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>> Article online:

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Another 100 affordable housing units in Langford includes 40 for indigenous families



Construction-site announcement of 100 more affordable housing units in Langford, at 731 Station Avenue on a rainy Thursday morning, December 13. From left: Langford Mayor Stew Young, M'akola Group CEO Kevin Albers, Premier John Horgan.

● **A total of 100 affordable housing units** will be built at 731 Station Avenue in the Langford city core area, with construction now underway for the 60 market rental units of the six-storey Phase 1 (studio size for about \$640/month up to 3-bedroom for about \$1,500/month), with commercial space on the main level.

Phase 2 will be comprised of 40 apartments — all 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units — for indigenous families to be able to put down roots in the community, with rent geared to income.

The announcement was led on December 13 at the construction site by Premier John Horgan, Langford Mayor Stew Young, and M'akola Group CEO Kevin Albers. M'akola Group praised the successful working relationship between the indigenous-housing support organization and the City of Langford that expedites developments to the benefit of developers and community, with DDCs often waived, and taxes deferred in order to get shovels in the ground and people into homes.

"Building density around a transportation corridor is good planning," said Premier Horgan, within his overall commentary of commending Langford for their growth and amenities including "a luxury resort on top of a mountain, planned communities around the region (like Westhills and Belmont), building retail and jobs for the future, and industrial sites".

Mayor Young thanked M'akola Housing for their leadership in recognizing the importance of working with community and working with city staff. "This is what Langford's all about – making sure that we provide the density and process that is efficient so that we can actually get to where we all need to be," said Young, adding that moving things forward during a housing crisis is imperative.

The Province is investing approximately \$20 million in capital costs toward the Station Avenue development: \$12 million toward Phase 1 through the Provincial Investment in Affordable Housing program and \$8 million for Phase 2 through the Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund. **WSV**

Full article: <https://westshorevoiceneews.com/langford-affordable-housing-includes-40-units-for-indigenous-families/>

SD62 decides to collect more from west shore developers; municipalities to review in new year

● **Municipalities will be approached early in the new year** for Council approvals of the Sooke School District 62 (SD62) motion (passed at their December 11 board meeting) to increase School Site Acquisition Charges (SSAC). SD62 needs more revenues in their capital fund for the acquisition of land and construction of schools. They are dealing with rapid student population growth at a rate of about 500 students per year for the next few years as more families move to Langford and the west shore area. SSACs are based on housing density.

The last time SSACs were increased by SD62 was in 2008, when housing prices were approximately 50% of what they are today. "Let's not wait 10 years, next time," said Board Chair Ravi Parmar. "I have no issue with this," said Parmar. "We still need to build multiple schools and buy land. This shows the government that we're willing to work to come to the table (with funds). Langford, Colwood and Sooke developers understand that we need the schools," Parmar said. SD62 Trustee Bob Phillips pointed out that the Home Owner Grant for eligible property owners in BC is to offset the taxes levied for redirection to school districts.

SD62 delivers public education in Langford, Colwood, Sooke, Metchosin, Highlands, and View Royal as well as the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area (including East Sooke and Port Renfrew). Premier John Horgan said during a housing announcement in Langford on December 13 that he feels the government and SD62 are keeping up the best they can with school facility development and expansion to keep pace with population growth as more families move to the west shore. **WSV**

Year-end chat with Premier John Horgan

by Mary P Brooke ~ West Shore Voice News

● **The pace is non-stop** and as the political promises are either met, modified or broken, the path gets more complex for any premier in the first term of office. Premier John Horgan seems to take it all in stride. In 2018 he has jockeyed the waves of a minority government that formed in July 2017, of environmental protection while pursuing economic growth, has provided more pathways to housing supply increase while dampening market values, and has adhered to his mission of helping as many sectors of the population and economy as as possible.

Horgan is equally proud of the poverty reduction program that embues its goal across the work of many ministries as he is of the prospect of jobs and long-term revenues from the LNG facility that got approval this year in BC's north. He readily offers that his LNG decision was controversial, but in addition to bringing more certainty to the BC economy in the years ahead, that deal helped smooth things over politically with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who was essentially side-swiped by BC's environmentally-based opposition to the TransMountain Pipeline. Call it pragmatic, or just going with the flow -- Horgan really had no choice but to let the LNG tap run future dollars into a provincial framework that has rapidly expanded its range of social programs. Likewise, he hadn't much choice than to serve the desires of his pro-environmental base when it came to obfuscating the pipeline (more specifically, the spectre of more tanker traffic on the coast).

Double score on the federal front: "The Prime Minister was grateful to have an ally" during the recent premier's conference in Montreal, over the subject of climate change and carbon pricing. Horgan's support in that helped assuage the very public heat that Trudeau was getting from Ontario Premier Doug Ford.

Horgan lives and breathes politics. It's not about stripe so much as recognizing the need to be a centerist and a pragmatist, but with a vision. He deals with multiple challenges daily yet somehow shows up for media conferences near and far, political rallies with the converted, business luncheons with the non-convinced, and holiday season open houses with the same calm demeanor and friendly banter for everyone in his path. There's less travel than he expected in the job, thanks to teleconferencing and digital media; this saves taxpayer dollars he says.

Lately Horgan has been challenging the media at live events to keep their questions on-topic for the announcement at hand (when the news release has already covered it) but media only wishes to use this access to get his comments on issues of the day. And did he realize the diminishing impact on news media resulting from election campaign spending limits? No, that was "an unintended consequence", he admits, that saw reduced revenues for the business model that delivers the reliable journalism that is particularly important during elections.

For this holiday season year-end interview, Horgan said that delivering an improved program of child care in BC is his top pick for his government's accomplishments in 2018: "It changes the lives of families when they can reduce their costs and have safe accessible quality locations" for their children. Last year his top pick was making sure one of the first things his NDP government did upon taking office was to eliminate tuition fees for people choosing to complete their 'adult grad' high school diploma; in the long term that helps people and the economy.

Horgan came to this interview by phone right after participating in an announcement at the legislative library about reduction of aquaculture in the Broughton Archipelago that will initiate the restoration of healthier and more abundant salmon. He was particularly pleased about the consultative process among government, business and first nations that will not only help the salmon survive but also set a role model for future adaptations and negotiations in a changing 21st-century landscape of integrated environment, business, and community.

He's pretty stoked about the strong economy. "There is no operating debt all in BC. We're flush with cash right now," the Premier told *West Shore Voice News*. While revenues from property purchase tax on home sales are down, revenues from taxes are up (corporate, income, and retail sales). "Consumers are confident," which he says comes from an economy that offers jobs, education opportunities, and supports like child care. "Massive investments in the tech sector, film and tourism are driving economic growth -- gaming and computer development, quantum computing are big." Some of this leads to job loss but other jobs are created; Horgan uses the example of sawmills where cutting wood with computerized precision minimizes waste of a natural resource.

Electoral reform -- aiming for proportional representation -- was a biggie in the 2018 BC political landscape. "I did what I said I would do," said Horgan. "I tried to stick with what I campaigned on and to be true to myself. I believe it needs to be reformed (from First Past The Post)." Referendum results to come by year-end.

While he didn't say so, by observation it's obvious that working in an integrated fashion with the BC Greens has been positive, to keep the minority government intact. What seems to keep Horgan himself intact is his deep connection with the people of Sooke in the farther west portion of the Langford-Juan de Fuca

riding. The resilient folks of that community that were for so long remote to the urban areas share Horgan's values of helping others. He knows many of them by name, mentioning a local quilter who is working on a project from a bolt of cloth he gave her a while back.

And with that, the call wrapped up. He was out of the car and into a Vital Vittles luncheon in Sooke for the poor and homeless. **WSV**

Hon. John Horgan, MLA
LANGFORD-JUAN DE FUCA



My best wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy, healthy holiday season!

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SD62 pushes back on federal social-policy tax change by voting themselves a pay increase



Mary Brooke, Editor, B.Sc, Cert PR

This publication has been contributing to a knowledge-based economy & society since 2008.

“Income is income is income” was essentially the reasoning behind a tax change in Canada that sees elected municipal officials and school trustees no longer getting to deduct one-third (or \$5,000 in the case of Sooke School District 62) of their service remuneration off their personal income tax. The change came within Bill C-44 in June 2017, to take effect starting 2019.

Good on SD62 for choosing to discuss this openly at their public board meetings. In the normal course of things it's hardly front-page news. But it matters. Not only that the federal government has chosen to remove a perk to trustees (that was probably first intended to offset the many quiet efforts of many elected officials for their communities -- often at a personal and lifestyle cost), but that in this case SD62 chose to 'make whole' the current income level for their trustees.

Without SD62's ultimate chosen adjustment of \$1,750 per trustee (bringing their per-trustee annual stipend to \$16,750), the new tax law would have meant a resultant pay cut (after tax) of approximately \$571 per trustee. The SD62 board could be seen to be protecting its hardworking trustees, or it could be said that they've done a bit of a workaround with taxpayer dollars in a way that others in society don't get to do.

It's unknown whether any municipalities in the west shore have made similar adjustments (we will look into that), but apparently several Boards of Education in BC have developed remuneration increases to offset the CRA tax lift.

All of this surfaces the question of privilege. Deciding to adjust the trustee stipend essentially skirts around the tax change -- indeed, the motion put forward by SD62 Trustee Bob Phillips was to "offset the new CRA tax increases for school board trustees". Do others have that opportunity or feel it's their right to do that?

The SD62 board vote on this (on December 11) did pass but was not unanimous. Trustee Wendy Hobbs voted against, saying there are "ways to do this without taking from the taxpayer". Trustee Margot Swinburnson was absent, but through Trustee Phillips had sent along comments that there should be a review in one year's time (which Chair Ravi Parmar said is policy to do so), and that the pay adjustment should not be called a pay lift but rather a tax offset. But it is what it is ... more money paid out, as a tax-change workaround.

The work of trustees is important, no debate there. The additional income to trustees (i.e. 'pay lift') is fully taxable -- they're not hiding or running from anything. But it's the defiance or sense of entitlement of this financial adjustment that readers may want to think about. The board took care of their own situation in a way few others are able to do. But they're not alone. This is a larger-scale pushback against

BC commercial vehicle collision report shows need for training, inspections, and public education

West Shore Voice News

Over the past 10 years in BC, on average about 300 people per year have died in motor vehicle incidents, with almost 20% of those incidents involving a heavy commercial vehicle. These findings were released in *An Independent Audit of Commercial Vehicle Safety* report through through the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia.

"Government's road-safety goal is zero fatal collisions," it was stated in a news release on December 11. "Everyone needs to be more aware of commercial vehicles when using the roads."

"The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and ICBC have commercial vehicle safety programs in place that prevent crashes and save lives, but much more needs to be done to ensure British Columbia's roads are safe," said Carol Bellringer, auditor general.

Heavy commercial vehicles, such as dump trucks, container trucks and semi-trailers represent about three percent of vehicles registered in BC, yet they are involved in 19% of fatal collisions. However, in the majority of fatal collisions involving a heavy commercial vehicle the commercial driver is not found to be at fault.

Safety education and awareness programs for road users on safe driving in and around commercial vehicles is one way to help prevent crashes. However, these programs are limited in BC because even though multiple organizations are involved, none have the budget or authority for overall responsibility. The report recommends that government establish clear responsibility for the promotion of commercial vehicle road safety education and awareness.

Government says it also needs to review the standards for commercial driver licensing in BC; presently, drivers are not required to take driver training to get their commercial licence.

The report also recommends doing more to ensure commercial vehicles are operating safely on BC's roads. Presently there is no clear and effective system to hold licensed private inspection facilities accountable for complying with commercial vehicle safety standards. Apparently commercial vehicle safety and enforcement officers could be more effective with better supports. Over the past three years, roadside inspection and enforcement activities with commercial vehicles in BC prevented an estimated 1,100 crashes, including four fatalities and more than 260 injuries.

Bellringer said that it's now seen "how all road users have a critical role to play in road safety". She added: "As we head into the holiday season in particular, I encourage everyone to review the Be Truck Aware safe driving tips."

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a federal approach to taxation. None of this addresses why trustees aren't paid what they're worth to begin with. If they were, there wouldn't be a scramble to patch up what is obviously seen as an unfair loss.

The small business sector (and anyone with medical tax deductions) won't need a reminder that the current federal government has slammed down hard with tax attitudes and approaches in the last few years in ways that have chipped away at those struggling sectors. The 'middle class' that the Liberals purport to be helping is actually being squeezed and deflated by all those 'nickel-and-dime' removals and reductions of small but helpful legitimate deductions. This approach has been diminishing small businesses and individuals in the past few years. All of this shows an attitude by the federal government of deriding the little guy on the one hand, while simultaneously purporting to help.

Sooke & JdF Health Foundation gets charity status: donations to help support new Sooke clinic

The Sooke and Juan de Fuca Health Foundation this week announced their new official Charity Status. Foundation board members will soon approach communities in East Sooke, Sooke, Otter Point, Shirley, and Port Renfrew to raise awareness, listen to local priorities, and enlist support for the venture. Fundraising initiatives will be announced.

The group feels this is an opportunity for individuals, businesses and organizations "to support health-related projects and services in response to both existing and emerging needs in our rapidly growing communities." However, it could be said that private donations to help support the clinic is essentially the funding of public health care from private non-taxation sources.

One of the group's first priorities will be to provide supplementary funding for a new Regional Primary Health Centre, to be built with the support of the Capital Regional District, BC Ministry of Health, and Island Health.

Sooke and Juan de Fuca Health Foundation board members are: Rick Robinson, Dr. Ellen Anderson, Dr. Roy Brown, Dr. Chris Bryant, Margot Swinburnson, MJ Whitmarsh, and Sally McLean. WSV

At a special 2 pm Council meeting on Monday, December 17 Colwood Council will review a request for \$50,000 as their portion of funding for seating at the Westshore RCMP Detachment. Apparently the initial RCMP submission to west shore municipalities for parking lot fencing, third floor renovation, and HVAC unit repair did not include furniture. Colwood's Police Building Reserve Fund of \$150,000 had enough

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for the initial request and can accommodate the furniture. Anything for 2019 and beyond would require "alternative funding sources" it is stated in a staff report. The detachment serves Colwood, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, View Royal, Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations.

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www.WestShoreVoiceNews.com

Victoria Shamrocks gearing up for 2019: 70th anniversary season

by Mary P Brooke ~ West Shore Voice News

When you can pack up to 2,500 fans into a sports venue in the west shore, something happens. There's an energy that connects and energizes. It's a fun night for fans, and a success-driver for the players.

In this case, it's for lacrosse at the Q Centre arena, home of the Victoria Shamrocks and where they hope to score the Mann Cup in 2019. In front of a full crowd there is an energy and passion that the players can draw upon to produce a win. The fans are the juice.... they come for the display of speed, skill, and athleticism.

"There's always something going on. Lacrosse today features a lot of speed. A lot of guys can burn it up on the floor. It's action-packed, says Chris Welch, general manager, Victoria Shamrocks. "Eye-hand coordination to move that ball around and find sticks with passes, take a pass and score. There's a lot of skill involved and it's exciting to watch," says Welch.

The Senior A Lacrosse season starts up again in 2019 mid-May and runs to mid-September. Under Welch as general manager and the marketing direction of the new Shamrocks Director of Corporate Partnerships David Michaud, the south island area will be hearing a lot about the Shamrocks who proudly 'bleed green'.

"It's exciting to be here on the island," says Michaud who successfully marketed the Penticton Vees Jr Hockey Club but has arrived now to make a difference in the lacrosse scene in Langford. "The team is very well supported. Fans want to come out and spend a summer night with us. We encourage young families to come out with kids. A fun night makes them want to come back." Parents now bring their kids to the games, because their father or parents may have brought them to a Shamrocks game long before that.

The Senior A sport goes back to 1910 in Canada when the made-of-gold Mann Cup was minted. In this national amateur sport the Victoria Shamrocks – established in 1950 and now gearing up to celebrate their 70th year – have won the top prize eight times, first back in 1955 and 1957, again in 1979, then in something of a winning streak in 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, and most recently in 2015. To celebrate their 70th year, big things should happen!

Season packages are now on sale at www.victoriashamrocks.com/season-memberships. There's a range of ticket options for full season membership starting at \$123 per person. And a season ticket referral program means earning gift cards when your friends buy their season tickets. The 10 private luxury boxes and upper green balcony sell out quickly.

The Shamrocks Alumni Ticket Package at \$105 includes first right of refusal on playoff and Mann Cup tickets as well as a 15% discount on Shamrocks merchandise.

"The best seat in the house is the one you own," says Michaud. "The experiences I've heard about from seasoned ticket members is that you build a little community in your section. There's a history with those seats, it becomes a social thing in addition to watching the action on the floor." Families of all ages show up. Refreshments are on hand by Westshore Parks & Recreation.

Michaud says the Shamrocks are well-supported on the corporate side. "The business community recognizes the Shamrocks' place in the community. Being around for 70 years means they've been doing some things right. The Q Centre a really nice facility and there's great fan support."

Michaud is now also president of Keycorp Sports and Entertainment Ltd, responsible for growing the division of the Keycorp group of companies by working with new and existing sports teams, entertainment venues, concert promoters, and more to bring professional-level promotion, ticketing, and event day production to Victoria, and across British Columbia.

With the Shamrocks club since 2004 and general manager since 2008, Welch says: "Victoria has been a strong lacrosse community and for a long time. We're one of the top Canadian cities in that regard. It's a sport that has always appealed. Victoria is kind of a summer town – people like to get outdoors. Box lacrosse is a popular outdoor sport for kids. Lots of people have grown up with the game," says Welch. He's excited about the 70th anniversary. The ramp-up to the high profile season includes a third Shamrocks jersey and 70th anniversary logo.

In the off-season, there's still a lot going on. There are players to find and trades to be made. A draft of graduating junior players will happen February 7, with opportunities for inter-provincial transfers after that. There are up to 25 players on an active roster (20 dressed for each game – two goal tenders and 18 runners).

In 2018 the Victoria Shamrocks team saw 16 of 25 players from the south island area. "And nine guys came from out of town to play for us (four from Calgary and five from Ontario)," says Welch. "An increasing crop of young players keeps us going," Welch explains. "The local contingent is something we emphasize, with more to come in the draft in February."

Players from Junior A have a schedule that overlaps with Senior A, both in summer. In winter, players are away doing the sport in the USA. Or they're in Professional National Lacrosse leagues (if they're not in school). For coaches and team management it's an opportunity for scouting over the winter.

Locally when students play lacrosse at school it tends to be field lacrosse. Claremont and Royal Bay high schools play an outdoor version of the game which has some significant differences to the indoor version.

The indoor Box Lacrosse sees youth working their way up through the ranks by playing minor lacrosse and working their way up through age categories. Victoria has four minor associations; the Juan de Fuca league plays at the Q Centre.

"One of the things we really celebrate is that lacrosse grew out of indigenous roots," says Welch. Long ago, lacrosse was played to settle disputes between tribes and communities as an alternative to actually going to war. That evolved into the game it is today. "There's a lot of indigenous spirituality that plays into it, such as playing the game with honour and treating the opponent and the game with respect," says Welch. "That's a big part of what the game is about." **WSV**
<https://westshorevoiceneews.com/victoria-shamrocks-gearing-up-for-70th-anniversary/>



Chris Welch, General Manager



David Michaud, Director of Corporate Partnerships

Sooke municipal buzz

West Shore Voice News

Two senior staffers at the District of Sooke are reportedly absent on administrative leave. Acting/Interim Chief Administrative Officer Brent Blackhall and Rob Howat and Director Development Services and Approving Officer, were apparently directed off the job by Sooke Mayor Maja Tait this week.

"I can confirm that they (Blackhall and Howat) are away from the office until January 19, the reasons for such are confidential. Staff and Council are working together to ensure service levels are maintained and we wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season."

Meanwhile, a District of Sooke Special In-Camera meeting has been called for 6 pm on Monday, December 17 to discuss labour relations, followed by a Special Open Meeting to consider amendments to Policy 7.3 Christmas Season Personnel Policy at 7 pm then Committee of the Whole.

In some past years, Council has had some concerns about too many staff being away on vacation time around the holiday season, in such a way that the normal required function of municipal business has been impeded.

In the past week at public events, new Sooke councillors got into the swing of things. Councillor Jeff Bateman seems already fully adapted to his new public role, Beddows offered up that he "has no regrets", McMath said she is really enjoying the new role, and St-Pierre said he is a bit astonished at having to read "400 to 500 pages of material" before a council meeting. **WSV**

Langford transportation infrastructure plans unveiled for 2019

by Mary P Brooke ~ West Shore Voice News

LANGFORD

The City of Langford Transportation and Public Works Committee heard from City Engineer Michelle Mahovich on December 11, delivering her annual Engineering Department Capital and Operations Budget for 2019 (\$5,732,839) as part of a 2019-2023 five-year plan. Council members who sit on that committee are Roger Wade (chair) and Norma Stewart.

The committee heard how new infrastructure in 2018 including 8.9 km of new roadways (including Bear Mountain Parkway and West Shore Parkway), 1.7 km more bikelanes, 1.6 km new sidewalks, 235 more streetsigns and 130 new streetlights will add up to 10% more to the maintenance budget. Funds for that come out of general revenues. That does not mean a 10% property tax increase, reminded Director of Finance Michael Dillabaugh. Generally, as more housing and businesses come to Langford, overall tax revenues increase accordingly, which helps cover increased maintenance costs.

Aging infrastructure gets taken care of. A lot of leaky culverts were repaired this year, with more of that to come in the 2019 maintenance program.

A few lane realignments (whether the road itself or lane markings) were done this year to help improve traffic efficiencies. There are now two lanes for turning left from Millstream Overpass onto Highway 1 (heading south), and now four left turn lanes at Jacklin and Jenkins will help support the huge Belmont Market and Belmont Residences development that comes onstream in 2019/2020.

Improvements on Langford Parkway to accommodate the upcoming connection to Leigh Road will continue into March 2019, ahead of the upcoming sports season at Westhills Stadium. Resulting from a traffic study done this year, a left-turn lane off Langford Parkway into the Quality Foods mall will be done in 2019 (adding about \$90,000 to the budget to amend the median, include a flashing pedestrian crosswalk, and install an improved wheelchair accessible BC Transit pad); backups there presently impede traffic flow along to Westhills and the West Shore Parkway and cause backups to Jacklin Road during rush hour.

Some reflective posts were added on a portion of Bear Mountain Parkway to discourage view-lookers who were pulling over to gaze but then their vehicles were bringing gravel back onto the road as upon pulling out.

Green City Strategies for bike and multi-purpose lanes have been ongoing since 2012, usually at about \$400,000 per year. For 2019 a Bike BC grant has not been received but the plan is to still go ahead with a connector from Humpback Park along Irwin Road to Goldstream Park.

Two more bus shelters were recently received from BC Transit. "They give us lots because they know we can get them installed," said Mahovich. The city provides the pads. One shelter will be on Millstream across from Home Depot and the other on Jenkins between Belmont Market and Westshore Town Centre. **WSV**



Trio of Sooke Councillors helped kickoff the Sooke Festival of Trees at SEAPARC December 4 (from left): Al Beddows, Brenda Parkinson, and Jeff Bateman.

Mary P Brooke - West Shore Voice News

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Blood Donor Clinic. Mon Dec 17. Sooke Legion, 6726 Eustace Rd, Sooke. www.blood.ca
City of Colwood Special Meeting of Council. Mon Dec 17. 2 pm. New Business: RCMP Detachment Building Budget 2018-2019. www.colwood.ca
City of Langford Council Meeting. Mon Dec 17. 5:30 pm. www.langford.ca
District of Sooke Special In-Camera Meeting Mon Dec 17 6 pm; Special Open Meeting 7 pm, and Committee of the Whole. www.sooke.ca
Town of View Royal. Development Cost Charges Open House. Tues Dec 18. 5 to 7 pm. Drop-in. www.viewroyal.ca
Royal Bay Dance Academy Show. Tues Dec 18. 7 pm. Royal Bay Secondary, Colwood.
Winter Wonderland Skate at JdF Arena, 1767 Island Highway, Colwood. Regular Admission. Wed Dec 19 6-7:45 pm & Thurs Dec 20 (4-5:45 pm). Fri Dec 21 4-5:45 pm, Sat Dec 22 2:15-3:45 pm, Sat Dec 23 1:15-2:45 pm. www.westshorerecreation.ca
SD62 Last Day of School before Winter Break Fri Dec 21. [Winter Break Dec 22 through Jan 6.] www.sd62.bc.ca

Always be prepared for power outages, especially in winter during storms and icy weather.



Juan de Fuca Emergency Program @jdfemerg
www.prepareyourself.ca

Xmas Eve Skate at JdF Arena, Colwood. \$2. Mon Dec 24 12-1:30 pm. www.westshorerecreation.ca
Christmas Eve Skate at SEAPARC. Mon Dec 24. \$2. 11:30 am to 12:45 pm. www.seaparc.ca
Christmas Eve Mon Dec 24. | **Christmas Tues** Dec 25 (most retail closed). | **Boxing Day** Wed Dec 26. **Highlands District office.** Closed Dec 24 through Jan 1. www.highlands.bc.ca
Sooke Region Museum. Closing for the holidays on Dec 24, re-open Jan 2. www.sookeregionmuseum.ca
New Year's Eve Skate at JdF Arena, Colwood. \$2. Mon Dec 31. 12-1:30 pm. www.westshorerecreation.ca
New Year's Eve Skate at SEAPARC. Mon Dec 31. \$2. 11:30 am to 12:45 pm. www.seaparc.ca
Happy New Year! Tues Jan 1.
District of Sooke New Year's Levee. In council chambers. Tues Jan 1. 10 am.
New Year's Day 2019 Polar Bear Swim at Esquimalt Lagoon. Tues Jan 1. 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Swimmers and spectators: bring a donation to support KidSport Greater Victoria. Prizes. www.colwood.ca

Festival of Trees. On now, to December 28 at SEAPARC Leisure Complex to support BC Children's Hospital. Vote for your favourite tree. www.seaparc.ca

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LANGFORD ON THE MOVE

TRAFFIC INFO



New landscaping in median at Langford Parkway at Langford Lake Road

New Landscaping in the medians on Langford Parkway. To accommodate BC Hydro safety standards for the height of landscaping below power lines (there was sag in the lines due to the required distance between poles), this past week the City of Langford planted deciduous 'ruby vase' Persian Ironwood and magnolia evergreen flowering shrubs, where taller red maples and cherry trees had been cut down the week before. ■

For other short-term traffic advisories see: www.langford.ca

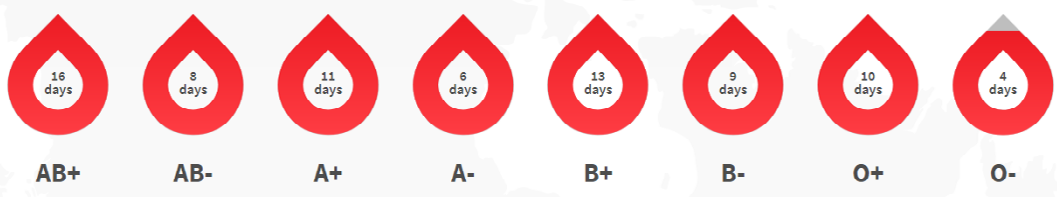
Land clearing for two new schools in West Langford starts ahead of wildlife nesting season

Despite the rain, contractors began clearing a 6.5 hectare section of land in West Langford, the future site of a new elementary and middle school. Trees are being removed in the expectation of construction to stay on track with the Sooke School District 62 (SD62)'s Long Range Facilities Plan that would see these schools open by September 2021. SD62 Superintendent explains that the jump-start on land clearing ahead of construction budget consideration by the Ministry of Education in Spring 2019 is to work around the bird nesting season. Waiting another nine to 12 months would put the school plan behind schedule. **WSV**

More: <https://westshorevoicenews.com/land-clearing-has-begun-for-two-new-schools-in-west-langford/>

Blood supply "good" heading into holiday season

Canadian Blood Services manages the national supply of blood products for all the provinces and territories (excluding Quebec). Many variables can impact their inventory such as weather, holidays or tragic events. This year it looks like "inventory levels are good" heading into the holiday season. As of December 15, the most widely usable O+ blood type is at 10 days supply, with B+ at 13 days and AB+ at 16 days. The lowest supply is for O- at 4 days. In previous years there has been a significant even urgent push for blood donations around the holiday season. In the west shore region, the last blood donor clinic before Christmas break will be in Sooke on Monday, December 17 at the Sooke Legion. Several afternoon appointment slots were still open and available as of December 15. Drop-in is fine too. After that, the next clinic in the region is also in Sooke on Monday January 14, followed by the first of 2019 west shore clinic at Church of the Advent in Colwood on Monday January 28 (early afternoon to early evening). **WSV**

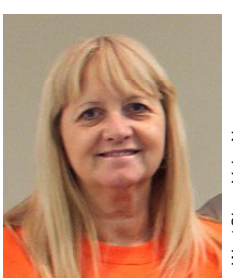


Blackberry to the rescue?

According to a news report last week by the Business News Network (BNN), it's possible that the worries about the capability and inclination of "spying" (as per former CSIS head Richard Fadden) by Huawei with its 5G network technology could be at least managed in part by the use of enhanced encryption. And that Canadian tech company Blackberry might just have the computing savvy to achieve that. The big telcoms in Canada could not resist the low-cost tech offer from Huawei to get setup into the 5G world, opening the door to Chinese state-owned surveillance opportunities via Canadian users of Huawei technology (that includes smartphones). Ironically, the unique and innovative Blackberry company out of Waterloo, Ontario that first brought handheld phone devices to the world but was pummeled in the hardware side of the industry when bigger players like Apple came in, may be the source of solution from the software side where they continue to excel. **WSV**

Parental input about seatbelts on buses

Parents may have a direct opportunity to provide input at a public meeting about the availability of seatbelts on school buses. That is the hope of SD62 Trustee Wendy Hobbs who at the SD62 December 11 board meeting pushed for something beyond discussion at the school district's Resources Committee. Hobbs initially started the seatbelt ball rolling at Resources Committee, from where recommendations go to the board level. The safety of children is not disputed. The board has been struggling with the cost implications (and likely the unspoken legal implications for drivers, teachers on field trips, and the district if an injured child were found not to be using a seatbelt). The board may be uncertain as to the intensity of concern among parents. Or they are quite aware, and wary of the cost-impact on other areas of education delivery if there is a significant push for seatbelts (school districts get their operating funds from the BC government, and budgets are already somewhat tight). Hobbs wants to loosen up the debate to involve all parents (the ones who don't regularly attend PACs or the district-wide SPEAC parent council), so the board gets the truest indication. If any existing SD62 buses were to be retrofitted the cost would be roughly \$40,000 per bus (equipment and labour) to replace existing seats, reinforce the floor boards, and install three shoulder belts per seat. Seatbelts within a new bus would come at a cost of about \$12,000 per bus. SD62 Trustee Bob Phillips suggested that educating drivers to slow down would help. Of course, the tragic Humboldt bus crash in Saskatchewan earlier this year has brought this long-standing safety concern to the forefront. **WSV**



SD62 Trustee Wendy Hobbs [file photo: on Orange Shirt Day Sept 2018]

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