

News

Water improvement applications overflowing

RICHARD ROLKE
Morning Star Staff

There's just not enough cash to go around.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board has \$58,000 available for water projects in the North Okanagan but local jurisdictions have applied for about \$100,000 for 2016.

"It doesn't take too

long to use that," said director Doug Dirk of the \$58,000 cap.

The Regional District of North Okanagan forwarded grant requests to OBWB Wednesday and applications are also coming from Vernon, Coldstream and Spallumcheen.

"If it's over-subscribed, someone is not going to get a grant,"

said Dirk.

Among the applications being forwarded by RDNO is one from the Deep Creek Improvement District for a sensitive habitat inventory mapping study. About \$15,000 to \$20,000 is

being sought.

Also being forwarded on to OBWB is a grant request from the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program for environmental resource kits and outdoor learning spaces at schools.



Doug Dirk

However, there were some concerns from Dirk, who is one of three RDNO representatives to OBWB and will be involved in selecting successful applicants.

"There's no financial information for this," said Dirk of the OCCP application, including other potential revenue sources.

Director Mike

Macnabb, though, didn't want the regional district board to possibly block OCCP's ability to seek funds.

"For us to self-select (whose application is forwarded) is wrong. We should send the application to that

organization (OBWB), which will then decide," he said.



Science Centre support put on hold

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Greater Vernon politicians aren't saying no to possibly funding a local amenity. But they also aren't saying yes.

The Greater Vernon Advisory Committee has been told by Coldstream that it supports current service levels until the completion of the cultural plan. As a result, any prospect of the Okanagan Science Centre becoming an official function

is on hold.

"It's a reminder of the process that's in place," said Doug Dirk, a Coldstream director.

"It's not about the specific item (science centre). It's about how you proceed."

Any changes to the scope of the parks and recreation service requires unanimous consent of Vernon, Coldstream and the two electoral areas.

If the Okanagan Science Centre were

to become a permanent function, like the art gallery, museum or Teen Junction, that would allow it access annual funding from GVAC.

Grant decisions deferred

There isn't any cash immediately going to local organizations.

Instead of awarding funding from the arts, culture and youth project grant program, the Greater Vernon Advisory Committee

has decided to wait on a decision until March 10.

"I don't support some of these projects because we need more information on them," said Dirk.

"We should look at the value of the project put forward and not just because money is there. Does it fit our goals and what we want to encourage?"

Some of the projects seeking funds include purchasing a grand

piano, creating butterfly habitat and historic plaques at Silver Star Mountain.

Early approval has been given to the North Okanagan Optimists Club, so it can plan for the Heritage Fair this spring.

Local cherries pick of the crop

Morning Star Staff

The Okanagan's cherry crop is popular.

B.C.'s cherry exports increased by 56 per cent in 2015 to 13,600 metric tonnes. They had a value of \$91.7 million, a 70 per cent increase.

"The data also includes a significant rise in sour cherry exports from \$2.7 million in 2014 to \$11.2 million in 2015," said Norm Letnick, agriculture minister and Lake Country MLA.

"Focusing on high-value B.C. products like late-season cherries



Norm Letnick

is key to growing the B.C. government's agrifood sector to a \$15-billion-a-year industry by 2020."

In 2014, Letnick was part of a delegation that resulted in full access for fresh cherries into China.

"As a direct result of our efforts, the export value of fresh, sweet cherries to China has more than doubled from 2014 to 2015, rising from \$9.9 million to \$24 million," he said.

"We are going to build on this momentum. Thanks to the close working relationship with our provincial cherry industry, we look forward to exploring new opportunities with Pacific Rim countries that recently signed the Trans Pacific Partnership."

Happy Retirement!

Annette Pollok
We are sad to announce the retirement of our Medical Office Assistant and friend.



After 36 years of dedication, she is moving on to pursue her multitude of other interests. She will be deeply missed by all the staff here and most of all, by our patients. We wish her everything of the best in her retirement!

Dr Louis Boucher & staff.

Tax News from Dean Chapple at H&R Block

The B.C. Seniors Home Renovation Tax Credit is now in its fourth year. This credit is a refundable credit for renovations done to their principal residence during 2015.

The renovations are to provide them with the ability to remain in their homes longer. This credit is calculated at 10% of eligible expenses up to \$10,000 resulting in a maximum credit of \$1,000.

Some examples of eligible expenses would be grab bars, handrails, walk-in bathtubs, wheel-in showers, Non slip flooring in the bathroom, lowering existing counters/cupboards. Some examples of ineligible expenses would be general maintenance such as plumbing or electrical repairs, repairs to the roof, new windows, appliances, installing new heating or air-conditioning systems, and replacing insulation.

Seniors do not have to be disabled in order to claim the credit. Spouses or Common-law partners can split the credit. This credit is also available to caregivers who have a family member that is a senior that is or will soon be residing in their home. This credit will be ongoing and not just for one year.

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