

May 24, 2007

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Letters

The end of a recycling program

Please let me clarify a few details regarding the program in Nipawin and more specifically our proposal to Council and the Administration of the Town of Nipawin.

Hugh Macdonald,
Managing Director
Handi-Works
Thursday May 24, 2007

The end of a recycling program

Please let me clarify a few details regarding the program in Nipawin and more specifically our proposal to Council and the Administration of the Town of Nipawin.

Let me first say that the work of collecting and processing paper products in our towns and cities in Saskatchewan is done largely by people with disabilities who are employed by non-profit agencies similar to Handi-Works. There are a few exceptions.

Handi-Works has been providing the service in Nipawin for many years and also in the past, we had collection bins in surrounding communities. The bins were emptied by our staff. The program was dropped due to the "high cost" of fuel in those days. While the prices for the product collected (household paper, office paper and newsprint) was never great, we were fortunate to have a business in Tisdale that used the material to make egg flats and fruit trays. Freight costs were good!

When the program was restarted, the Town of Nipawin supported the paper collection through the transfer of several bins that were located throughout Nipawin. A local waste company was contracted by Handi-Works to transfer material from most of the bins while Handi-Works emptied the material from a few plywood bins situated at L.P. Miller and a few condos.

The Town also supported the cardboard collection program, which saw a schedule set up that best met the business needs (remember that the Co-op fire was caused by young people starting the cardboard bin on fire).

We have offered this service five days a week from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some businesses have pickups twice daily while others vary from daily, weekly or whenever they contact us. Handi-Works purchased a larger baler (\$14,000) and a compactor truck (\$16,000).

As an original member centre that founded SARCAN, we received an annual return. These funds have been invested in employment of the disabled (Royal Mini Golf, Nipawin Ice, Nipawin Water, Northern D'Lites Ice Cream Stand), environment (paper baler, compactor truck, forklift) and education of the public on recycling matters.

When this service to businesses was first offered, the Town of Nipawin insisted that this service be offered through taxes and at no cost to the businesses. It was felt that this process would result in a higher percentage of return. The option of having businesses pay directly for the service has been mentioned twice - initially by Mayor [Glen] Day at the meeting where I presented our proposal on March 27 and secondly when Town Administrator Steven Piermantier was quoted in last week's Journal, that the fact that the businesses don't pay has been a concern of Councils for a number of years. Had we known! While initially Handi-Works was able to ship the product to Tisdale, this option ended and Edmonton was the next most practical. Nipawin does not have a lot of trucking companies that move freight south on a back haul. As a result, while the costs are much higher for freight now, it is still less costly than hauling to Regina.

Handi-Works has maintained this program with the hope that someday an agreement would be reached between the Government of Saskatchewan, the paper industry and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. The object was to offer funding to support community paper, cardboard, milk jug and milk carton recycling. Discussions fell apart when the municipalities changed their mind after agreeing to a level of support.

Handi-Works sees our operation as a service to the Town of Nipawin and we have asked the Town to see our costs as a fee for service instead of a grant. We are no longer able to carry the cost of the program and we would like a schedule of payment through the year and not after the year is complete as has been the case.

Also, we are unable to offer service in 2007 at 2000 levels. We need support in purchasing

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equipment as well as to provide a safe, efficient operation.

There are many ways that municipalities support these programs in our province. I provided a survey to Town officials that indicated this. Some purchase equipment, some rent buildings, some provide pickup service and so on. The ideas presented to the Town of Nipawin are not original.

Hugh Macdonald,
Managing Director
Handi-Works

A parent bullied

As a parent of children in the French Immersion program, I feel compelled to share the following with you.

Amanda Nickel,
Nipawin
Thursday May 24, 2007

A parent bullied

As a parent of children in the French Immersion program, I feel compelled to share the following with you.

As a result of the discontinuation of the French Immersion program in Nipawin and with no direction at this time from the North East School Division, I took it upon myself to inform my family of the choices available to us.

If I wish to continue to have my children educated in the French language and remain living in Nipawin, my options are to have my children attend École Zenon Park or École Notre Dame des Vertus school in Zenon Park.

With this knowledge in mind, I arranged to visit these facilities and they both welcomed us with open arms. Having done this, I informed a few of my fellow French Immersion friends of my planned visit, only to have them wanting to join.

So being that the Division had not put into place nor offered options, I shared and invited other families in the same situation to visit the Zenon Park schools.

What started out as a day appointment quickly turned into an evening visit with many families attending. As quickly as this fell into place, the Division was even quicker to inform me that I had no right to set up such a visit independently and that I was to wait for further direction from the Division as they would decide where, when and how my children will be educated.

I feel this is wrong and as a parent I have every right to look into options concerning the education of my children. As a result of this experience, I have been left feeling intimidated, humiliated, misinformed and as a person whose opinion is not valued.

Also, although the North East School Division has refused a public meeting as requested by the Nipawin Canadian Parents for French, I am pleased to note that the Division have asked French Immersion parents who are interested in continuing the French language education for their child to come forward. However, why as parents do we have to go to such lengths in order to ensure our children receive the best possible education?

Amanda Nickel,
Nipawin

Bad situation

I read an article in the North East REDA 2007 about the 'industry cluster' being used to retain and expand existing business. In the same day's mail, I read about Handi-Works having to end their paper and cardboard collections. This doesn't sound like retaining or expanding their business.

Mae Colvin,
Carrot River
Thursday May 24, 2007

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It seems to me we are progressing backwards.

Handi-Works has been providing this service free of charge, saving to landfill sites and the environment from smoke. Could we not work together to save this part of their business and our environment?

Let's think of our children's future.

Mae Colvin,

Carrot River

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