of phone calls and emails from people upset about the notices.

Cody Awid of Edmonton said he found one of the leaflets on his car

windshield in Penticton. Similar notes were placed on other vehicles in the same parking lot, while others were lying on the ground. Awid said he was confused by the notice and wondered why he hadn't heard about the issue in the media.

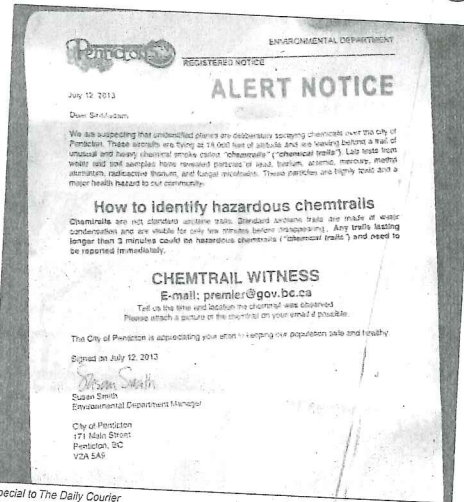
"It just didn't seem too legit as a way to get the news out," he said. "I would have thought it would be in the paper or on the news, but not like a flyer that goes on your car."

The notice, dated July 12, suggested that "unidentified planes are deliberately spraying chemicals over the City of Penticton."

It said the high-flying aircraft are leaving behind a chemical trail, markedly different from standard jet contrails that consist of condensed water vapour. The notice claimed lab tests revealed particles of lead, barium, arsenic and other toxins in water and soil samples.

So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the notes.

West Kelowna asks people with information to call 778-797-1000.



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RCMP are investigating the distribution of bogus "alert notices" warning of chemical trails from aircraft flying overhead.

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Water board gets OK for new milfoil plan

By Daily Courier Staff

The Okanagan Basin Water Board has been given the go ahead for a new plan to control milfoil.

The OBWB has been working with provincial officials to develop a new system and comprehensive mapping for the 53 kilometres of shoreline in which they are responsible for controlling milfoil growth.

The board has been granted a five-year permit to combat the problem.

"In the past, we've had to notify the province twice a year, even though our operations have been relatively consistent for decades," said James Littley, OBWB of- fice and project manager in a press release.

"This year, we were able to collaborate with provincial staff to develop best practices that will let us control the weeds, and protect the lakes' sensitive species and ecosystems."

Since the 1970s, the OBWB has been responsible for controlling Eurasian water milfoil in Okanagan lakes.

Due to new species and environmental concerns however, older methods are no longer enough to control the invasive species.

Milfoil is a freshwater, aquatic plant that can grow in water nearly six metres deep, and can grow up to five centimetres per day.

If the plant isn't contained, it can carpet the surface of the water and, in turn, affect water quality and the surrounding habitat.

The program's summer harvesting got off to a late start, but Littley is confident operators will make up for lost time.

"In the long-term though, this plan will allow us more flexibility and allow us to make greater headway in reducing the density in really troubled areas," he said.