

# MISTUSINNE COUNCIL UPDATE #27 – MARCH, 2013

## 1. ASSESSMENTS AND TAXES

### 1.1 ASSESSMENT

- Mistusinne's taxable assessment in 2012 was: 10,666,460
- Mistusinne's taxable assessment in 2013 will be: 27,236,160
- That's a **155% increase!**

This newsletter is being mailed along with your 2013 assessment

notice (the last page in your package). The following are answers to typical questions about assessment.

**What is assessment?** Assessment is the act of determining a property's value. Assessment is NOT taxes. But taxes are based on assessment.

**Who decides how assessments are done?** The provincial government assigns the job to SAMA.

**Why did the value of my property change?** Occasionally, some properties will increase in value because the building has been upgraded. However, because 2013 is a revaluation year, all properties are **reassessed to reflect the sale prices of comparable lakeshore properties**. As a result, the market has driven up the assessments on cottage properties such that cottages have experienced the largest increase of any property category.

To provide more information about how SAMA calculates assessment on cottage property we have included a 2-page information sheet from SAMA (attached to this newsletter).

**How often are properties revalued?** Revaluations are done every four years. This 2013 revaluation is based on 2011 sales figures. The next revaluation will be in 2017.

**What happens if I disagree with my property's assessment?** You will have the right to appeal your assessment to a Local Board of Revision. Caution however, an appeal must be based on an assessment error. It's not sufficient just to state that your assessment is too high (as will be the case for almost everyone) – you have to show that the assessor erred. The second level of appeal is the Sask Municipal Board. Again caution: no new evidence can be introduced at this level unless it was previously introduced at the Board of Revision.

**How can I compare my assessment to others in my village?** You can view all of the assessments in our village as follows:

1. Go to the SAMA website [www.sama.sk.ca](http://www.sama.sk.ca)
2. On the left side, part way down the page, click on SAMAVIEW
3. Next screen: Click on I agree and then click on Property Search by Map
4. Next screen: Enter Mistusinne; a small map of Mistusinne will appear.
5. You can use + or – to zoom in or out. Drag the curser to move around the village.
6. Your total 2013 assessment will appear on your lot. Remember, these are TOTAL ASSESSMENTS and must be multiplied by .7 to get TAXABLE ASSESSMENT. For example, lot #603, shows an assessment of \$218,700 but its taxable assessment will be  $\$218,700 \times .7 = \$153,090$ .

**Who determines the .7?** These percentages are set by cabinet. The percentages are .7 for residential, 1.0 for commercial properties, and .55 for agricultural property.

*Your tax bill will have two parts = school taxes and municipal taxes (see next page)*

## 1.2 SCHOOL TAXES

*School taxes = Taxable Assessment x mill rate (set by province)*

As you are aware, the law requires the Village

to collect the school taxes. There are two factors that will affect your school 2013 taxes:

- 1) The province has discontinued the 15% discount on early payment of school taxes.
- 2) Lakeshore assessments have experienced huge increases.

This information was sent out in February to those of you who have email addresses, asking for your support in writing letters to Ministry officials. Thank you so much to the **dozens of Mistusinne ratepayers who took the time to write letters** (along with ratepayers from many other cottage communities).

Last week, Premier Wall announced that: "education tax rates will be reduced significantly in next week's provincial budget to keep the overall impact on property taxes revenue-neutral in terms of re-assessment." We believe that the government's decision to reduce school tax mill rates was largely due to the overwhelming number of letters from Saskatchewan cottage owners!

**On March 20<sup>th</sup>**, your mayor attended the pre-budget briefing session in Regina and learned that the province has set the school mill rate at **5.03 mills**. Check out the example in the box to see an example of the school tax changes for one cottage in our village. As you can see, my school taxes will go up by \$230. (If the mill rate had not been reduced, my taxes would have tripled!

The reason why Mistusinne will have some school tax increases is BECAUSE OUR ASSESSMENT INCREASES OF 155% ARE LARGER THAN THE PROVINCIAL AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT INCREASES OF 89%.

In other words, it's not good news – but it's not the disaster it could have been.

**I've provided my own assessment figures as an example:**

**In 2012**, the taxable assessment on my cottage was 66,800 and the school tax mill rate for residential was **9.51 mills**. Therefore my 2012 school tax bill was:

\$ 66,850 x <b>.00951</b>	=	635.74
Minus the 15% discount	=	- 95.36
Net 2012 school tax	=	<b>\$ 540.38</b>

**In 2013**, the new taxable assessment on my cottage is \$153,090. The new school tax mill rate is **5.03 mills**. Also, the province has cancelled discounts for early payment. My 2013 school tax bill will be:

\$ 153,090 x <b>.00503</b>	=	\$ 770.04
Minus the 15% discount	=	0.00
Net 2013 school tax	=	<b>\$ 770.04</b>

Lynne Saas

## 1.3 MISTUSINNE TAXES

The auditor has just completed the annual review of Mistusinne's 2012 financials. At our March Council meeting we will begin preparing our 2013 budget. Your Council will work hard to hold expenditure so as to maintain a **revenue neutral** budget position.

In other words, Council plans to lower the mill rate to offset the huge assessment increases. Remember, however, that even if Council keeps the **same total revenue** as last year, some cottage owners' taxes will increase and other cottage owners' taxes will decrease, because of differences among the new assessments. Your Mistusinne tax notices will go out near the **end of June**.

*Mistusinne taxes = Base tax + (taxable Assessment x our mill rate )*

## 2. SPRING EVENTS

### 2.1 Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>

#### 10:00 am – Tree Planting Day

We have ordered another 670 free trees and shrubs. They are intended partly for in-fill and also for creating decorative groups of flowering shrubs to enhance our straight-line plantations. Once again, we are hoping for a good turn-out of enthusiastic volunteers. If we have enough volunteers, there may be an opportunity for some mulching teams as well. Please come to the Maintenance Building at 10 am for instructions from Keith.

**1:00 pm – Tree Planters' Barbeque**, free lunch for planters.

### 1.3 Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm – CPR / AED Course

Funds raised at the annual Mistusinne Fun Day Golf Tournament have traditionally been donated to both the Elbow Fire Department and to the First Responders. This winter the First Responders decided to use some of those funds to purchase a portable defibrillator for Mistusinne. Council has made plans to place the device in a small insulated compartment attached to the office building (with access to heat from the building). The box will have a small exterior door with a code lock access; the access code will be provided to all Mistusinne staff and cottage owners.



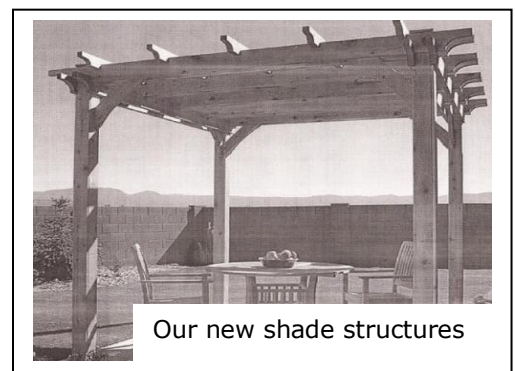
The next step is to provide the necessary training for our staff and for interested cottage owners. The course will be 4-hours and will cost **\$60 per participant**. There is limited room for this course, so **phone and register early to hold your spot!**

I'm sure you have heard many of the recent news stories about people who have suffered heart attacks and have been resuscitated by volunteers trained in the use of an AED. In fact, the federal government recently announced a plan to put AED's into every hockey rink in Canada.

### 1.4 Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>

#### 9:00 am - Work Bee at the Gathering Place

In the spring of 2012, Mistusinne received a \$3,000 matching grant for the erection of shade structures in the outdoor gathering place next door to the new addition at the maintenance area. Last summer we were too busy building the new addition to have time for the shade structures. Certainly we could have used them at last year's Fun Day Golf Tournament!



The materials for each shade structure will be pre-cut and teams will work together to assemble the structures.

#### 1:00 pm – Community Barbeque & Question Period

Please note that this year we will **NOT** have a public meeting on the May long weekend. Instead, the budget documents will be available after the June 1<sup>st</sup> work bee; council members will be on hand to answer questions. Everyone is invited. **Remember to bring your lawn chairs.**

- *Please mark these dates on your calendar.*
- *Please phone and register for these events. (Janice at 854-4637).*
- *We need your participation!*

### 3. UPDATES AND REMINDERS

#### 3.1 Update about follow-up to the Thanksgiving fire

Subsequent to the fire last Thanksgiving, EMO coordinator Keith Lonsdale convened a meeting of the EMO Committee and subsequently reported to council that the fire had provided an excellent "dress rehearsal". It was noted that the water from the new irrigation system had proven critical to keeping the 3 fire trucks operating. The following subsequent improvements have been implemented:

1. Contact was made with the 911 fire dispatch to correct their contact procedures.
2. Repairs were made to the pump on our fire truck for ease of starting.
3. Missing fire gear was located and moved back into the maintenance building.
4. A new pump (for pumping from the lake during the winter) was purchased, along with 300 ft of hose; both were attached to a utility trailer which Tim refurbished. The trailer was attached to a quad and stored in the maintenance building for the winter. Plans are underway for additional fire drills in the spring.

#### 3.2 Update about sewage disposal

First, we need to alert residents that the Village of Elbow has increased the lagoon access fees for 2013 for sewage that is hauled in by truck. The new rates are **\$216 for year round access** (and thus \$108 for seasonal access). The increase was charged to cover the costs of repairs to the truck dump site which is only used by non-Elbow residents.

Secondly, Council has decided to actively seek a long term solution to Mistusinne's sewage disposal. To date, two meetings have been held with representatives from Elbow Council and the Council of the RM of Loreburn. Several possibilities are currently under discussion.

#### 3.3 Update about irrigation start-up

The irrigation system will be operational by the May long weekend. In preparation for checking the system, we ask that the few residents who removed the village taps or ball valves from their standpipes please re-install them by **Monday April 15<sup>th</sup>**. They must be in place so that we can pressurize and test the irrigation system. Also, this is a reminder that residents should not remove village taps from the standpipes. Only village staff can remove or alter these taps in any way. Residents can attach their own splitter or hoses, but should not remove the village tap. Thanks for your co-operation.

#### 3.4 Update about Council portfolios

Council has been busy updating some of our policies, including the roles of staff members and of council members. These new policies will be available on our web site after final reading at our March meeting.

##### Council Portfolios:

##### Councilor, Jerry Boulanger

- Maintenance advisory
- Lagoon research

##### Councilor, Lianne Hurlburt

- Village trees advisory
- Natural Environment
- Waterwolf Committee

##### Councilor, Craig Pederson

- Canada Day Coordination
- Golf Course advisory

##### Councilor, Lloyd Montgomery

- EMO advisory
- Shade structure coordination

##### Mayor, Lynne Saas

- Communications
- Policies
- Member of all committees

### 3.5 Ratepayer updates

- Our **condolences** are extended to the family of Marilyn McRae who passed away suddenly last month. The McRae family have had their cottage since the early 1980s.
- Our **congratulations** are extended to Father Steve Ripplinger of 435 Mistusinne Crescent who will celebrate his 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the priesthood at the end of May.
- We bid **farewell** to Reg Aupperle who has recently sold his cottage. Reg served a term as a member of the Mistusinne Council.

### 3.6 Reminder about the spring public meeting

There will be no public meeting on the May long weekend. Instead, reports and the financial projections will be available for pick-up at the Village Office.

Join us for a community barbeque at 1:00 p.m. on **June 1<sup>st</sup>** at the Mistusinne Gathering Place. Council will be available to answer your questions about the report after the barbeque. Bring your lawn chairs. See you there!

### 3.7 Reminder about trees on village property

You are reminded that trees on village property are not to be trimmed by residents. Only authorized personnel are approved to trim trees on village property.

### 3.8 Heads up to high school students

Depending on the funds available in the budget, Village Council is hoping to hire one (perhaps two) high school students to work in the Village during the months of July and August. Interested students are encouraged to submit a standing application by email ([Mistusinne@sasktel.net](mailto:Mistusinne@sasktel.net)) and are also advised to watch the Mistusinne web site ("What's New" at [Mistusinne.com](http://Mistusinne.com)) for the job postings in early June.

### 3.9 What you missed this winter

Some of our fellow cottage owners who have been exiles in Arizona or Mexico have missed the joys of winter in Mistusinne. Those of us who held down the fort over the winter wish to report that:

- Our streets were always well ploughed.
- The fall suppers and the winter pot lucks kept us well fed.
- The winter animals were a source of much delight. Maud, the Mistusinne Moose, and her yearling dined on a smorg of Mistusinne twigs. The coyotes called, from out on the lake or from beside us, as we walked our dogs.



## 4. WINTER VISITORS AT OUR MISTUSINNE BIRD FEEDERS



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Mistusinne year-round residents have been setting out a daily smorg for a variety winter gusts. Guarded by sharp-eyed **Ravens (1)** from on high, our bird feeders have hosted a number of larger birds: one sharp tailed **Grouse (2)** has patrolled the perimeter of the yard, scooping up the fallen seeds. Six flashy **Magpies (3)** like to bully the small birds but they do not scare off the five beautiful **Blue Jays (4)** who swoop from feeder to feeder. A special treat this winter have been the dozen orange **Pine Grosbeaks (5)** who have stayed all winter. A **Bohemian Waxwing (6)** visited briefly.



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Visitors to the suet feeders include the red-headed **Hairy Woodpecker (7)**, an identical smaller **Downy Woodpecker (8)** and the largest woodpecker, the **Flicker (9)**, plus the only birds that run head-first down the tree trunk, the **Nuthatch (10)**.



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The smaller birds are the **Finches (11)** at the thistle seed feeders, the almost tame **Chickadees (12)**, and the hordes of different kinds of **Sparrows and Redpoles (13)**. Every few days a fat **Red Squirrel (14)**



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called in to raid the the feeders.