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“The Wheel Line” ***The best information line*** **FALL EDITION 2020**

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Hello, Fellow Irrigators:

I hope this newsletter finds you well, and your harvest is progressing as well as can be expected. The year 2020 will be memorable for all of us, not only because of COVID-19 and the evergrowing unrest in our world, but also because it will be remembered as the year the Government of Saskatchewan announced a \$4 Billion irrigation expansion project, increasing our province's irrigated acres by half-a-million and strengthening Canada's food security for decades to come.

The Board of SSRID is excited for what the future of irrigation in our province will look like, and for the positive impacts the announced expansion will have for our District. However, I can not stress enough, our priority has ALWAYS BEEN and will ALWAYS BE our District, SSRID No. 1 Inc., & its smooth operation, its financial security, and its future challenges & successes.

The contents of this newsletter will update all ratepayers relative to the operations, financial standing, and future directions of the District. Should you have any questions regarding the content of this newsletter, please contact the office by phone or e-mail, or contact one of the board members by phone (see the 'Contact Us' section).

Wishing you all a safe and productive harvest!



Steve Primrose

Chairman of the Board of Directors

South Saskatchewan River Irrigation District No. 1 Inc.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING UPDATE

The Board would very much like to hold an AGM, and there have been several requests from ratepayers to have an AGM scheduled prior to harvest. However, current COVID-19 gathering size restrictions are still in place (no more than 30 persons in an indoor or outdoor gathering with a 2 meter distance to be maintained at all times, effective July 28, 2020). The Board feels that it would not be fair or in the best interest of the District to hold an AGM if the doors would have to be closed after the first 30 people entered the building.

Until gathering size restrictions are relaxed to the point where all ratepayers can come together under the same roof, or an alternative arrangement is decided upon, the Board and SSRID Staff will work hard to communicate with ratepayers, & to provide you with answers to questions as well as materials to serve you, as required.

OPERATIONS MANAGER UPDATE

The Board would like to remind all ratepayers of the upcoming retirement of **George King**, Operations Manager, at the end of the 2020 season. George has been a dedicated, key member of SSRID staff for 41 years. It takes real drive, commitment, and true loyalty to give 41 years of one's life to the same company, and the Board would like to sincerely thank George for his many years of service to SSRID.

The Board is very pleased to announce that **Adam Knapik** has been hired into the role of Operations Manager, effective April 1st, 2021. Adam has been a ditchrider and operator with SSRID for the last 17 years, and he is looking forward to this next challenge in his career.

Best of luck to both George and Adam.

GENERAL MANAGER UPDATE

SSRID's General Manager, **Brian Bartel**, has provided the following update. Detailed reports from our staff can be found on our website, under

the 'Irrigator Information' section.

Once again, we have had a very busy year due to the high heat throughout July and August. I would like to thank our area supervisors for doing a great job again this year. One of the key factors to their job is communication with the "YOU" the irrigators. Thank you so much for working with the SSRID staff.

I've attended multiple meetings with local Ministry of Agriculture staff regarding the District CAP program that has been offered back to districts. There are a few policies and procedures that have to be resolved prior to utilizing this program, I hope to have results in the near future.

George King is presently preparing for upcoming IRP, CIP and Custom Work projects. Material for most of the projects has been ordered and should be arriving soon.

Jill Desjarlais has resigned from SSRID. The SSRID Board of Directors and staff would like to wish Jill all the best. Bailey will be increasing her back to work schedule to Monday thru Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Please contact the District Office at 306 867 9923 should you have any inquiries or issues to discuss with Brian.

2020 SEASON & UPCOMING FALL SEASON

- The District will be able to supply water to all areas until the end of September.
- This past summer was one of the busiest for the ditchriders, relative to water usage.
- Algae control was much better this past season than in other years, thanks in-part to ongoing, scheduled treating by District staff.
- A Rock Grizzly has been built for the District and has been set up at the South pit. A substantial amount of rock has been stockpiled for use this fall on several IRP projects.
- IRP and CIP projects have been completed

- on the 1C8 drain (emergency wasteway).
- Fall mowing and fall repairs are occurring as normal.
- IRP projects are being planned along the A7 canal.

DISTRICT FINANCES

SSRID's audited financial statements are available to ratepayers upon request. Please contact the office should you wish to look over these documents.

Our various assets are (as of August 2020):

- Savings = \$100,022.99
- Chequing = \$302,661.45
- IRP Fund = \$3,672,456.86
- Replacement Fund = \$3,145,615.63
- CIP Fund = \$6,839,544.47
- Development Fund = \$869,328.78
- Equipment Fund = \$118,500.75

A fully complete, detailed 2020 budget is available at our office, and can be viewed by ratepayers upon request. A copy of the budget has also been added to our website, under the “Irrigator Information” section.

This past April, the SSRID Board of Directors decided that due to global uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, no portion of the base rate would be billed out until the fall, pending further review. **The District will now be sending base rate invoices to all ratepayers, and invoices will be due in full with water usage fees on December 31st, 2020.** If you would like to discuss payment options or issues, please phone the office and ask to speak with Brian.

As a reminder, please note the following:

- The 2020 **base rate** is \$46.98 *per acre* (this includes the 2020 IRP contribution)
- The 2020 **estimated water usage fee** is \$7.37 *per acre foot*
- The current **futures fee** is \$25.40 *per acre* (\$24.00 IRP fee plus \$1.00 levy for

ICDC and \$0.40 levy for SIPA)

- The 2020 Tweeten and 4A/4B **base rate** is \$48.48 *per acre*
- The 2020 Tweeten and 4A/4B **estimated water usage fee** is \$13.37 *per acre foot*

SSRID MEETS WITH RICK BURTON

On July 29, the SSRID Board and staff had the opportunity to meet with **Rick Burton**, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan. The Board put forward many important matters to discuss with Rick, and we would like to thank him and his staff, as well as staff from Outlook's Ministry of Agriculture office, for taking the time to meet.

Highlights from our meeting include:

Westside Rehab and Expansion

- This is the first phase of the \$4 Billion project, with an estimated cost of \$22.5 million. Later phases of the project will cover more acres and involve other fresh water users, & will therefore consume a larger portion of the total budget.
- The Ministry is hoping to have their primary consultant hired this fall, with preliminary work commencing as soon as possible thereafter.
- Realistically, shovels will not be in the ground until next summer, or later.
- Funding from the government for SSRID is mostly covered through their contribution to our IRP fund.
- The Board, Rick, and his staff all agreed that it is now time to start discussing government funding for SSRID, beyond our 5-year IRP agreement. The Board will send out more information, relative to these future discussions, as details become available.

CAP Program Constraints

- The District has concerns with PST charges not being refundable to ratepayers should they hire SSRID to manage their projects

- under the CAP Program.
- PST charges would be refundable for a CAP the Board will be reviewing & updating District by-laws for your approval, we will initiate a 10-year strategic plan for the District, and we will introduce SSRID's Mission Statement.
- Ministry staff admit that currently, there is no mechanism in place that would facilitate the PST being returned to the irrigator if the District were running their project. The Board questioned whether or not a mechanism could be established. Ministry staff will communicate back with an answer.

secure funding into the future. This coming winter, the Board will be reviewing & updating District by-laws for your approval, we will initiate a 10-year strategic plan for the District, and we will introduce SSRID's Mission Statement.

SSRID's future direction relies heavily on input from **YOU!** E-mail ssrid1@sasktel.net or send a letter to the Board and tell us **YOUR VISION** for SSRID in 10 years. What problems do we need to address? What solutions do you propose to these problems? How can we all work together to remain profitable & sustainable in this ever-changing world?

SSRID & MACRORIE IRRIGATION DISTRICT

On July 15, all SSRID Board Members were sent a letter from Larry Lee, Chariman of the Board for Macrorie Irrigation District Inc (MID). The letter stated that MID felt an amalgamation between them and SSRID would be a good fit, but not at this time due to concerns they have with the SSRID Board. According to the letter, MID has lost confidence in the SSRID Board, and will only reopen amalgamation talks when the SSRID Board members have been replaced.

On three occassions (July 15, July 17 and July 23), the SSRID Board reached out to the Macrorie Board, by phone and in writing, requesting a meeting to discuss their concerns openly and honestly. MID has repeatedly refused a meeting with SSRID on every invitation.

The Board will keep all reatepayers informed on this issue as details develop. Rest assured, though, the SSRID Board remains committed to the operation and the oversight of **YOUR** district as their **TOP PRIORITY**.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF SSRID

Over the last number of months, the Board and SSRID staff have been working hard to navigate the future direction of the District. This included developing better communication with the ratepayers through the establishment of this newsletter, and by engaging with government to get more acres under irrigation in our District and

We look forward to seeing your input!



SSRID
SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER IRRIGATION DISTRICT NO.1

"The Wheel Line"

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