

DoKURA NEWS

Summer, 2021

Welcome to the Summer 2021 newsletter for DoKURA (The District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association). Over the past few months the association's directors have been busy tracking several issues that impact the non-municipal areas of the region.

Changes Coming to 9-1-1 Services

Because most 911 systems were originally built using analog rather than digital technologies, public safety answering points (PSAPs) across the country need to be upgraded to a digital or Internet Protocol (IP)-based 911 system, commonly referred to as Next Generation 911 (NG911).

The success and reliability of 911, in jurisdictions where it is offered, will be greatly improved with the implementation of NG911. It will enhance emergency number services to create a faster, more resilient system that allows voice, photos, videos and text messages to flow seamlessly from the public to the 911 network. The migration to NG9-1-1 has been delayed due to COVID-19. However, on June 14, 2021, the CRTC released Telecom Decision 2021-199 in response to NoC 2020-326. In this decision, the commission directed NG9-1-1 network providers and Originating Network Providers (ONP) be ready to provide NG9-1-1 Voice by March of 2022. Having an approved 911 system is still a requirement to benefit from upcoming changes.

No timeline has been announced with respect to the implementation and provision of real-time text (RTT)-based NG9-1-1 Text Messaging until standards are sufficiently advanced with respect to RTT callback and bridging. The Commission has requested that the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC-ESWG) file a report with the Commission with recommendations related to the provision and timing of NG9-1-1 Text Messaging for all stakeholders.

Decommissioning of the existing E9-1-1 network has been established for March 4, 2025. Further information is available on the following link to the Commission Decision:

<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2021/2021-199.htm>.

Text for 9-1-1 service is currently available in any jurisdiction with 9-1-1 capability. Individuals interested in this service can register through their mobile telephone service provider. More details are available on the following link: <https://www.textwith911.ca/en/wireless-service-providers/>.

DoKURA 2021 AGM

With the current relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions, DoKURA is planning for an in-person 2021 AGM. This year's meeting will be held at the **Oxdrift Fire Department Hall on September 16 at 4 pm.**

Your association has been busy this year. Please plan to attend to learn more about current issues such as broadband, social services, affordable housing, emergency 9-1-1 services and forestry.

DoKURA Fighting for Universal Access to Broadband

Significant progress has been made on addressing broadband issues.

DoKURA Directors were pleased to be a part of the June 24 Kenora District Services Board (KDSB) announcement with the Government of Canada for \$4.981 million in funding from the Universal Broadband Fund. This project will connect as many as 4,200 customers to the internet, many for the first time. Further information, including how to apply, is available on [our website](#). (continued...)

DoKURA Fighting for Universal Access to Broadband (continued from page 1)

This came about in part because, in mid-December 2020, DoKURA decided that fair access to high-speed internet was a right of all residents in its large territory. It was felt to be akin to rural electrification in Northwestern Ontario in the 1950's. Steps were taken to take advantage of Federal and Provincial funding programs for broadband improvements. Since DoKURA does not have either financial resources or staff to implement a project, KDSB agreed to advance an initiative with FSET Information Technology technical involvement.

DoKURA has met with telcos serving the Kenora District, and with an emerging local internet supplier, to identify further projects that will increase access opportunities and increase internet speed and reliability to residents. We anticipate that more projects will emerge in months to come. DoKURA will work with internet suppliers and project partners to bring improved internet service to our residents.

Earlier, DoKURA reached out to residents by e-mail and received a wealth of responses, all complaining about lack of internet access, low speed, uncertain reliability and cost. Many respondents spoke about their children not being able to access on-line learning during CoVID-19. Health, social services and justice services are difficult to access without good internet. Existing businesses and prospective businesses said it was either difficult to manage an existing enterprise or contemplate a new business without better internet support.

This is an extremely fluid file. You can keep up to the minute on recent events by accessing [our website](#). Similar expansions were recently announced for the Black Sturgeon, Schnarr, Grassy and Austin Lakes areas. More information is available [here](#).

Forestry

Forestry has been an integral part of the Kenora District economy since 1880 and, perhaps, earlier. Now, as Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF) update some of their Forest Management Plans in the DoKURA area, there are tensions emerging between interest groups.

Principally, it is the Kenora Forest Management Plan renewal that it is attracting attention as it is in the process of being renewed by OMNRF. Some proposed cutting areas are of concern to cottagers and permanent residents. The balance between harvesting and preservation of sight lines, environment, impact on roads, noise during logging and claimed conflicts between the Clearwater Bay Restriction Order and forest harvesting acts and regulations are critical issues for debate.

Recent consultations have reduced areas to be cut to the west of the Kenora boundary and other

mitigative measures have been offered by OMNRF to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of harvesting in those blocks. OMNRF is taking steps to develop Forest Management Plans that will serve to protect what we enjoy while reducing forest fire risk and sustaining a forest industry. DoKURA is monitoring development of the Kenora Forest Management Plan. Directors have had discussions with the Lake of the Woods District Stewardship Association's (LOWDSA) forestry committee. One Director is involved with the Kenora FMP planning process and has attended meetings with OMNRF officials and bilaterally with property owners on the west side of Kenora. Further information on Kenora Forest Management Planning is available on the LOWDSA website at the link below:

<https://www.lowdsa.com/articles/kenora-forest-management-plan-stage-four>.

All Nations Health Partners NEWS

DoKURA continues to be involved in health care planning and improvements in the district, providing a rural perspective in various forums.

Director Bob Stewart represents the association on the All Nations Health Partners, a co-operative group representing Kenora area First Nations, the municipalities of Kenora and Sioux Narrows Nestor Falls, and frontline health service agencies.

Over the past year much of the group's focus has been on co-ordinating efforts of its members in addressing CoVID related issues. These have included establishing isolation spaces, assisting with vaccine delivery, communication and public information; and helping with CoVID outbreaks in two area First Nation communities.

The ANHP is continuing its work towards establishing a local Ontario Health Team to improve health care delivery in the Kenora area. Once established, the team will take on some of the functions now delivered through the Northwest Local Health Improvement Network as well as serving as a co-ordination forum for local health care delivery agencies. Recruitment of medical professionals to serve people in the area and improving access to and availability of health services closer to home remain among the ANHP's priorities.

Further information is available at the partnership's website: <https://www.anhp.net/>

The health partnership is also involved in providing input into the All Nations Hospital project.

Begun in 2019, the project's task is to design and build a new health care facility in Kenora to replace the current Lake of the Woods District Hospital.

In June, Charlene Kissick, one of two community project planners for the hospital met with DoKURA board members and provided an update on the project.

This past spring the project steering committee wrapped up its initial public consultations phase and is now moving towards the next phase, which includes selection of the site for the new hospital. Three options are being looked at: building on the current site, building on a new site, or extensive renovations/new construction of the current hospital building. DoKURA has requested a seat at the table to represent the interests of residents in the unincorporated areas.

No firm timeline has yet been set for the opening of the new facility as government approval is required as each phase of the project is completed, but an eight-year period from planning to completion was targeted when the project was announced in 2019.

Further information is available at the project's website: <https://anh.lwdh.on.ca/index.php>

Ontario Launches Applications for 2021-22 Seniors Community Grant

Province's program will help improve the lives of older adults. Find our more [HERE](#).

Check out our website at dokura.com

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