

On the trail of rogue radiowaves

Regional District set to make use of spectrum analyzer

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Staff from the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George will be on the hunt for sources of radio interference hampering communications between volunteer fire departments in the region, following the purchase of a real-time handheld spectrum analyzer.

The district board approved the purchase of the \$46,650 piece of equipment during Thursday's board meeting and it is expected to be in use by the end of the year.

In a report to the regional district board in July, district public safety coordinator Tony Fry wrote that, "Harmful (radio) interference is encountered on a daily basis which can cause communication problems during fire operations."

Regional district spokesperson Renee McClosky said radio interference generally takes two forms, direct interference – other radio users talking on channels reserved for emergency crews – and indirect interference caused by other electrical equipment producing radio static.

"What (the spectrum analyzer) does is help identify where the source is and what the source is," McClosky said.

District 911 technician Murray Scott said fire department radios are powerful enough to cut through interference, but it can reduce the effective range crews can communicate.

"The direct interference can cause problems because you're talking and then people talk over you, or talk between the conversa-



The antenna array on top of Fire Hall No. 1 is shown.

CITIZEN PHOTO BY BRENT BRAATEN

tions," Scott said.

Once district staff track down the sources of direct interference, they'll ask them to voluntarily change the radio channels they are using. If the radio users refuse, the district will get Spectrum Management and Telecommuni-

cations, the federal government department which manages radio frequency use, involved.

"They have to (stop using emergency channels), basically," Scott said.

In the case of indirect sources, the district will request the owner

of the source of the static to repair or shield the source to reduce or eliminate the errant radio waves.

"For example, in Beverly we think there is outside interference from an AC power (transmission lines)," Scott said. "We'll ask BC Hydro to come in and fix them."

Terrace-to-Hazeltons bus service starting

Citizen staff

An extension from Terrace to the Hazeltons of B.C. Transit's service along Highway 16 starts Monday.

"This new route will provide some communities with public transportation for the first time, meaning safe and reliable transportation so people can get to appointments, access services and visit friends and family," Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Claire Trevena said in a media release.

It is the fourth service to begin on Highway 16 this year. B.C. Transit is also running buses between Smithers and Moricetown, between

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Burns Lake and Smithers, and between Burns Lake and Prince George.

The BC Transit route 164 Kispiox/Terrace will make round-trips on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. In addition, the 163 Kispiox/Smithers (formerly route No. 2) will add an additional day of service and will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

A new route No. 32 West Connector will be

introduced, operating on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between Hazelton and Gitwagank.

The route 31 Kispiox/Gitsegukla (formerly route number 1) will change the days it operates and will now run on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

The standard one-way fare is \$5, while seniors and students will pay \$4 each way.

The B.C. government has committed to \$6.4 million over five years to the entire Highway 16 service, covering the full cost of the buses and two-thirds of the operating cost, with local governments and First Nations contributing the rest.

Ladies tuned up for CFUR fundraiser

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Genre has no borders on Saturday night when musical women are celebrated, but are also celebrating in return.

Some of the region's top names in music – all of them female – will take turns dropping songs and lifting spirits at the Women Of The North: CFUR Fundraiser downtown at Omineca Arts Centre (Third Ave. and George Street) starting at 7 p.m.

"There, we will gather enthusiasts of local music and culture to celebrate women musicians of our region, with the accompaniment of live painting and live and silent auctions, creating an evening of celebration with northern flair," said a CFUR statement.

"This action is supported by CFUR's mandate and ever-growing ambitions of exposing

and encouraging the arts in northern B.C."

The live painting will be done by another highly regarded woman of the north, Audrey McKinnon de Leon. She will work while the music plays, letting the sonic creativity inspire and move her visual creativity.

On stage will be a top-drawer lineup of talented performers. It includes the all-female Nove Voce choir, plus versatile singers/songwriters Britt AM, Amy Blanding, Kym Gouchie and Rachelle van Zanten.

CFUR 88.7-FM is the campus radio station of the University of Northern B.C. Its programming is reflective of northern culture and a catalyst for northern music, the arts and the discourse that goes along with it.

Tickets are available in advance at the radio station office at UNBC, at Handsome Cabin Boy Tattoo, or online at the CFUR website.

Woman reported missing

Citizen staff

The Prince George RCMP are requesting the public's help in locating a missing person.

Sheena May Halverson, 31, has not been seen in more than two months despite extensive efforts to find her, police said Friday.

She is described as First Nations, 165 cm (5'5") tall and weighing 54 kg (120 lbs) with a thin build.

Halverson also has several tattoos including a dream catcher on the side of her neck and has brown eyes and brown hair, sometimes with extensions.

She was last seen in Prince George on Sept. 7.

According to her Facebook page, she also goes by the names Merrissa May Halverson and Sheena May Setah. She grew up in Williams Lake and has lived in Kelowna, according to the posting.

Anyone with information on where Halverson may be is asked to call the Prince George RCMP at 250-561-3300.



HALVERSON

Tips can also be left anonymously at Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477, online at www.pgcrimestoppers.bc.ca (English only), or Text-A-Tip to CRIMES (274637) using keyword "pgtips."

News Tip? Call 250-562-2441

City looking to write off taxes on mobile homes

Citizen staff

On Monday city council will consider writing off the outstanding property tax owed on 51 mobile homes in Prince George.

The outstanding amounts range from \$13.81 up to \$16,438.18, and total \$144,512.96 in unpaid taxes, penalties and interest. Of that total, 70 per cent was owed to the City of Prince George, with the remainder owing to the regional district, school tax, B.C. Assessment and the Municipal Finance Authority.

"The tax balances in this report relate to balances owing on manufactured homes for which the means of collecting taxes have been exhausted," city director of finance Kris Dalio wrote in a report to city council. "The city has liens on all of the manufactured homes in this report and thus has the option to take possession of the abandoned manufactured homes. In all the cases in this report, the city has declined to take possession as the manufactured homes are in very poor condition and there is no recovery value for the city to realize."

In 23 of the 51 cases the mobile home had been demolished or destroyed by fire, and a further 17 had been moved or were otherwise no longer on the site.

Ten of the remaining mobile homes were inspected and listed in "de minimus" condition – meaning they were essentially worthless.

One of the 51 had since been sold.

The City of Prince George can't write off property taxes without approval of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Council will consider a motion to request the ministry's approval to write off the taxes on Monday.

Ban part of new rules

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BCNREB "strongly supports" changes clarifying licensee disclosure requirements to consumers, saying they largely codify information real estate agents provide now.

The ban is part of the first major rules to be introduced by the Office of the Superintendent of Real Estate since the provincial government ended self-regulation of the real estate industry last year and transferred rule-making powers from the Real Estate Council of B.C. to the office of the government-appointed superintendent.

The OSRE did not reply to a request for comment Friday.

— with files from Vancouver Sun

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