REGIONAL DISTRICT
of
CENTRAL OKANAGAN

‘A Look Into the Past’

A Historical Review
1967 – 2006
by A.T. Harrison
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing this review, the author used excerpts from various publications and also received input from several Regional District staff. Appreciation is expressed and recognition is given to the following:

UBCM News
Regional District Concept – 1968
Regional Districts in British Columbia – 1971
South East Kelowna Irrigation District Newsletter
George Fenton, photo assistance
Joe Rich Community Association

Regional District Staff who provided information for this review:
  Ken Arcuri, Planning
  Gary Leier, Human Resources
  Hillary Hettinga, Engineering
  Harold Reay, Finance
  Kelly Roth, Inspection Services
  Bill Vos, Parks and Recreation Facilities
  Colleen Bond, Economic Development
  Jody Foster-Sexsmith, Parks and Recreation Facilities
  Eve Wegscheidler, Parks and Recreation Facilities

Editing assistance provided by Carole Gordon.

A special thanks to Dorothy Weavers, who for many years served the Regional Board and the Administrator as Administrative Assistant and without whose help this historical review would not have been possible.
FOREWARD

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) commissioned this work to record in one volume the history of its growth and development as a service provider organization, dating back to the Provincial Government legislation and incorporation. In writing and performing this work, I had to consider the format, order and content, and whether there should be some chronological form with respect to the growth and development of the Regional District.

While I carried out substantial research, I also relied upon memories of activities that occurred over a period of time. The problem with memories is that they can be challenged by a person who remembers the same activity in a different way.

A.T. (Al) Harrison
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INTRODUCTION

The provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs, in 1964, in co-operation with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, introduced legislation to establish regional districts as an alternative to metro forms of government. One might generally state that a regional district is an elected agency with the prime purpose of taking joint action in providing services that are of mutual benefit to the areas which it serves, services which can best be handled on a co-operative basis and also to provide services to the unincorporated areas.

Regional district boards are made up of elected representatives appointed by the member municipalities, people who are already involved in the municipal picture whereas in the unincorporated or unorganized territories, where there is no local council, regional district representatives are elected by the people of the area. Regional districts do not have the power to impose general property taxes on their own to secure revenues but requisition upon the municipalities and for electoral areas, through the Provincial Government, for the provision of services. They were not conceived as a fourth level of government but a functional rather than political amalgamation.

The powers of regional districts were limited strictly to those granted by Letters Patent issued by the province in each particular case and it was up to the people in that region, with the consent of the municipalities and electoral areas, to decide what functions the regional district would perform. As time went on, a number of statutory functions were granted; these were generally matters of overall provincial concern. The representational scheme that was established by legislation provided necessary cross-communication between, and secured coordination of the activities of, individual municipalities and electoral areas of the region. The assumption of powers by the Regional District evolved over a period of time based upon consultation and dialogue between the regional board, participating municipalities and electoral areas.

At the outset of establishing regional districts the board also served, pursuant to Letters Patent that were issued by the Provincial Government, as a regional hospital district with the boundaries coterminous with the regional district. The purpose of the regional hospital district was to provide funding for the construction of hospital facilities. At that time, construction costs of hospitals were shared 60% provincial and 40% regional hospital district. Prior to the establishment of regional hospital districts, and in the case of the Central Okanagan, the Hospital Improvement District No. 36 was in place to provide some local representation to hospital improvements within the area.

Prior to the adoption of legislation establishing a basis for regional districts to be incorporated, virtually all decisions with respect to local issues in the unincorporated areas had to be referred to and dealt with by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in Victoria. This was a very time-consuming and cumbersome process for all concerned and by the mid-sixties it had become increasingly clear that the existing municipalities in the province and the provincial government were no longer adequate vehicles for providing
certain services to the citizens. The fractionalization of communities by restricted municipal boundaries made it difficult and often inefficient to provide many services on the scale required by the community as a whole. It was also clear that the community interest in certain matters extended far beyond the organized municipal territory. Community interest in such things as hospitals, regional parks and environmental management was clearly much broader. In British Columbia, at the time, there was no general agency to reflect what might be termed the regional community of interest, hence the establishment of regional districts.

In 1989 the Provincial Government brought in legislation which established a new foundation for regional government. This legislation amended Part 24 of the Municipal Act which was virtually a re-write of the powers, authority and operation of Regional Districts in British Columbia.

The legislation made it easier for Regional Districts to provide services to its constituents and more clearly outlined the procedural requirements of bylaw adoption and enforcement. This amendment to the Act provided Regional Boards with far more statutory authority to establish and operate local services including among others, sewer systems, water systems, refuse disposal systems, community parks, libraries, recreation facilities, fire protection services, street lighting systems as well as extended services including animal control, nuisance regulation, building regulations, house numbering, emergency programs and regional parks. This new legislation was welcomed by the Regional District of Central Okanagan and other regional districts in the province as it made it more efficient to meet the needs of local communities.

**PROFILE OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN**

The Regional District of Central Okanagan includes an area extending from Oyama in the north to Peachland in the south and Easterly and Westerly to the Okanagan basin water shed boundary. The region, at the time of incorporation was comprised of two municipalities, City of Kelowna with a population of 14,006 (1966 Census) and the District of Peachland with a population of 709 (1966 Census) and four electoral areas with a combined population of 23,929 (1966 Census). Population in the Central Okanagan has grown substantially over the years reaching 154,193 people (2001 Census).

Valleys of the Okanagan lake chain run north and south between high plateaus, which contain the source of many streams draining into the Okanagan lakes. The Okanagan is characterized by cool humid air and cloudy skies in winter and by dry air with bright skies in summer. The climate of the Okanagan Basin is somewhat less continental than the rest of the interior of the province. The warm summers with fairly low humidities, as well as the relatively mild winters provide an attractive environment for agricultural and recreation.
The Central Okanagan Regional District has a wide range of cultural and social amenities and activities which appeal to all ages including arts and music, regional libraries, services clubs and associations, ethnic community activities and senior citizen activity centres. The Rotary Centre for the Arts, the Kelowna Community Theatre, Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna Museum, Johnson-Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre, Mount Boucherie and Winfield Recreation Centres are just a few of the many popular places for tourists and residents. As the region’s population has grown, so have recreational capabilities unfolded. Over the years people discovered that recreation went beyond Okanagan Lake up into the mountains, where hiking, fishing, hunting and breathtaking scenery abound. The winter reveals many recreational past times such as downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and hockey. Today, within one hour of the City of Kelowna, residents and visitors alike may enjoy two major ski hills and hundreds of kilometers of cross-country trails. Summer recreation includes water sports, swimming, fishing, lawn bowling, horse riding and field sports such as golf, soccer, rugby, football and baseball. There are also numerous golf courses in the region, yacht clubs, marinas and also a wide selection of hiking trails and parks for people to enjoy throughout the Central Okanagan including the Greenway along Mission Creek. In more recent years, the public together with the Regional District and Municipalities have made contributions to the region’s recreation facilities, which include community swimming pools, ice arenas, curling rinks and racquet sports facilities.

Within the region there exist many educational opportunities including the University of British Columbia-Okanagan, Okanagan College and several other private educational institutions.

The provision of parks in this region is of vital importance and the Regional District is proud of its community and regional parks program. The District has several very active lakeshore properties along with many community parks which are used extensively by the residents. The Regional District has partnered with the Provincial Government, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Trust, the Central Okanagan Parks and Wildlife Trust and its member municipalities in the provision and development of parks. The regional board has maintained the philosophy that parkland should be acquired for present and future generations.

Health care facilities include Kelowna General Hospital, Cottonwoods and Brookhaven Extended Care hospitals and many private care institutions together with many public health programs. There is also the full Cancer Treatment Centre located in the City of Kelowna next to the Kelowna General Hospital, which serves cancer patients in the South Central British Columbia areas.

**REGIONAL DISTRICT FORMATION**

In 1966, the Central Okanagan Regional Planning Board sponsored a series of eight meetings in the then provincial unorganized territory of School District No. 23 to
discuss Regional District formation. At these meetings, issues such as structure and local representation, proposed preliminary electoral areas, local problems requiring solution, costs and establishment of a regional district advisory committee were on the agenda.

- The first of such meetings was held on September 22, 1966 at Tinlings Restaurant for persons living south and east of the city boundaries and north of Mission Creek.

- The second meeting was held September 29th in the Okanagan Mission Community Hall for persons living south of Mission Creek and the Okanagan Mission area

- The third meeting was held on October 4th in Lakeview Heights Community Hall for those persons living in the Shanboolard, Green Bay, Lakeview Heights, Casa Loma and Fintry areas.

- The fourth meeting was held on October 6th in Westbank Community Hall for those persons living in the general Westbank centre area.

- The fifth meeting was held on October 11th in Winfield Community Hall for persons living in the Oyama, Okanagan Centre and Winfield areas.

- The sixth meeting was held on October 13th in the Rutland High School for those persons living in the Ellison, Rutland and Belgo area.

- The seventh meeting was held on October 18th in the Glenmore Elementary School for persons living in the Glenmore area

- The eighth and final meeting to discuss Regional District formation was held on October 19th in the East Kelowna Community Hall for persons living south of Mission Creek in the East Kelowna Area.

There were a great number of questions raised about the operations of a regional district with the issue of the voting unit being most prevalent and of greatest concern. The unorganized territory groups were very vocal in their objections to a system that places the policy determining weight with the City of Kelowna. It was clearly stated by representatives at the meetings that decisions to be made which impacted unorganized territories must lay with the representatives from those areas, or the reaction to proposals would be so negative that nothing or little would be accomplished. As a result of this concern, three voting units were considered, namely 1500, 3000 and 5000. It was felt therefore that each unincorporated community (Electoral Area) would be represented by one or more elected directors based on the voting unit and would act as spokesperson for Local interests and to tailor bylaws to specific local requirements. The fact that every 1500 to 5000 people, for example, would have direct democratic representation and control of vital affairs was seen to be one of the key advantages of the regional district concept. Another safeguard in this concept was that a Technical Planning Committee comprised of the planning director of the Regional District and representatives of the Provincial Departments of Highways, Municipal Affairs, Agriculture, Lands, Water
Rights, Health and Municipalities, was set up to advise the Board of policies and programs of various provincial departments. All planning bylaws and legislation would be referred to this committee before being considered by the Regional Board. All zoning and subdivision bylaws would first be submitted for approval by the Provincial Cabinet by way of an Order-In-Council and all building regulation bylaws were to first be approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The proposed Regional District would encompass the 1100 sq. mile area of School District No. 23 and would add local control and decentralize the authority of those services formerly handled and approved by the Provincial Government in Victoria.

The Directors of the Regional Board were to be elected by each community “Electoral Area” together with appointed representatives from councils of municipalities. Only the directors of communities contributing toward the cost of particular services would vote on matters affecting that service. Several agencies were involved in the provision of services to the unorganized territories, as follows:

1. Department of Municipal Affairs. Provincial Building Inspector issued permits for the construction of residential and commercial buildings if the proposals complied with zoning, health, highways, water rights and any other agency requirements that may be applicable.

2. The Provincial Government agent issued business licenses for uses in existing buildings, based on the zoning regulations in effect over that property.

3. The Department of Highways issued access permits to properties fronting highways under its jurisdiction, but approval of access for commercial use was based on the Community Planning Area Nos. 1 & 2 Zoning and Development Regulations in effect over any particular property. It also acted as the formal Approving Officer for subdivision of land.

4. The Regional Planning Division, Department of Municipal Affairs in Victoria, had the responsibility for the planning regulations in effect in Community Planning Area Nos. 1 & 2, an extensive area covering part of the arable and habitable land within School District No. 23 that was not within the City of Kelowna or the District of Peachland, and on which much urban and rural development was taking place. These regulations governed general use of land (zoning, building regulations and, in liaison with the Department of Highways and the Medical Health Officer, subdivision standards)

5. The Central Okanagan Regional Planning Board acted as the Community Development and Planning Advisor in an advisory capacity only to:

   • The Department of Municipal Affairs in Victoria for all unorganized territory totaling some 98.7 percent of the total land area of School District No. 23.
   • Municipal Council, City of Kelowna
   • Municipal Council, District of Peachland
There were many improvement districts and local utilities within School District No. 23, who were responsible for domestic and irrigation water, fire protection and other services. There are still some improvement districts and private utilities in existence today.

Initially, an informal steering committee was formed from the first two community meetings, consisting of those persons noted herein, and from the aforementioned public meetings sponsored by the Central Okanagan Regional Planning Board. A Steering Committee known as the Central Okanagan Regional District Advisory Committee was established with its first meeting held on November 22, 1966 in the provincial government building in Kelowna. The public meetings held in the communities were generally successful and the local areas were to elect their own representatives to act on the Steering Committee.

The City of Kelowna and the District of Peachland were invited to send representatives to the Advisory Committee so that all communities could explore all aspects of the formation of the Regional District.

Mr. V.J. Wieler, Planning Director for the Central Okanagan Regional Planning Board, whose office was in the Bridge Administration Building on the west approach to Okanagan Lake Bridge, was very helpful in providing administrative support to the various meetings that were held in this process, as was F.K. Chamberlain, Chair of the Regional Planning Board. Membership of the informal Steering Committee and the Central Okanagan Regional District Advisory Committee were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V. Gelhorn</td>
<td>Winfield/Oyama/Okanagan Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.C. Bennett</td>
<td>Glenmore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.J. Blanchard</td>
<td>Rutland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.W. Marshall</td>
<td>Rutland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Porter</td>
<td>East Kelowna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.D. Cameron</td>
<td>L.D. Guisachan, Benvoulin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.J.T. Bulman</td>
<td>Okanagan Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.R. Dooley</td>
<td>Lakeview Heights, Shanboolard, Fintry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.J. Wilkinson</td>
<td>Kelowna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan Elliot</td>
<td>Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.A. Snook</td>
<td>Rutland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.D. Wakefield</td>
<td>Westbank Center, South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Fred K. Chamberlain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting Secretary:</td>
<td>Vern. J. Wieler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informal Steering Committee - 1966
Central Okanagan Regional District Advisory Committee – 1966

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>R.J. Wilkinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Kelowna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reeve</td>
<td>Harold Thwaite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District of Peachland (Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillor</td>
<td>J.H. Clements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District of Peachland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provincial Unorganized Territory

K.V. Ellison #1
M. Kawano #1
A.S. Bluett #1
E.G. Marshall #2
Vacant member #3
J.C. Bullock #4
J.H. Stuart #4
E. Day (G.D. Cameron) #5
V. Rampone #5
W.T. Bulman #6
Dr. J.A. Rankine #6
A. Crouch #7
L.R. Dooley #7
A. Duncan #8
G. Edgerton #8
F.K. Chamberlain Central Okanagan Regional Planning Board
V.J. Wieler “ Planning Director

DEFINITION OF LETTERS PATENT

With respect to local government, Letters Patent is a legal instrument which is issued by way of an Order-in-Council of the Province of British Columbia and signed by the Lieutenant-Governor-In-Council, which may establish local government and improvement districts and set boundaries, establish services and may confer upon local governments certain and specific legislative powers.

SUPPLEMENTARY LETTERS PATENT

Supplementary Letters Patent may broaden the powers of local government by amendment to Letters Patent. The legislation adopted by the Provincial Government in 1964 with the recommendation of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor-In-Council, could, by the issuance of Letters Patent, incorporate any area of land and the residents within that area in to a regional district for
the purpose of carrying out functions and services as may be granted from time to time or conferred upon it by the Municipal Act. In addition to the functions and services conferred upon the regional district by the Municipal Act, the regional district had such functions as were provided by Letters Patent or Supplementary Letters Patents and for this purpose the Lieutenant-Governor-In-Council, upon the recommendation of the Minister, could provide in the Letters Patent or Supplementary Letters Patent, such further objects, powers, obligations, duties, limitations, and conditions in respect to any or all functions requested. Before the Lieutenant-Governor-In-Council issued the Letters Patent or Supplementary Letters Patent, a request to be granted the powers to undertake the function(s) must have been received from the regional board, and such a request had to specify the member municipalities or electoral areas which were to participate and the basis for sharing the costs of each of those functions. Before advancing such a request, the regional board must have received the consent of the council of each municipality which was to participate in the function, and would have submitted for and received the assent of the owners of land in each electoral area, which was also to participate, except where the function was of a regulatory nature.

**INCORPORATION**

With Premier W.A.C. Bennett as the presiding member of the Executive Council, Letters Patent to incorporate the Regional District of Central Okanagan were issued by the Lieutenant-Governor-In-Council on the 24th day of August, 1967. The Letters Patent set out that the member municipalities of the Regional District included the City of Kelowna and the Corp. of the District of Peachland with the Electoral Areas as follows:

- Electoral Area A (Winfield, Oyama and Okanagan Centre)
- Electoral Area B (Glenmore, Poplar Point)
- Electoral Area C (Rutland, Belgo, Ellison, Joe Rich)
- Electoral Area D (South and East Kelowna)
- Electoral Area E (South Pandosy)
- Electoral Area F (Okanagan Mission)
- Electoral Area G (Lakeview Heights, north to the north of West Shore Estates)
- Electoral Area H (Westbank)

Supplementary Letters Patents were issued on May 29, 1969 to divide Area ‘C’ in two to create Electoral Area I, encompassing Belgo, South Okanagan Mission, Ellison and Joe Rich. The Letters Patent also stipulated that the population deemed to be a voting unit is 5,000 which was amended to 4,000 on the 25th of May, 1973, and required the requisite number of municipal directors be appointed. The following persons were appointed as *interim directors* to represent the Electoral Areas for the year 1967:
**Interim Directors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Electoral Area represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. McCoubrey</td>
<td>(Elect. Area A) Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.C. Bennett</td>
<td>(Elect. Area B) Glenmore, Poplar Point, McKinley Landing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Marshall</td>
<td>(Elect. Area C) Rutland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.H. Stuart</td>
<td>(Elect. Area D) East Kelowna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.L. Piddocke</td>
<td>(Elect. Area E) Benvoulin, S. Pandosy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.H. Raikes</td>
<td>(Elect. Area F) Okanagan Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.G. Menu</td>
<td>(Elect. Area G) Westbank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Hill</td>
<td>(Elect. Area H) Lakeview Heights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Electoral Area represented**

The above-appointed interim directors were the sitting directors of the Kelowna and District Hospital Improvement District #36. W.C. Bennett was elected chair and Mr. C.E. Sladen was appointed as secretary. The interim Electoral Area Directors remained in office until such time as the first election was held.

The Secretary of the Regional District was appointed as returning officer for the first election. The term of office of each of the first elected directors of the Electoral Areas ran from the first meeting of the Regional Board until the first day of February, 1970. The term of office for the Municipal Directors (The District of Peachland and the City of Kelowna) ran until the 31st day of January, 1968. The first meeting of the Regional Board was scheduled for the 13th day of September, 1967 in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Kelowna. In those early days, only a person whose name appeared on the current list of electors for the election of school trustees and who was the owner of real property within the electoral area was qualified to be nominated, elected and to hold office as an elected director.

The Letters Patent made arrangements for the first election of Electoral Area Directors with polling being held on the 9th day of November, 1967.

Elections were held in Electoral Areas and appointments were made by the City of Kelowna and the District of Peachland to form the Regional Board. The following is a list of elected and appointed members to the Regional Board and includes Area of Representation and Term of Office:

**Appointed Interim Municipal Directors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area of Representation</th>
<th>Term of Office</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Area Represented</td>
<td>Term of Office</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R. Hein</td>
<td></td>
<td>1978 – 1981</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Baker</td>
<td></td>
<td>1982 – 1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.C. Bennett</td>
<td>Glenmore, Poplar Point, McKinley Landing</td>
<td>1968 – 1972</td>
<td></td>
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<td>J.C. Piddocke</td>
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<td>O.H. Koates</td>
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<td>M.A. Graham</td>
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<td>P. Hanson</td>
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### Regional District (Municipal) Board Members 1968 – 2007

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<td>C. Day</td>
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<td>M. Serwa</td>
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<td>G. Reid</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Baker</td>
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(Terms of office for directors are listed up to 2007 only)
The first board of the Regional District of Central Okanagan, 1969.

Since incorporation of the Regional District in 1967, the following persons were elected by the Board as Chairpersons:

**Regional District Chairpersons 1967 – 2007**

- W.C. Bennett 1967 – 1972
- S. Simpson 1991 - 1993
- R. Hobson 1994 to present

All Chairpersons who served the Regional District of Central Okanagan during their term of office, including Robert Hobson, who currently serves in that position, provided tremendous leadership and direction to the growth and prosperity of this Regional District. Their continued dedication in this position greatly enhanced the opportunities for the Regional District to fulfill the needs and provide the services to the residents in a cost effective and efficient manner.
**W.C. (Wally) Bennett**

Wally Bennett was the first elected chair of the Regional Board in 1967 and held the position through to 1972 when he became Mayor of the expanded City of Kelowna. Wally made many friends at the local government level during his term of office, as well as friends and contacts with those persons in senior positions in the Provincial Government, both political and appointed. Prior to holding public office, Wally was the original developer of McKinley Landing residential community. For many years, he also owned and operated a heavy-duty construction company with his family.

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**Andy Duncan**

Andy Duncan was elected to the Regional District in 1988 to represent the Westbank area, Electoral Area H and served in that position until 1974. Mr. Duncan was elected and served as Chair of the Regional Board in 1973 and 1974. Upon his return from the air force, Mr. Duncan purchased a small airplane and flew out of the Rutland airstrip. He also was a founding member of Okanagan Helicopters.

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**James H. Stuart**

James (Jim) Stuart holds a distinguished record of public service within the Central Okanagan, beginning with his appointment as trustee of Hospital Improvement District No. 36 in 1964 as well as a trustee of Kelowna General Hospital. In August of 1967 until 1996, Jim was Director of the Regional District of Central Okanagan. In March of 1972 he became a Director and Trustee of the Municipal Finance Authority and was elected chairman in 1977, a position that he held for 12 years. Jim was elected Alderman of the City of Kelowna in 1973 and was subsequently elected Mayor in 1987. From January of 1975 to 1990, he held the position of Chairman of the Regional District of Central Okanagan. Perhaps his greatest personal asset is his ability to negotiate settlement or agreement and to reach an understanding between opposing parties. He was often called upon to do this during his term of office. Jim Stuart was highly respected as Mayor of the City of Kelowna and Chairman of the Regional District and many successes and accomplishments can be attributed to his leadership ability in the positions which he held.
Sharron Simpson

Sharron Simpson was born and raised in Kelowna but left to attend university, travel, and work. When she returned to the Okanagan in 1984, Kelowna was a much-changed community from the one she left several years earlier.

Sharron first ran for public office in 1986 and served as Kelowna City Councillor for the next three terms. During this time she also served as a Director on the Board of the Regional District of Central Okanagan. Sharron was also an executive member of the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the Municipal Finance Authority, and the Okanagan Basin Water Board. As well, she served as Chair of the Regional District during her last term of office.

The highlights of these years in public office included the opportunity to meet and work with many talented, highly skilled, dedicated professionals, including, most notably, the staff of the Regional District of Central Okanagan. Another highlight was presented in the signing of the landmark collaborative agreement with the Westbank First Nation for the provision of services on reserve lands.

Since leaving the political arena, Sharron created Sharron Simpson and Associates, Consultants, has served on a number of corporate and provincial boards, has written for various publications as well as authored a history of the Okanagan lumber industry. She also provides writing and editing services through her company, Manhattan Beach Publishing, and continues to work in collaboration with the Kelowna Museum in designing and presenting her award winning writing series, Memories into Memoirs.

Robert Hobson

Robert Hobson is a professional planner and administrator with over 30 years experience working at all levels of government and in the private sector. As a planning consultant, his area of focus has been heritage conservation and resource management. Robert is also a third generation Kelowna orchardist. He has been married to Adair for 29 years and has three children. Robert, a member of Kelowna City Council for 18 years, has been Chair of the Regional District of Central Okanagan Board for 12 years. An elected Director of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for the past 9 years, he now serves as a Trustee of the Municipal Finance Authority. His major appointments include:
Chair, Regional Transportation Committee
Member, Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (Province of BC)
Chair, Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District
Chair, UBCM Health Committee
Chair, BC Healthy Communities Coalition
Vice-Chair, UBCM Resolution Committee
Director, Okanagan Basin Water Board
Trustee, Municipal Finance Committee
Past Chair, Kelowna Water Committee
Past Chair, City of Kelowna Town Centre Implementation Committee
Past Chair, Southern Interior Medical School Committee

Robert holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Queens University and a Masters in Community and Regional Planning from the University of British Columbia. His professional career includes positions with Environment Canada and three years as Planning Director for the Fraser Estuary Management Program. He also worked as a municipal planning director for Terrace, B.C. As a heritage consultant, he has completed major heritage inventories and site management plans throughout British Columbia.

Current Regional Board (2006)
Standing from left: L. Novakowski, B. Given, B. Clark, G. Reid, C. Day, D. Knowles; Sitting from left: P. Hanson, A. Dinwoodie, R. Hobson (Chair), S. Shepherd, J. Baker
Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District incorporated April 13th, 1967

At the outset of establishing regional districts, the board also served, pursuant to the Letters Patent, as a Regional Hospital District with the boundaries coterminous with the Regional District. The purpose of the Regional Hospital District was to provide funding for the construction of hospital facilities. At the time of issuing these Letters Patent, construction costs of hospitals were shared 60% Provincial and 40% Regional Hospital District. Prior to the establishment of Regional Hospital Districts, and in the case of the Central Okanagan, the Hospital Improvement District #36 was in place to provide some local representation to hospital improvements within the area.

In December of 1995, Letters Patent were issued to establish the South Okanagan Similkameen Regional Hospital District. The new directions and regionalization that the Provincial Government of the day implemented, established this new regional Hospital District encompassing the Central Okanagan and Okanagan Similkameen areas. Under this new regime, the Central Okanagan was required to participate in the capital costs of all facilities throughout the new region. Communities to the south were also required to participate in the capital cost and new construction, etc. for hospital purposes within the Central Okanagan Regional District. At the time, the parties involved in this new system seemed to be of the view that the provincial government appeared to have accepted that a larger region could deliver health care services more effectively, efficiently and economically. However, the larger region did raise a number of concerns amongst the participants.

With the new Regional Hospital District, there was also one Regional Health Board serving the greater area with 18 members. The Health Board votes were based on a simple majority except on financial issues; a motion must receive an affirmative vote of 67 percent of the members present for the motion to pass. The new Regional Hospital District representation and votes were as follows:

27 Directors holding 54 votes

- (Central Okanagan – 9 directors with 30 votes)
- (Okanagan-Similkameen – 18 directors with 24 votes)

Local representation on the new Regional Health Board was based upon the number of community health councils while representation on the Hospital District included all directors on both regional district boards. While this system was in place, the provincial government structured another new health care system where five (5) health authorities were established throughout the province. The Interior Health Authority which encompasses the Central Okanagan provides funding and manages all health care facilities and services within its area of jurisdiction.
During the term of the NDP Government in the early 1970s, sweeping changes were made to the boundaries of four municipalities in British Columbia: Nanaimo, Prince George, Kamloops and Kelowna. Boundary extension to the City of Kelowna was effective December 15, 1973. The new boundary included Okanagan Mission, South Pandosy, South and East Kelowna, Rutland, Black Mountain, a portion of Ellison District, the southerly part of Electoral Area A which was more commonly referred to as Winfield, and the Glenmore Valley.

Prior to the boundary being established by the provincial government’s Ministry of Municipal Affairs, many meetings were held by local government, elected officials and representatives from the Ministry. Of greatest contention was how far north the boundary should extend. Should it include Winfield? Should it include just up to Jim Bailey Road, which would mean that Hiram Walker Distillery Plant would be part of the City of Kelowna? The Rutland community was also very upset with being forced to become part of the City of Kelowna. With the boundary extension of greater Kelowna the jurisdiction for all services of the Regional District of Central Okanagan which had application to the area newly enclosed within the City were transferred. The effective date of the new area jurisdiction of services was to be six months after the date of establishing the new boundaries of the City. It’s interesting to note that the City of Kelowna negotiated with the Province of British Columbia for many years following the extension of boundaries with regards to provincial sharing of costs for various services such as roads, sewer and policing. It has been suggested many times that forced incorporation of the magnitude that occurred in these four municipalities will likely never be done again because of the costs and difficulties involved. It’s fair to suggest, however, that looking back, it was probably the best thing that occurred for many of the communities included within the new city as various services and facilities were provided on a more efficient and cost-effective basis.

Following the boundary extension of the City of Kelowna, the Regional Board provided Community Planning Services to City Council, specifically for those portions of the Electoral Areas that were taken into the City boundaries. Regional District staff prepared reports for applications and presented them to City Council for consideration. This process, however, was short-lived in that it proved to be a little cumbersome and City Council soon expanded its own Planning Department staff so that it was in a position to review all applications for development within the expanded city.
LAKE COUNTRY INCORPORATION

The second major change to the boundaries of the Regional District occurred in February of 1995 when the communities of Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre and Carr’s Landing, formerly known as Electoral Area A, formed together to become the District of Lake Country. This area remained a component of the Regional District as a member municipality which elects a mayor and council and appoints a representative to the Regional Board. The services operated by the Regional District and applicable to Electoral Area A prior to incorporation were transferred to the municipality. On several occasions the new municipality made representation to the provincial government to amend the southerly boundary so that the Hiram Walker Distillery Plant was included. It was felt that this area was wrongly included in the City of Kelowna when its boundaries were changed. Industrial assessment of the land and improvements within the Hiram Walker area was substantial and Lake Country felt that the District would be a stronger economic unit if it included those areas. However, a boundary adjustment never occurred.

SERVICES AND FUNCTIONS

The Regional Board, often referred to in the media as CORD, has always been aggressive in developing and providing services to the region. The region has, over the years, enjoyed a relatively high assessment base which provided the financial capability of establishing services and facilities to residents at affordable tax rates. The board has also shown leadership in the province in embarking upon programs that were not traditionally operated by regional districts. The Regional District of Central Okanagan was the first regional district in British Columbia to provide 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Services on a region-wide basis. Regional Parks was another service, which was not widely provided in other regions of the province. The following are descriptions of Letters Patent that were issued by the Lieutenant-Governor-In-Council for the provision and establishment of services and functions. This list of services and functions operated by the Regional District is not exhaustive and will not include those administrative items covered under General Government Services.

Regional and Community Planning Letters Patent issued in 1969

Under the authority of Supplementary Letters Patent dated March 19, 1969 the Regional District was granted the function of regional and community planning. It is noted that Community Planning Area #1 and part of Community Planning Area #2 established under the Local Services Act were within the boundaries of the Regional District and that certain regulations applied to those areas. These areas encompassed the Lakeview Heights area, South Pandosy and Rutland community north to Pino Road, all of which were outside the boundary of the City of Kelowna. In October of 1969, the provincial government passed an order in council to apply the regulations which were in force and effect in those areas as if they were bylaws adopted by the Regional Board. These regulations related to land use within those areas.
Several months later, the Regional District proposed a zoning bylaw which was an all-encompassing land use regulation applicable throughout all electoral areas. A public hearing was held in the Elks Community Hall on Pandosy Street which went on for four days. A very large, angry group of farmers attended and vociferously opposed the bylaw claiming that the Regional District had no business restricting and regulating the use of their land. Mrs. Mary Serwa, who farmed with her husband, Albert, in the Glenmore Valley, was extremely vocal in her opposition to the proposed bylaw. Mrs. Serwa was later elected to the Kelowna City Council and subsequently appointed to the Regional Board. During her term of office, she was a strong advocate in protecting landowner rights in the farming community. Adoption of the proposed bylaw was defeated in view of the strong opposition raised at the public hearing.

In September of 1972, the Regional Board expanded the Community Planning Area #1 provincial regulations to all electoral areas of the Regional District. Land use regulations were therefore clearly in place covering all areas of the Regional District; however, more controls were on the horizon with the provincial government adopting the Agricultural Land Reserve legislation in 1973.

On behalf of the provincial government, Gary Runka conducted a survey of all lands in the province using the Canada Land Inventory Classifications as a guide to determine what lands had capability within classes 1 to 5 for agricultural production. The Regional Board, in 1973, adopted the Central Okanagan Agricultural Land Reserve Bylaw for the purpose of clearly setting out the areas within the Regional District that may be designated as an Agricultural Land Reserve by the Provincial Land Commission within the terms of the Land Commission Act. The landowners in the farm community were extremely disturbed by this legislation in that, in their opinion, it locked their land into a perpetual greenbelt without compensation. There were a few landowners who supported the legislation; however, by far, the majority was strongly opposed. The Agricultural Land Commission and the legislation had a major impact on residential and other development within the Central Okanagan. A number of farm owners cried foul, indicating that this was to have been their retirement fund but this legislation removed that opportunity. The legislation prevailed, but there have been many areas of land removed or reclassified over the years and several permitted uses have been allowed within the Agricultural Land Reserve. There have been several land use bylaws adopted by the Regional District over the years, as listed below but one which clearly has some historical significance is Bylaw No. 176 which was adopted on the 9th of March, 1981. This bylaw repealed the Community Planning Area Regulations which previously applied to the Regional District by way of Letters Patent and Zoning Bylaw #66, and replaced those regulations with a full complement of land use requirements for all Electoral Areas of the Regional District.

**Summary of Planning Milestones**

The following is a detailed summary of planning milestones as provided by Ken Arcuri, Director of Planning Services, which indicates that a tremendous amount of time,
energy and resources has gone into this function and the service it has provided over the years. The significance of the Planning Department contributions is immeasurable.

- Initial regulations pertaining to the management of land use and subdivision established for Community Planning Area No. 1 under Supplementary Letters Patent, approved by the Provincial Government on October 27, 1969.
- Division (3) of Community Planning Area No.1 Regulations pertaining to subdivision repealed March 17, 1971 and replaced by Subdivision Regulations 262/70 of the Local Services Act.
- Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 66 adopted on September 6, 1972 in order to apply zoning regulations to the Electoral Areas of the Regional District.
- City of Kelowna boundaries expanded to include all or part of Electoral Areas B, C, D, E, F, and I on March 3, 1973, thereby reducing the area of land use jurisdiction under the authority of the Regional District.
- Land Commission Act enacted late in 1973 by the Provincial Government to protect the agricultural land base for future generations of farmers. This Act had the effect of zoning the land base across the entire province for agricultural activities only based upon the agricultural capability of land.
- Subdivision Bylaw No. 82 (initial subdivision bylaw for the RDCO) adopted on November 20, 1974.
- Official Regional Plan Bylaw No. 124 adopted on December 20, 1976, providing a framework of planning principles, land use categories, policies and regulations to guide the orderly growth and development of the Region.
- Zoning Bylaw No.176 adopted on March 9, 1981, replacing Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 66 and providing an enhanced zoning bylaw for the Electoral Areas.
- Official Settlement Plans for the Westbank and Lakeview Areas, adopted on May 11, 1981, providing for the first comprehensive land use policies to guide the growth and development of the Westside at a community scale.
- Legislation pertaining to Regional Planning repealed by the Provincial Government in early 1980’s over concerns related to the duplication of planning authority between municipal and regional governments.
- Initial Official Community Plans (formerly Official Settlement Plans) for the remainder of the Westside and Electoral Area “A” (presently the District of Lake Country) adopted in the 1980’s to provide land use policy direction similar to the Westbank and Lakeview Plans.
- The Okanagan Lake Foreshore Plan was adopted in the early 1990’s, providing some initial policy direction to the Regional Board and the Crown with respect to foreshore use and permitting of wharf and dock structures. This policy direction is integrated into the Official Community Plans.
- Subdivision Servicing Bylaw No.464 adopted on September 13, 1993, replacing Subdivision Bylaw No.82 with enhanced subdivision regulations to better address the urban form of development rapidly emerging within the Electoral Areas of the Region.
- The Planning and Parks Departments collaborate in the summer of 1995 to develop an inventory of sensitive environmental and cultural features within the

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Region. This inventory was the precursor of the Regional District’s environmental planning program that eventually unfolded in the late 1990’s.

- A new era of “Regional” thinking is born in mid 1995 as the three (3) Regional Districts within the Okanagan Basin feel the need to collaborate on ways to address the impacts of growth and development on basin wide values such as air quality, water quantity and quality and transportation. At the same time, the Provincial Government enacts the Growth Strategies legislation to enable Regional Districts to embark upon a strategic planning process that works towards addressing the impacts of growth at a regional and interregional level involving all levels of government. The focus of the legislation is to manage growth on private lands. While the three Regional Districts within the Basin could not reach agreement on how to proceed jointly, the Regional District of Central Okanagan resolved to pursue the preparation of a growth strategy under the new legislation. This process began in 1996. Parallel to the preparation of the RDCO growth strategy, the Province initiated the Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), a strategic planning process focused on crown land management within the Basin.

- Through the process of preparing the Growth Strategy and participating in the LRMP, Regional District planning policies, services, standards and regulations were enhanced to better manage the impacts of growth and development. Some notable actions included:

  - Establishment of Advisory Committees (Planning, Environmental and Agricultural)

  - Numerous reviews and updates to all the OCP’s, the Zoning and Subdivision and Development Services Bylaws.

  - Preparation of Town Centre and Village Centre Plans for the Westside

  - Preparation of Neighbourhood Plans for the designated growth areas on the Westside.

  - Preparation of discussion papers on issues of regional interest (water resources, environmental protection, transportation, air quality, economic development and governance) to support the growth strategy program.

  - Initiating an Environmental Planning Program by hiring an environmental planner, under taking a science based sensitive ecosystem inventory, developing a partnership with Environment Canada through the Habitat Stewardship Program and preparing sensitive habitat inventory mapping (SHIM).

- Committees of the Regional Board coordinated following the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy to support the ongoing implementation of the Strategy.
Planning Commentary

As evident in the summary noted above, planning has played a significant role in the growth of the Regional District as an organization and the services it provides to the public. Planning Services has matured to provide a level of service that is comparable to an urban municipality largely because of the growth demands experienced on the Westside. While Planning has faced many challenges over the years as to its role and mandate within the organization, the Regional Board has been progressive in advancing regional thinking and leaders with respect to increasing the scope of planning services.

Recognition should be given to all of the staff who have contributed to the Planning program over the years, including the previous Directors of Planning, Don Barcham (pre-1980) and John Woodroffe (1980 – 1988).

Joe Rich History

The community of Joe Rich is unique. As outlined in its historical review, over the past 30 years, a polarization of opinion has tended to develop between the old time Joe Rich residents who own and live on large parcels of land and depend on the valley for their livelihood and the many newer residents who own smaller properties and use Joe Rich as a dormitory community and an attractive framework to their homes while concentrating their interest and gaining their livelihood outside Joe Rich. The newer group of residents favours regulations which will keep Joe Rich as they think it should be. The group of old time residents misses the old days of united opinion in a close-knit community and would prefer to be left alone to manage Joe Rich as they see fit without regulations imposed from outside the valley. They tend to see people as more polluting than animals or logging equipment which have always been a background to Joe Rich life.

Joe Rich is unique within the Central Okanagan Regional District because it is the most rural part of the district and one of the areas with the most difficulty in reaching consensus amongst its residents in regard to future planning. In the early 1980’s, a Settlement Plan was worked out for Joe Rich by the Regional District and presented at community meetings. Agreement could not be reached and so the plan was shelved. As a result, for many years, Joe Rich planning was more ‘broad brush’ and not as precise as it could have been. Finally, a Land Use Committee with strong local representation was convened and as a result a Rural Land Use Bylaw is not in place. Land us regulation has been complicated by the presence of the Agricultural Land Reserve legislation. This has designated some areas of Joe Rich as agricultural land when in fact they could never be profitable as such. The climate limits the growing season and makes most agriculture in the valley very marginal.

In the past 20 years, the Goudie Road area has grown rapidly. It is now referred to as West Joe Rich and Joe Rich Creek area together with the Philpott and Three Forks Road areas are known as East Joe Rich. West Joe Rich is already the larger of the two. The total population from the top of the Black Mountain Hill to the end of Joe Rich Valley, based on Stats Canada figures for 2001, is 1,030 people.

This Letters Patent allowed the North Okanagan, Central Okanagan and Okanagan-Similkameen Regional Districts to participate in a partnership program whose function was to try to maintain the quality of water in our mainstream valley lakes. Each of the three regional boards initially appointed three (3) members to the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) on an annual basis. Two major services provided by the Okanagan Basin Water Board were tertiary treatment facility funding and aquatic weed management. The Water Board provided grants to municipalities and electoral areas that upgraded or installed sewage facilities to the tertiary treatment level. Aquatic weed management was the second largest service that was provided by the Okanagan Basin Water Board where they purchased aquatic weed harvesting equipment for the purpose of controlling milfoil aquatic weeds in the Okanagan Lake system. This program continues today and weed harvesters are seen operating in the lakes where the aquatic milfoil weed has become a major problem confronting communities. The OBWB was also involved in a major Okanagan Basin study that was undertaken a number of years ago which included federal, provincial and local participation. The OBWB has been involved in discussions relating to other environmental issues that might affect the Okanagan Basin and its communities.

Both the milfoil management in area lakes and the provision of grants to local municipalities and regional districts for sewage treatment infrastructure have been highly effective. Recently the Okanagan Basin Water Board has undertaken the most significant change in its thirty year history. These changes are intended to enable the Water Board to expand its focus to include a variety of regional water resource management issues, including permission to approve its own annual budget for a three year period. The Board will administer the water conservation and water quality improvement initiative programs.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board was managed in the early years by William Parchomchuk whose office was located in the offices of the Regional District of Central Okanagan. Mr. Parchomchuk left this position and the Water Board was administered under contract by the Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District for one or two years, following which it was taken over by the North Okanagan Regional District and remains as such today.

Noxious Insect Control Letters Patent issued June 16th, 1969

This was a service that was implemented as a result of the Regional District receiving complaints that some orchardists were not carrying out a recognized spray program to control insects in their orchards. When a complaint was received, the Regional District would inspect the subject orchard to determine whether or not the owner was carrying out a recognized spray program and if not; an order would be issued to do the necessary sprays. If the owner did not carry out the work, the Regional District would spray the property and charge the owner for the costs of the work.

This function provided for the operation and maintenance of the Westbank Sanitary Landfill which served most of the communities on the Westside of Okanagan Lake, including I.R. #9 & #10, and a user fee arrangement at the Kelowna Sanitary Landfill for the electoral areas on the eastside of Okanagan Lake. The Westside Sanitary Landfill has a long history of operation within the Westbank community. Initially this operation consisted of a pit and burn procedure on the site where the Kinsmen ball fields are presently located. This pit and burn operation was managed by the Westbank Irrigation District and looked after by long term Westbank resident, Sid Saunders. Upon closure of the pit and burn procedure, the Regional District operated a landfill on the same site until such time as sufficient space became a problem. The District then entered into a lease with crown land to establish a full sanitary landfill operation on its present day site on Asquith Road.

Prior to the implementation of this function, the Lakeview Irrigation District also operated a pit and burn site on the location where Brookhaven Westside Care Home is situated today. This pit and burn operation was also closed when the Westside Sanitary Landfill was established.

A garbage dump later to become landfill was operated on a site north of Killiney Beach on the west side of Okanagan Lake to serve Fintry, Ewing’s Landing, Valley of the Sun, Killiney Beach and West Shore communities. That operation was managed by long term resident, Jules Harvath. The Regional District experienced a lot of bear problems at this location and eventually it was closed in favour of locating the transfer station closer to the centre of the communities, and operated by a community association. A transfer station was also located at Traders Cover to provide a disposal site for residents generally within the Traders Cove and Lake Okanagan Resort areas.

Rutland Pool Facility Letters Patent issued June 1st, 1971

The old Rutland Swimming Pool which was located on the community park property now known as Centennial Park. It was the only public pool serving the Rutland Area. The pool facility needed new change rooms and washrooms and a general upgrade of the pool itself. These Letters Patent served to carry out the necessary improvements with the communities of Rutland, Belgo and Ellison participating. There was considerable opposition by the residents of Ellison who felt at that time that they should not be required to participate in the costs of this recreation facility as few residents of their community would use it. The Rutland Pool continued in its operation until such time as the new Athens Aquatic Centre was built by the City of Kelowna.

Dog Control Letters Patent issued July 17th, 1972

Because of complaints raised by residents about the number of dogs running at large, the Regional Board decided to operate a Dog Control Function throughout the
Regional District and to provide the same service under contract to the City of Kelowna, the District of Peachland and the District of Lake Country when it incorporated. This service, over the years, is undoubtedly the most controversial one that the Regional District has operated. Several years ago the Regional Board entered into an arrangement with the Kelowna Branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) whereby they will take some of the dogs for placement into homes throughout the area. The Dog Pound is located in Kelowna and staffed by Regional District employees. Westbank First Nation in years past has had its own dog control officer but they have utilized the Regional District dog pound for a fee. The Dog Control Letters Patent have been amended since 1972 to provide dog control officers the power to issue tickets for dog control and licensing bylaw infractions.

**Building Inspection**

With the issuance of letters patent by the provincial government to enact and establish building regulations throughout the electoral areas, which were previously carried out under provincial jurisdiction, provincial building inspectors, Edward Ashton and Allan Cushing, transferred and became Regional District employees. In April 1971, the Regional Board enacted and established building regulations pursuant to its authority granted by the Province. Subject to several amendments so as to make it more applicable to the Central Okanagan and to improve standards, the regulation adopted by the Regional District encompassed most of the National Building Code of Canada and supplements thereto and set building permit fees.

Mr. Kelly Roth is currently the Chief of Inspection Services and has filled that position since 1987. At that time there were three building inspectors on staff; however that was reduced by one later that year due to budget restraints. Also on staff was a bylaw enforcement officer whose responsibilities included litter control, mosquito control as well as unsightly premises in the city and the region. Staff at that time was spread fairly thin with the inspector on the east side of Okanagan Lake responsible for building inspections up Highway 33, Ellison, Winfield, Oyama, Okanagan Centre and Carr’s Landing areas. The Westside inspector looked after the area from south of Peachland to Wightman’s Creek north of Killiney Beach. The early 1990s saw a building construction boom and it was therefore necessary to add five additional building inspectors. In the 1990s the department underwent a restructuring, with Dog Control, Weed and Insect Bylaw and other bylaw enforcement coming under the direction of the new Inspection Services Department. Dog Control particularly added an interesting dynamic to the Inspection Services Department. It was quickly found that there was a lot more emotion involved in dealing with problems caused by dogs which often created very complex situations.

**Mosquito Control Letters Patent issued June 22nd, 1973, March 11th, 1982 and September 14th, 1983**

The Regional District, for many years, since the issuance of Supplementary Letters Patent provided mosquito control on the east side of Okanagan Lake. A staff
member in the Inspection Services Department conducts inspections of all ponds and bodies of water in the spring months that harbor mosquito larvae and treats them with an environmentally friendly product. Records of all inspections and treatments are kept for future reference.

A 1983 amendment to the Letters Patent brought County Pines and West Kelowna Estates areas into the function, as they too were experiencing mosquito problems. This service over the years has had a fairly high success rate in reducing the numbers of mosquitoes within the developed areas on the eastside of Okanagan Lake in this region.

**Recreation Complex and Senior Citizens Facility Letters Patent issued November 29th, 1973**

This function encompassed Mount Boucherie Recreation Centre, which included a community hall and arena together with a new senior citizens activity centre which was later to be constructed in Westbank. There were several Supplementary Letters Patent issued to provide amendments to more clearly define those areas on the Westside which were to participate in the costs of building and operating the Westside Senior Citizens Activity Centre. The Mount Boucherie Recreation Complex became the central focal point for recreational and community activities in the Lakeview and Westbank communities. Today there are other recreational facilities within the areas to provide citizens with additional opportunities for their leisure time. The Regional District opened the Mount Boucherie Community Centre in the Lakeview Heights area, in September of 1975 with Doug Gow appointed as manager. The Boucherie Centre was designed by the architectural firm of Meiklejohn, Gower and Fulker.

Mount Boucherie Centre with its large community hall, meeting rooms and arena, was one of the first buildings in this region to be considered as a joint-use facility between School District #23 and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. Soon after this centre was constructed, the position of liaison officer was created, whose salary was shared 50 percent between the Regional District and the School District. This person served as part-time school teacher and support staff as well as assisting in developing and operating community and adult recreational and educational programs in the area.

**Regional Recreation**

In the early years the Regional Board held numerous discussions regarding the advantages of Regional Recreation. It was felt by the board members at that time that consideration might be given to look at providing, operating and maintaining recreation facilities on a region-wide basis.

In 1981, therefore, a Regional Recreation Facilities Study was commissioned and Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (PERC) was awarded a contract to study the feasibility of establishing a regional recreation facility system, based on Terms of Reference that was prepared by the Regional District. The goal of this study was to generate sufficient information to allow elected officials representing all residents
of the Regional District of Central Okanagan to decide whether or not to deliver public recreation facilities on a region-wide basis. It was noted that the study was built upon one fundamental underlying principle: “That a Regional Recreation System should only be entered into if and when all participants can see a net benefit in co-operating within the system”. The Regional Board appointed a Regional Recreation Study Committee with City of Kelowna Councillor Ben Lee as Chair. The Committee consisted of representatives from the City of Kelowna, The District of Peachland and Electoral Areas ‘A’, ‘G’, ‘H’ and ‘I’ with several members appointed at large from the community.

The study pointed out that a number of local and regional governments in British Columbia had opted to enter into Regional Recreation Systems based on economies of scale, fairness, justification of new services and facility and right of access. The consultant was directed to look at the delivery of regional recreation facilities as they relate only to structures and not playing fields and to include the capital cost of planning and development (construction) together with the ongoing plant maintenance.

The first phase of the study was intended to be fact-finding with the second phase, if prepared, to include issues and methods to determine future needs of the communities within the region and ways and means of meeting those needs. The study reviewed many issues including facilities that might be included in the system, geographic scope, apportionment and allocation of costs, and the basis upon which taxes might be levied.

This was a difficult study as much data had to be gathered and researched with much analysis taking place. There were certainly inequities within the region with respect to use of facilities and allocation of costs. This problem was most evident with the Johnson-Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre. The Committee was of the view that it was not their mandate to correct this inequity.

The first phase of the study indicated that a compelling need to operate recreation facilities on a region-wide basis had not been established and it was felt that if facilities continued to be operated and funded separately, the need would never be compelling. It was also noted by the Committee that while the report was well done and received, that a second phase should be conducted to develop a framework for the future. The outcome of completion of the first phase resulted in a committee resolution which pointed out that the study clearly indicated that the only major inequity in usage in existing recreation facilities was the Johnson-Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre and that there was not a compelling need to implement a Regional Recreation Facilities Program at that time. The committee further recommended that the Regional Board proceed to the preparation of a Phase Two report for the purpose of developing a framework for the development, management and financing of recreation facilities in the future.

While the study and recommendations were received by the Regional Board at a subsequent time, action was not taken to conduct a Phase Two Study for the purpose outlined in the resolution.
Community Parks Letters Patent issued June 30th, 1973

The Letters Patent for this function were amended in 1982 to include Ellison and Joe Rich. When subdivision developments occurred, areas of land that were not necessarily acceptable for residential use were donated for park purposes. With the issuance of these letters patent, the Regional District was granted the power to receive parcels of land and to maintain them for community use. Letters Patent were further amended on March 29th, 1989 to provide the Regional Board with the authority under the Municipal Act, to require the dedication of land for community purposes when new subdivisions are registered. This provision also allowed the Regional Board to receive money in lieu of parkland; however, in the majority of cases, the Regional Board required land to be dedicated for this purpose. Even though the land dedicated would not necessarily be developed at the time for community park purposes, it was felt that the land would always be available for the future when the need arose. Over the years the Regional Board acquired many parcels of land through this dedication process for community parks, of which many are used extensively and enjoyed by the communities.


This is an operation which originally started when Mel Marshall was an Electoral Area Director representing the Rutland community and he felt there was an opportunity to turn septic sludge into a useful product. Mr. Marshall owned a feedlot alongside of Highway 97 and he developed a system whereby a number of small lagoons were built on his property utilizing several base materials on an experimental basis. The idea was to find a material that was readily available, which would absorb the effluent and sludge pumped out of septic tanks and disposed of in the lagoons and then compost this material to see whether or not a usable product could be created. Mr. Marshall used hog fuel from Crown Zellerbach Sawmill, shavings from the sawmill, straw from his own feedlot operation and material taken from the actual feedlot where the cattle were kept. He initially had an arrangement with Ray Dellar, who owned Valley Clean Septic Services, to dump effluent and sludge in the lagoons to see what the results would be. It was found that hog fuel was the most successful product to use for this purpose and the Regional District then entered into an agreement with Mr. Marshall to operate a septic tank disposal site on his property.

The Regional Board passed a bylaw requiring the septic tank truck operators within the region to dispose of the effluent at this location. This was not an easy process as fees were charged to the operators for disposal and some of them chose to empty their trucks at various locations throughout the region contrary to the provisions of the bylaw. The disposal site was operated on Mr. Marshall’s property for a few years and subsequently moved to a much larger operation on the land where the current U.B.C. Okanagan is situated. Finally, property was leased from Winfield Ranch just outside of Winfield where large lagoons and drying beds were developed.

The transformation process is very simple starting with the septic tank sludge and pump-out being mixed with the hog fuel. Once the lagoon is filled, it is allowed to dry,
to the point where it is virtually hard enough for a person to walk on, a process which takes a number of months. The lagoon is then emptied and the material is placed in large windrows and begins to heat. Staff tests the temperature of the windrows daily and when they reach 55 degrees Celsius, they are turned. Windrows are turned approximately five times which destroys the harmful bacteria. The product is then shredded and sold to landscapers and backyard gardeners. Often the Regional District has had a difficult time meeting the demands for this material. Gardens have been grown by the Regional District in the past using this material and the fruits and vegetables have been sent to the health labs in Vancouver for testing. All tests received from the health lab indicated that the produce is well within the Canadian Health Standard for food.

Today, the City of Kelowna is operating a similar program where it composites the sludge from the sewage treatment plant and goes through a similar process. This material is then shredded and sold to the public as Ogogrow and has been very well received.

**Recreation Complex Letters Patent - Arena and Curling Rink – Area ‘A’ (Winfield, Oyama and Okanagan Centre)**

These Letters Patent were issued July 4th, 1974 and amended in 1978 to provide for sharing in the costs by the City of Kelowna. This recreation centre was designed by architect George Brown and was opened just before Christmas in 1975 for public skating. The Winfield Recreation Centre was managed by George Fenton.

When the City of Kelowna was expanded to take into its boundaries those lands and buildings generally known as Hiram Walker Distilleries and Vanguard Recreational Vehicle Manufacturing plant, it was felt by the citizens of Electoral Area ‘A’ that a substantial amount of taxable assessment was removed from their tax base thereby making it more difficult for them to afford to operate this facility. There was much discussion at the time with respect to this matter and it was by the good graces of Mayor Stuart and the City of Kelowna Council that they offered to share in the operational costs of this recreation complex. This complex has provided many hours of enjoyment for those children and adults alike that participate in public skating, minor hockey, figure skating and curling and has been a focal point for recreational and other activities within the community.

**Regional Parks Letters Patent issued October 25th, 1974**

The Regional District of Central Okanagan operates and maintains a substantial number of regional parks, both on and off the shore of Okanagan Lake and within many of the electoral areas and municipalities. Today the regional parks function commands a very large portion of the Regional District’s annual budget. When this function was first assumed and the Letters Patent were issued, the Provincial Government under the provisions of the Regional Parks Act provided funding for the acquisition of properties to the extent of 60 percent (60%) of the cost. This funding program is no longer in place; therefore, the Regional District and its participating member municipalities share in the total cost of acquisition and operation. The first property that was purchased for a
regional park is known today as Traders Cove Regional Marine Park, and is situated on the Westside Road just past Bear Creek Provincial Park. Since inception of this function, there has been a Parks Advisory Committee, appointed annually, which meets often to discuss items relating to parks. Mr. William (Bill) Eaton was the first Regional Parks Superintendent, whose position was later filled by George Fenton and then Bill Vos. Many properties of diverse nature and topography have been acquired over the years through various means such as leases, acquisition, cost-sharing with the provincial government, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Trust, sharing arrangements with Central Okanagan Parks and Wildlife Trust, Provincial Crown and municipalities. There have also been properties donated and bequeathed by dedicated community citizens to the Regional District for regional park purposes. Today the Regional Parks function provides a myriad of programs and activities, including the following:

- Environmental Education Centre which provides education opportunities
  (Opened September 25, 1994 in Mission Creek Regional Park)
- Mission Creek Greenway Kokanee Run
- Junior Naturalists Day Camps
- Health hikes
- Annual Gibson House Strawberry Tea
- Kickoff to Nut Harvesting at the Gellatly Nut Farm Regional Park in Westbank
- Photography courses
- Music performances
- Restoration of the Gibson Heritage House at Kopje Regional Park
- Ellison Heritage School Centre which was built in 1912
- backpacking
- many places where people can enjoy leisurely walks in quiet, peaceful surroundings
  and enjoy nature

Much has been said in the past about the Mission Creek Greenway and the many people who have dedicated hours to bring this wonderful pathway along the Mission Creek corridor to fruition. The regional parks properties that are along the lakeshores and creeks together with those that are in the more natural settings and the various programs operated by the Regional Parks Department provide many opportunities for citizens to enjoy and learn about nature for many years to come.

The following is a sampling of several major park acquisitions:

- **Bertram Creek Regional Park:** The Regional District acquired the land for Bertram Creek Regional Park on May 30, 1977, from the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Goldsmith, for the property described as N.E.1/4 of Section 16, approximately 45 acres. (on Lakeshore Road located in the Mission Area of the City of Kelowna)
- **Coldham Regional Park:** Acquired through a generous donation from Mr. and Mrs. Coldham in January & February, 2003. (Trepanier Road from Hwy. 97 S. in the District of Peachland)

- **Cedar Mountain:** Acquired by the Regional District of Central Okanagan on June 20th, 2000. (Chute Lake Road in the Mission area of the City of Kelowna)

- **Gellatly Heritage Regional Park:** The acquisition of Lot 1, Plan 37173 located at Gellatly Road was completed on the 24th of February, 1999. ((Gellatly Road from Hwy. 97S. in the Westbank area of the Westside)
• **Gellatly Nut Farm Regional Park:** RDCO purchased the property on November 19th, 2002 from the Leslie Family. (Whitworth Road from Gellatly Road in the Westbank area of the Westside)

![Gellatly Nut Farm Regional Park](image)

• **Glen Canyon Regional Park:** Numerous parcels making up a linear trail and corridor along Powers Creek with properties acquired as early as 1974. (entrances at Aberdeen, Blue Jay, Glenrosa and Gellatly Roads or Last Mountain Park in the Glen Canyon area of the Westside)

• **Kalamoir Regional Park:** Kalamoir Regional Park was transferred to the Regional District of Central Okanagan from the province in the summer of 1982. The property was formerly a Class ‘C’ Provincial Park. (Collens Hill Road in Lakeview Heights area of the Westside)

• **Kaloya Regional Park:** Acquired through purchase January 10, 1975. (Trask Road from Oyama Road in the Oyama area of the District of Lake Country)

• **Kopje Regional Park:** Acquired through purchase from the Broome family in 1987. (Carr’s Landing Road in the District of Lake Country)
• **McCulloch Regional Park:** Acquired by purchase from the Pollard family in 1996. (McCulloch Road in Central Okanagan East)

• **Mill Creek Regional Park:** Acquired through a subdivision by Pentar Homes in 1990. (Spencer Road from Old Vernon Road in the Ellison area of Central Okanagan East)
• **Mission Creek Regional Park:** Numerous parcels making up Mission Creek Regional Park and the Mission Creek Greenway by purchase, donation, crown grant and operating contract with the City of Kelowna. The anchor property of Sutherland Hills Class ‘C’ Provincial Park was transferred to the Regional District in 1982. (Entrances at Springfield and Hall Roads in the City of Kelowna)

• **Mission Creek Greenway: Phase I** - A project of the Friends of Mission Creek Society, in partnership with the Regional District, City of Kelowna, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Westbank First Nation and the Central Okanagan Foundation. **Phase II:** Plans for 8 km more are currently underway. (Main entrances to the Greenway are at the Mission Sportsfields on Gordon Road in the City of Kelowna)

• **Okanagan Centre Safe Harbour:** Acquired through an agreement with the District of Lake Country for the management and regulation of the Safe Harbour in 2001. (Okanagan Centre Road W. in the District of Lake Country)

• **Raymer Bay Regional Park:** Purchased in January 1974 from Luluwap Enterprises Ltd. and O’Neil Enterprises Ltd. and developed in partnership with the Associated Canadian Travelers. 6.8 hectares which contains a swim area, covered picnic shelter and playground. (Located on Westside Road before Bear Creek Provincial Park.)

• **Reiswig Regional Park:** Purchased in 1991. (Woodsdale Road from Hwy. 97 in the District of Lake Country)

• **Robert Lake Regional Park:** Acquired through purchase and donation in partnership with the Central Okanagan Parks and Wildlife Trust in 1998. (Curtis Road in the Glenmore area of the City of Kelowna)

• **Rose Valley Regional Park:** Numerous parcels including 3 crown license of occupation granted in 1996. (Westlake Road from Hwy. 97 on the Westside)

• **Stephen’s Coyote Ridge Regional Park:** Acquired through the generous donation from Kay Stephens who also assisted in the acquisition of a crown grant for a further 150 acres. (Glenmore Road in the Glenmore area of the City of Kelowna)

• **Antlers Beach/Hardy Falls:** These properties were donated to the Regional District of Central Okanagan within the summer months of the year 1991. (Hardy Road from Hwy. 97 in the District of Peachland)
Antlers Beach Regional Park

Antlers Beach is located at the south end of Peachland just across the bridge at Deep Creek. The beach was not always known as Antlers Beach Park. The name originated right after World War II when a family built a building and called it the Antler Inn. The inn was located where the parking lot is today. The inn became a most popular spot for young people to hang out on Friday and Saturday nights. Inside there was a jukebox, eating area and a small dance area. The inn drew young people from Summerland, Peachland and Westbank. The inn’s name came from the antlers hanging on the walls. The antlers were from moose, deer, elk and other animals.

It is believed the inn burned down and never was replaced. It was a sad day for all as their favourite place was gone. The legacy of the Antlers Inn is that the beach today is named after the inn.

Hardy Falls Regional Park

Hardy Falls in located at the south end of Peachland and is part of Deep Creek. The falls are located about one-half kilometer up stream from Highway 97. The falls were named after the Hardy family who lived in the area. After World War II, lumber was in demand and forestry started to expand. One of the hazards facing forestry at that time was forest fires. The majority of fires were caused by lightning and not by man. In order to keep fires under control, suppression crews (named attack crews today) were formed throughout British Columbia. One such crew was recruited and Hardy Falls became their camp. The crew consisted of approximately twelve people and one crew chief. They were all young men and spent the early part of the season training. All tools were of the hand type – axes, shovels, grub hoses, etc. All work was done with hand tools, mostly building fireguards. After returning from a fire they cleaned and sharpened their equipment and waited for the next fire. When there were no fires to fight they spent their time playing sports, swimming, performing camp duties and keeping fitness ready.
Mission Creek Greenway and Regional Park

Mission Creek Greenway is one of the most used parks in the Central Okanagan, with an estimated average of 1000 visits each day. If you want to take a walk or a run, go for a horseback ride or get out on your bike, you’ll find Mission Creek Greenway a perfect place to go.

The Friends of Mission Creek proposed the Greenway, which is constructed on the dyke running along Mission Creek. They worked in partnership with the Regional District of Central Okanagan, The City of Kelowna, the Provincial Government, Westbank First Nation, The Central Okanagan Parks and Wildlife Trust, many corporate sponsors and fish and game associations. Students from School District #23 also got involved in the project by providing art work and interpretive signage. Protecting the creek was the main goal of the Friends of Mission Creek. The Friends of Mission Creek raised a substantial amount of money for this project, which exceeded 2.8 million dollars.

Credit must also be given to Harold Hall, a previous senior management employee of the City of Kelowna, who worked diligently, researching land titles and surveys throughout the Greenway, and encouraged sponsorships and fundraising initiatives.

Phases One and Two of the Greenway extend along Mission Creek from Lakeshore road where it crosses Mission Creek to Gallagher’s Canyon, approximately 17 kms. It is an easy trail to hike except for the very steep switchback to get above and around the canyon.

The dyke along Mission Creek was originally constructed by the Provincial Government to prevent flooding of private land during spring freshet. While the Ministry
of Transportation is still responsible for the integrity of the dyke, the Regional District maintains and operates the Greenway.

There are several areas along the trail where the original creek channel may be seen where it existed prior to construction of the dyke. While the dyke was mostly built on Crown land and land that was purchased, it did traverse through some private land, which caused the land owners to be concerned, and law suits were filed which resulted in the trail in these areas to be diverted until these matters could be resolved. You can access the Greenway from Lakeshore, Gordon, Casorso, KLO and Springfield roads. Parking is best found at Mission Creek sports fields and Mission Creek Regional Park off Springfield Road.

There is a long history of land acquisitions which make up various components of, and complement, the Greenway and the dyke, beginning with the Rutland Lions Club who first developed a portion of the site which is now named Mission Creek Regional Park. This site was turned over to the Regional District and, with its many amenities, is an integral part of the overall Greenway. The Regional District and the City of Kelowna, over the years, acquired other properties which abut the Greenway including Sutherland Hills Class ‘C’ Provincial Park, land previously owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. Bullock through funding by the then provincial greenbelt fund and the Regional District, the abandoned Rutland Waterworks settling pond, and other privately owned land along the creek together with land donations and some Provincial Crown leases.

The third phase of the Greenway still to be constructed, will extend through land owned by Westbank First Nation, on an easement granted for this purpose, and from there on will enter Crown Forested land. This phase will provide an excellent view of Mission Creek Falls above Gallagher’s Canyon.

There are several interesting features within the Greenway, beyond its natural beauty of trees, shrubs and wildlife. For example, one might notice the very large diameter square concrete culvert which enters the creek from under the dyke just west of the bridge at Mission Creek Regional Park. This culvert was installed several years ago to divert some of the spring floodwaters from Mill Creek to Mission Creek, to prevent flooding of lands along the lower reaches of Mill Creek. This culvert runs from Mill Creek behind Home Depot, crosses under Highway 97 and then Springfield Road to Mission Creek. Visitors may also see the irrigation ditch which meanders through Mission Creek Regional Park. This ditch was constructed many years ago to provide irrigation water to some lands in the Benvoulin flats area and it is still used today. In the late summer, you might also view the annual Kokanee fish spawning run, which not only occurs along the creek but also in the fish spawning channel across the bridge at Mission Creek Regional Park. This is a popular educational event enjoyed by all ages and many school classes. Another interesting feature is that several trails intersect with the Greenway, which leads to ponds in adjacent Sutherland Hills Park. Here, goldfish can be seen together with many mud turtles and a variety of waterfowl.
The riparian area of the creek corridor is heavily used by wildlife including bear, raccoon, deer, beavers, squirrels and many species of birds including Great Blue Heron and Bald Eagles. The herons have a large nesting area or heronry in the Benvoulin Woods between KLO Road and Mission Creek Regional Park. Bears can occasionally be seen on the Greenway as they use this corridor to access the Kokanee when they are spawning in the creek and the orchards on the East Kelowna bench where they feed on apples and other fruits in the fall. The Greenway has many benches for hikers to rest and enjoy the surrounding scenery and to reflect upon the beauty of the Mission Creek Corridor.

Woodhaven Nature Conservancy

Woodhaven Nature Conservancy was going to be developed into a housing development, which the citizens of the Mission area were very upset about; in fact some of the large trees on the property were cut down. The Regional District then informed the owners that it was interested in acquiring the property for park purposes. The property contained many insects, plants, trees and shrubs that are rarely found anywhere in the Central Okanagan. On this basis, the Regional Board approached the Nature Conservancy of Canada to ask them to share in the purchase of the property so that the flora and fauna found on the property would be protected for future generations. The title was therefore vested in both the Nature Conservancy and the Regional District, with both holding one half interest.
Several years after the purchase of this property for park purposes, it was noted that many of the giant cedars were showing stress due to lack of water. The Provincial Government had carried out work in the main channel of Bellevue Creek for flood control. This work prevented the natural flow of water into the north channel during the spring freshet, thereby stopping all water flow into the Nature Conservancy and to the trees. The Regional District, as a result of this problem, installed a water intake in Bellevue Creek so that water, once again, could flow into the north channel. This did cause some problems to the homes built to the north of the property in that some of the basements and crawl spaces got wet, so the Regional District installed a curtain drain on the north boundary to collect excess water and redirect it back into the north channel of the creek.

Jim and Joan Burbridge continued to reside on the property in a little cottage as caretakers. The Burbridge’s cared for and fed many of the wild animals and birds that made this property their home. Jim, a well known naturalist in the area, had been retained by the Region to collect rattlesnakes in the spring from the dens above Wilson’s Landing. The snakes would come down the mountain and would bother some of the cottage owners in the little resort community. Jim would take any snakes that he caught to the Okanagan Game Farm, south of Penticton. Interestingly, on one occasion, Jim lost one of the snakes in his car. Not worrying too much about it, he let it be, thinking that it would re-surface at some point. A few days later, upon opening the car door in the morning, the snake was found peacefully sleeping on the front seat.

Other significant parks and recreation events:

- Recreation Complex (Arena and Curling Rink) (AREA ‘A’, now the District of Lake Country)
- Transferred all Area A parks and facilities to the District of Lake Country May 2, 1995 (excluding Regional Parks)
• Mount Boucherie Complex and the Westside Senior Centre November 29, 1973. (AREA G & H, now Area Westside)

Mount Boucherie Community Hall

Jim Lind Arena at Mount Boucherie Complex
• Construction of the EECO Centre and opening in September 25, 1994.
• Official Regional Park Plan completed and adopted July 10, 2000
• Westside Parks and Recreation Master Plan completed and adopted December 2000.
• Okanagan Mountain Fire 2003 – lost most of Cedar Mountain and Bertram Creek Regional Park; reconstruction is underway.
• Major community fundraising campaigns for the Greenway in 1996 and 2004 raised over $2.8 million total in land donations, cash and in-kind donations for the 16.5 km trail.
• Construction of second sheet of ice at Mount Boucherie currently underway.
Currently the Regional Parks and Recreation Department administers 28 Regional Parks including:

- Two campsites under contract with Ministry of Forests
- 101 Westside Parks (72.67 hectares)
- 6 Eastside Parks (13.24 hectares)

Credit is given to the Westbank First Nation who owns approximately twenty-five hundred (2500) acres in the Gallagher Canyon area in southeast Kelowna. The Regional District, City of Kelowna, South East Kelowna Irrigation District, Black Mountain Irrigation District and Westbank First Nation Council negotiated a right-of-way through their lands to add to the Mission Creek Greenway so that there is a continuous hiking trail from Okanagan Lake to the crown land in the Mission Creek watershed. This trail may eventually join the high rim trail of the Okanagan. The co-operation of the Westbank First Nation in providing this opportunity has been appreciated. More about the Gallagher Canyon Agreement is written later in this review.

**Fintry Estates property**

The Fintry Delta or Fintry Estates property is a landmark site in the Okanagan. Its rich and colourful history goes back to when the Okanagan Indians used parts of the delta for summer camps in the early years. It has been suggested that Fintry was a base for hunting big horn sheep and abundant other game in the hills of the Short’s Creek headwaters. The old Fur Brigade Trail ran through the Fintry property as well and parts of the trail are still in evidence today. According to a survey of the existing portions of the trail made in 1982, the trail is obscure and no longer discernable on the southern part of Fintry where it came up from the south near the lakeshore and ran across the Short’s Creek Delta but just to the north of the creek the trail is very clear and in a good state of preservation where it runs up the hillside. The rich and colourful history provides the residents of British Columbia with a window to the past and how the Okanagan Valley was settled and developed. Its natural features provide lasting images for all those who visit the site. The estate also holds one of the most unique canyons in the region. Short’s Canyon provides spectacular waterfalls, deep pools and steep canyon walls. Man-made features in the canyon of historical significance include remains of a suspension bridge and of irrigation and power generation structures. The estate also provides an impressive sandy foreshore of 1,920 lineal metres (6,300 lineal feet).
Since the incorporation of the Regional District, several proposals were received by prospective developers of this property, some of which contained condominiums, golf courses and recreation facilities together with water and sewer systems. One such proposal was presented to the Regional District Parks Advisory Committee in 1995. The Regional Parks Advisory Committee at the time was chaired by Director Ben Lee. The reason that this proposed development was submitted to the Regional Parks Advisory Committee was for the purpose of discussing what area of lakeshore within the development would be dedicated to the Regional District for park purposes. The Administrator, Mr. Harrison, suggested that there might be some possible means by which the Fintry Delta could be purchased under a partnership agreement with the Regional District and the Provincial Government and to turn this property into a Provincial Park. It was felt by the committee that this suggestion had merit and that it could become a jewel in the Provincial Park system in British Columbia. Upon presentation to the Regional Board for consideration, concern was expressed by the Board with regard to the costs of acquiring this property. Mayor Stuart firstly approached City Council with this proposal and strongly supported its acquisition. If not for Mayor Stuart’s conviction that this property should be acquired for park purposes, it would likely never have become a Provincial Park as he convinced City Council to agree to the proposal. The City of Kelowna would be responsible for the largest regional share of the costs of purchasing this property and without Council’s participation it would not be accomplished. Councils of the District of Lake Country and Peachland could also appreciate the merits of acquiring this property and agreed to participate.

Upon the support of the municipal councils and agreement by the electoral area directors, a letter was forwarded to the Minister Responsible for Parks, the Honourable Moe Sihota in Victoria, proposing that the Regional District and the Provincial Government partner in the acquisition of this property for provincial park purposes. Arrangements were made for the meeting with the Minister and Chair Robert Hobson, Director Ben Lee and Mr. Harrison traveled to Victoria to meet Minister Sihota. After much discussion, Mr. Sihota requested that a full report be submitted by the Regional District setting out details of the property. Chair Hobson and Mr. Harrison gave a commitment to have the report on the Minister’s desk the following Tuesday. Though this was a very short time frame, the commitment was met with a full and complete report providing details with respect to site location and description, physical inventory, historical review, existing land use and zoning, the Agricultural Land Reserve, Official Community Plan, the proposed Short’s Creek protected area strategy, existing services and previous development proposals together with a number of aerial photographs of the property. Recognition must be given to Hilary Hettinga, Regional Engineer, and Ken Arcuri, Planning Director, and other staff together with UMA Engineering Ltd., engineers and planners with offices in Kelowna, who spent many hours putting this very detailed report together in time to meet the commitment given to Minister Sihota.

Negotiations were then entered into between the Regional District, the Provincial Government and the owner of the property, represented by realtor, Gordon Hirtle. After long discussions and negotiations, the property was purchased for $7,680,000.00 with the Regional District contributing $2,000,000.00 of that amount. An official ceremony to
announce purchase of this property for provincial park purposes was subsequently held at the Fintry Delta next to the Manor House with the Friends of Fintry conducting tours of the site. A more formal presentation was held later that day at Okanagan Lake Resort with Chair Robert Hobson hosting the ceremonies. A number of provincial, regional, municipal and First Nation dignitaries were present at the ceremony.

A 1998 Fintry Provincial Park Management Plan was prepared for the Provincial Parks Branch by Hartley and Associates. Since this time, portions of the property have been developed into a provincial park and campground and the Friends of Fintry, together with the Provincial Parks Branch, have contributed money towards restoration of some of the historic buildings on this site. At that time, in order for the region to legally participate in this acquisition and to provide $2,000,000 towards the purchase, one parcel contained within the overall property was vested in the name of the Regional District. The partnership agreement required that the province have a portion of the delta on the property developed into a provincial campground by the year 2001. The property is now in use for that purpose and the province has contracted to private enterprise to operate it as such. The agreement includes provisions for all of the property to be maintained as a Provincial Park, with costs paid by the Provincial Government.

A number of the heritage buildings on the property have been, or are, in the process of being restored which will add to the beauty and enjoyment of this wonderful property. Short’s Creek runs through the property and in the springtime, during runoff, a magnificent view of the waterfall can be seen by climbing the steps that lead to several viewpoints. Adjacent to the parkland there is an area included in the protected area strategy containing some 65,000 acres. This, together with the purchased land, will provide one of the largest and most desirable park properties in the interior of British Columbia.

**Industrial Development Commission Letters Patent issued February 24th, 1978**

The Industrial Development Commission in later years became known as the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The Commission has its own Board of Directors who elect a Chairperson annually with representatives from the greater business community of the Central Okanagan as well as political representation from member municipalities and the regional board. The EDC, over the years, has carried out numerous studies with respect to enhancing the business community and has promoted the region at national and international levels. One of the projects which has attained tremendous success is the Young Entrepreneurial Competition which encourages and assists young people in seeking information and knowledge for possible entry into the business community. The EDC has also promoted and participated in numerous trade shows, not only in this region but also other communities and cities in North America.

The following are a few historical milestones that have occurred in Economic Development in the region since incorporation in 1967:
1970 – 1 million cases roll off the line at Calona Wines
1980 – Population reaches 100,000 by end of decade
    Gallagher’s Canyon housing development launches golf community concept
1990 - Coquihalla Connector opens, bringing a boom to the region
    The Grand Hotel open, marking big-time entry into international tourism
    Airport attains international status
    Population grows to over 100,000 (35% increase in five year census period (1991-1996)
    Western Star (1400 employees) leaves region
    3rd largest tech region in B.C.
2000 - Okanagan Mountain Fire; results in construction boom & increased need for related trades
    Population grows to over 165,000
    Mission Hill Winery completes $30 million expansion
    Employment levels lowest in over 30 years
    1 million plus passenger mark at the Kelowna International Airport
    Record-setting building values
    UBC announces Okanagan campus

**Urban Transit Authority Letters Patent issued March 12**th, 1981

In 1981 a transit system was implemented within the terms of an annual operating agreement with the Urban Transit Authority of the Province of British Columbia for service to the Westside areas, including Peachland, and also to the Ellison District. HandyDART service was also implemented to provide transit service to those persons who could not ride the regular buses. At that time agreements were entered into to participate in this service with the City of Kelowna and in later years the District of Lake Country. Electoral Area Directors and representatives from the participating municipal councils served on a regional transit management committee which has been administered by the City of Kelowna since its inception. The transit service has been operated by private companies under contract. Since 1991, ridership has increased substantially and each year a need has been expressed to expand the service provided and to acquire additional buses. Costs of providing this service has always been shared between the participating members within the Regional District, the Provincial Government Urban Transit Authority and fare box revenue.

**Emergency 9-1-1 Service Letters Patent issued February 20**th, 1985

Following the issuance of Letters Patent in 1985, the Regional District of Central Okanagan was the first Regional District in the Province of British Columbia to implement a 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Service on a region-wide basis. At the time of implementation, the communication centre was located in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Detachment on Doyle Avenue in Kelowna where Regional District staff was employed as radio communications officers. This centre was later re-located to the new RCMP subdivision headquarters on Norris Road in 1997, at no cost to the Regional District.
An Implementation Committee comprised of elected and appointed officials, members of the telephone company, Kelowna Fire Department and the RCMP worked diligently for a number of months to plan the logistics, and become prepared to resolve any potential problems associated with the implementation of this kind of system. Special arrangement was made with the R.C.M.P. communication centres in Vernon and the Vernon Fire Department to dispatch emergency services to the Fintry, Killiney Beach and Westshore areas. Arrangements were also made for ambulance services to be dispatched through the ambulance communications centre in Kamloops.

**Sewage Treatment and Disposal Letters Patent issued January 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1987**

Upon issuance of these Letters Patent, the Regional Board embarked upon a program to provide sewage collection and treatment in the Westbank community. The sewage treatment plant was designed to duplicate, as near as possible, the Bardenpho Treatment Facility that is operated by the City of Kelowna. The Bardenpho Treatment System is a biological process which is considered to be more environmentally friendly when disposing of the effluent in a body of fresh water. In the cases of the City of Kelowna and the Westside Treatment Plant, the effluent is, and has been, tested on numerous occasions and is very close to the quality of the receiving waters. Several areas in the Westbank community, under specified area bylaws, were provided with sewage collection systems to transport effluent to the treatment facility. This has become an ever increasing and expanding service within the Westbank and Lakeview areas. Some areas were provided service under Latecomer Agreements, where subdivision developers provided funding to install service and trunk mains so their developments could attain higher density. Latecomer Agreements require landowners who subdivide their land at a later date and connect to the sewer trunk main to provide a refund to the initial funding contributor. The sewage treatment plant and collection system have been operated under the direction of the Engineering Department since implementation.
An agreement was also entered into with the Westbank First Nation Council to provide sewer services connection to development on Indian Reserves No. 9 and No. 10. A substantial amount of commercial and residential development occurred, particularly on I.R. #9 during the years 1993, 1994 and 1995 and the sewer services agreement entered into with the Westbank First Nation Council has served them very well. It was important at the time of writing the agreement that all properties connecting to the sewer service pay exactly the same amount on reserve as off reserve.

At about the same time of entering into the agreement for sewer servicing of reserve lands, the regional district entered into a local service agreement to provide the Indian Reserves with other services such as Sanitary Landfill, Recreation and other matters. This came about as a result of the Westbank First Nation obtaining authority from the Federal Government to enact its own taxation bylaw. At the time of entering into this agreement, the Westbank First Nation had approximately 6,000 non-natives residing on the reserve. The local services agreement has been the subject of controversy since entering into it, in that the Regional District receives a flat fee for the services rendered rather than utilizing the assessment base to calculate the share of costs that should be paid by the Westbank First Nation. This agreement, which expires in 2007, was for a term of fifteen years.

The Agreement provided for a dispute resolution process. Tremendous growth occurred on the Reserve Lands and the board believed that an opportunity to amend the fee structure in the contract was available. Court action was taken by the Regional District and in the final analysis; the decision was ruled in favour of the First Nation.

**Crime Stoppers Program Letters Patent issued September 15th, 1988**

Upon implementation of this service, the Regional District provided funding and continues to employ a Crime Stoppers Coordinator who works closely with the Kelowna Detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as well as with the Kelowna and District Crime Stoppers Society. This function, over the years, has provided a means for solving many crimes within this region.

**Victim Assistance Program Letters Patent issued September 14th, 1988**

Under this function the Regional District established a Victim Witness Assistance Program which is a program to assist victims and witnesses through the Provincial Court system and also provide some counseling to victims of crime. Staff for this program has been housed in the Kelowna Detachment of the RCMP and a well-trained volunteer component assists in this service.
Fire Protection

1968 and 1970 Fire Protection Special Service Area and Loan Authorization Bylaws were adopted by the Regional Board to provide funding assistance to the Benvoulin Fire Protection Department for the purpose of constructing a new fire hall and to the Okanagan Mission Fire Protection Department to provide financial assistance for improvements to its fire hall. In later years, the Regional District established volunteer fire departments in Ellison, Joe Rich, North Westside Road, Wilson’s Landing, Carr’s Landing and West Kelowna Estates. All fire department chiefs throughout the region including those that are managed through improvement districts and municipalities are members of a Regional Fire Department Chiefs Association. This fairly loose organization holds meetings from time to time to discuss items such as bulk purchasing, equipment needs, procedures and educational programs. This process has been very successful in maintaining good relations throughout the fire departments in the Regional District.

It’s interesting to note that the very first bylaw that the Regional Board adopted in November of 1968 was to authorize the establishment of the Electoral Area E (Benvoulin Fire Protection Special Service Area) and provided borrowing funds for the purchase of a fire truck and building a fire hall on KLO Road. The cost of purchasing the fire truck and building the fire hall in 1968 was $63,000. A second bylaw adopted by the Regional Board in 1970 was to establish an area within the Okanagan Mission District to raise funds in the amount of $30,000 for building an addition to the fire hall and for other miscellaneous fire protection equipment.

The Regional District entered into a written Mutual Aid Agreement between all fire departments as well as the North Okanagan and Okanagan-Similkameen Regional Districts. There is also a similar agreement in place between the Regional District and the Ministry of Forests. With the expansion of boundaries of the City of Kelowna in 1973, Benvoulin and Okanagan Mission Fire Departments were taken into and operated by the City of Kelowna. In the early years there was also an attempt made by the provincial government to amalgamate the Lakeview and Westbank Fire Protection Improvement Districts. A number of meetings were held at that time between trustees of the improvement districts, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Regional District; however, the proposal was not acceptable and was therefore not implemented.

OTHER FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

Over the years there have been other necessary functions and services that were established under the provisions of the Municipal Act or within the powers previously granted by Letters Patent or Supplementary Letters Patent. The following therefore represents a sampling of these services.
**Regional Rescue Service**

The Regional Rescue Service was developed through the Association of Regional Fire Chiefs and is carried out by all fire departments in the region. It is structured to respond to any rescue need, even those areas that are not covered by fire protection. The Regional Rescue Service has also equipped and trained firefighters for the purpose of providing marine rescue. The marine rescue program maintains several well-equipped vessels which are strategically located throughout the region. This function also operates a hazardous materials unit staffed through the City of Kelowna Fire Department.

**Emergency Plan**

The Regional Emergency Plan and Bylaw was prepared and adopted several years ago through much assistance and consultation with the City and other agencies. The Emergency Plan is coordinated by the Fire Chief of the City of Kelowna for the region with various senior staff members receiving in-depth training to manage a response program in case of emergency. The bylaw adopted by the Regional Board establishes a political structure which places responsibility for the implementation and management of the plan during a disaster as well as provision for appointment of an emergency plan coordinator.

During the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Park Fire catastrophe, many properties were destroyed. The Emergency Plan was put to the test during the fire and proved to be very effective in evacuating and accommodating those persons who were in danger during the colossal emergency.

**Sterile Insect Release Program**

Five Regional Districts, namely the Central Okanagan, Okanagan-Similkameen, Columbia-Shuswap, North Okanagan and Central Kootenay Regions participate in a program referred to as the Sterile Insect Release Program. This program is aimed at controlling codling moth throughout the regions where fruit is grown by the release of sterile codling moths. There is a major sterile codling moth producing plant in Oliver which is managed and operated under the jurisdiction of the Sterile Insect Release Board. This board consists of representatives from each of the participating regions. This is a very high cost function and has become very controversial; however there appears to be a majority of support amongst fruit growers.

**Solid Waste Management**

The Regional District of Central Okanagan was the first region in the province of British Columbia to have a Solid Waste Management Plan approved by the Minister. All member municipalities and electoral areas participated in this service. The Regional Board employed a Solid Waste Management Coordinator and a Solid Waste Management Educator in the Engineering Department who supervises the program. The program includes solid waste collection, recycling and education. Over the years, initiatives have
included limiting weekly garbage pickup to two containers and instituting a bi-weekly blue bag recycling program. There has been a substantial reduction in solid waste flow to the landfills since implementation of the plan.

**Johnson-Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre**

In 1987, an aquatic centre was built by the community of Westbank as a memorial to the Johnson and Bentley families who tragically lost their lives. The debt retirement and operational costs are paid solely by Westbank taxpayers, however a number of people from outlying areas use the facility. This project was the subject of substantial controversy from the outset, particularly with respect to the area that would provide funding for its operation. A referendum was held in the Lakeview Area to determine whether or not the taxpayers in those communities would share in the ongoing costs of this facility but it was defeated. The problem was that when the Mount Boucherie Centre was planned, space was made available for a future swimming pool to be part of the complex; however, the Westbank community was adamant that the pool be built in Westbank. The Westbank Irrigation District offered land that it owned for this purpose. The YM/YWCA originally operated the Centre under contract to the Regional District until December 31st, 1996 following which a Civic Property Commission was appointed to oversee and monitor the operation with a contract subsequently being issued to a group residing in Westbank.
Johnson-Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre

**Engineering Services and Public Works**

Infrastructure has played a major role in the development of the region over the years. The following is an outline of the history of the Engineering Services and Public Works submitted for this historical review by Hilary Hettinga, Director of Engineering.

- Early public works included the operation of the Westside Sanitary Landfill and the Killiney Beach Water System.

- A formal Engineering Services and Public Works department was established in 1989 in response to increasing responsibilities. As the Regional District grew, it became increasingly involved with management of utility services and engineering functions.

- A Liquid Waste Management Plan established in the late 80s identified the need for the Regional District to establish a community sewer function (taken over from the Westbank Irrigation District) and construction of a tertiary wastewater treatment plant. Biological nutrient removal technology was used, which was and still is state of the art technology.

- The first phase of the multi-million dollar wastewater facility was completed in 1989.

- Liquid Waste Management Plans completed in the early 90’s evaluated and recommended that all developed communities in the then Electoral Areas ‘G’ & ‘H’ be provided with community sewer. This significant plan embarked the Regional District on a massive sewer infrastructure program to construct community sewers, starting with priority areas, over a 10 – 15 year construction schedule.
The Regional District provides new services to approximately 400 – 500 existing lots per year, in order to accomplish the recommendations in the plan.

Mid 1990’s, the Regional District completed a comprehensive Master Drainage Plan unique to regional districts, to ensure drainage is properly managed as part of development.

With provincial ministries determined to see the elimination of small community water systems, and with increasing liability issues with respect to the operation of water systems, utility owners sought out the Regional District to take over and operate their water systems.

A Solid Waste Management Plan was required by provincial ministries in 1992. The Regional District aggressively pursued preparation and implementation of the Plan, becoming the first regional district in the Province to have an approved Plan which worked towards the 50% waste reduction target. The Regional District is still very progressive in its waste reduction programs, and is currently preparing an update to that major plan, further refining programs and strategies to enhance the waste reduction initiatives.

Continued growth has required the Engineering Services Department to establish one of its first significant bylaws, the Subdivision Servicing & Development Bylaw. Bylaw No. 704 (1996) amended the original bylaw to identify works and services required from new development. This bylaw was enhanced to include development properties, and is continually undergoing changes to ensure that the levels of service to accommodate growth are dealt with in an effective and efficient manner.

Fire Protection is another significant area of responsibility in the Engineering Services Department. It has grown significantly since 1990, as we look towards expanding local rural departments to provide protection to unprotected lands and continue to expand levels of service. Inclusion of the Westside Fire Protection in 2005, as a regional function, recognizes fire protection under the authority of the Regional District for almost all of the unincorporated areas.

In 2004 comprehensive sewer servicing strategies were developed to establish cost equity in servicing multiple local service areas.

Finance Department

The following is a brief historical summary of financial activities since incorporation as provided by Harold Reay, Director of Financial Services:

**1967 Financial Statement** (2 pages long)
One fund only (revenue fund) with assets of $5,843

**2005 Financial Statement** (47 pages long)
Eleven funds with assets of $125,046,114

Highlights over the years:
1. In 1980, Vadim was contracted to provide a computerized financial system that continues to be the platform used today.
2. Utility billing started in 1990 and now generates 37,000 bills annually.
3. In 1999, the insurance administration was brought in house and has built up a reserve of $1.9 million, reducing insurance charges to the various functions.
4. The Regional District started with one employee in 1967 and the May, 2006 payroll was 280 employees including senior staff, exempt, casuals, part-time and members of the Staff Association (SARDCO).
5. In 2001, the Board started financing capital projects for the Regional Hospital District from taxes rather than long-term borrowing. The result has been that debt charges have been reduced from 77.2% of the budget in 2001 to 33.2% of the budget in 2006.

**Administration**

When the Regional District was first established, all of the operational procedures were carried out by the administration department. Responsibilities included management of records, finance, by-law and resolution writing, preparation of proposal calls and specifications, advertising, elections, fire protection, correspondence, and a myriad of other day-to-day requirements. Many other matters had to be taken care of by the administration department such as Board administration, public contact and consultation, facility inspection and human resources. This department slowly changed over the years as the Regional District operation evolved and other departments were established to manage and meet the needs of a rapidly growing, more urbanized region. The departments established included engineering, inspection services, regional and community parks, finance, regional and community planning, economic development and human resources. These departments today provide a full complement of services within their areas of responsibility to meet the ever demanding needs of the regional district. The administration department has grown from one employee in 1969 to a number of personnel sufficient to manage all board matters respecting the keeping of records and documents to meet the legal requirements of provincial legislation and oversees the functions and services of the Regional District.

Today the Regional District of Central Okanagan is a professional, sophisticated local government, providing a full spectrum of public services, equal to any in British Columbia, and satisfies the vision of the Provincial Government when it introduced and adopted legislation in 1964 to establish Regional Districts.

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICE**

Upon the Letters Patent being issued to incorporate the area into a regional district in 1967 and the appointment of the interim Regional Board, the original office was situated in C.E. Sladen’s public accountant’s office on Water Street in downtown Kelowna. Mr. Sladen served as accountant and secretary for the Regional Board until such time as it appointed a full time administrator. Mr. A.T. (Al) Harrison was appointed as administrator and commenced work on April 1st, 1969. The filing system when Mr. Harrison arrived to assume his duties was two apple boxes with several file folders in
each one. Mr. Harrison’s desk consisted of a table in one corner of the office and Mr. Sladen’s staff provided secretarial services to the Regional District. Soon thereafter, a lease agreement was entered into with R. & R Equipment (Roger Simoneau) for office space at 540 Groves Avenue in the South Pandosy area. Upon assumption of the Planning and Building Inspection Services, staff from the Okanagan Regional Planning Board and the Provincial Government Building Inspection Branch joined Mr. Harrison in the new offices on Groves Avenue.

Leasehold improvements were carried out in the building to accommodate the administration, reception, various offices and a regional board room. The westerly end of the building housed the Benvoulin Fire Department truck which remained there until such time as the new Benvoulin Fire Hall was opened. For several years R. & R. Equipment maintained their electrical shop in the easterly end of the building until purchase of the building by the Regional District. This building remained as the Regional District offices until 1994 when the Regional District opened its new offices at 1450 KLO Road.

The Board purchased the building on Groves Avenue from R. & R. Equipment on April 21st, 1980 for a purchase price of $245,000. With the expansion of services and functions, both floors of this building went through several renovations to accommodate staff and elected officials so that they could carry out their responsibilities. It is interesting to note that one afternoon during a particularly strong windstorm, the easterly wall of the building collapsed with concrete bricks falling on several cars that were parked in that area and totaling crushing them. It was indeed fortunate that no one was in the vehicles at the time.
In February of 1974, the Regional District acquired Lots A and B of D.L. 131, Plan 24808 on KLO Road with the intention of building new offices on that site. During the months following the acquisition of this property, a number of discussions were held with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs regarding the provision of new offices for the Regional District which in the end turned out that the Ministry would not support this project, nor approve the Regional District’s proposed bylaw. The regional district therefore continued to operate from Groves Avenue until such time as it gained approval to construct new offices on the KLO Road properties. In the meantime however, the land was leased to Kenji Oishi for agricultural purposes. A portion of the land described as Lot A, was subdivided and sold to the Okanagan Regional Library for a distribution centre and later the easterly portion of the remainder of the property was leased to the City of Kelowna for playing fields.

The new office building at 1450 KLO Rd. was built under a design-build project constructed by Al Stober Construction of Kelowna. The architect was Steve Ulrich of the firm Woodworth, Ulrich and Frie also of Kelowna. The Regional District entered into an agreement with the contractor to build the building under a 10 year mortgage. The mortgage was paid off several years before the expiry of the term. The office building is situated on a lot which is approximately three (3) acres in size and contains the necessary infrastructure to construct a third floor in the future if it is needed.
The official opening ceremonies were held on May 27th, 1994, with Chair Robert Hobson officiating.

ADMINISTRATORS

A.T. (Al) Harrison

A.T. (Al) Harrison was born in Merritt, British Columbia, attended schools in Rutland and later settled in Camrose, Alberta. In 1962, he was employed by the County of Camrose as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer.

In 1969, Al accepted the position as Administrator for the Regional District of Central Okanagan, becoming the first full time employee of the Regional District. Mr. Harrison studied municipal government administration at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, extension department as well as enrolling in related courses at the University of Victoria and the Banff School of Management.

Al attained his Senior Certificate of Municipal Administration awarded by the Board of Examiners of the Province of British Columbia and was also awarded the designation of Professional Administrator by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators in Canada.

During his employment with the Regional District, he served as an executive member of the Municipal Officers Association of British Columbia as well as being appointed as a member to the National and Pacific Recreational Boating Advisory Councils to the Canadian Coast Guard. Mr. Harrison retired from the Regional District on February 1st, 1997.
Wayne B. d'Easum

Wayne started working in local government on January 1, 1966 for the City of Duncan. While employed by the City, responsibilities included property assessment, building inspection and general administrative duties.

In July 1969, he was employed by the Regional District of Nanaimo as Deputy Secretary-Treasurer. In addition to general administrative duties, other responsibilities included accounting and personnel. As regional districts were new to the British Columbia local government scene, explaining regional districts and establishing new functions (services) required a large amount of time.

In October 1972, Wayne was employed as Administrator/Secretary-Treasurer of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary. Again, as regional districts were fairly new, establishing new functions was a large part of the position.

January 1, 1976 saw employment with the City of Dawson Creek as the first City Administrator for that community. As well, the duties of the City Clerk were part of the responsibilities.

In July 1978, a return to the regional district form of local government occurred with appointment to the position of Administrator/Corporate Secretary for the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona.

September 1996 saw a move to the Okanagan as Deputy Administrator/Secretary with the Regional District of Central Okanagan, moving up to Administrator/Corporate Secretary in February, 1997.

During his career, Mr. d’Easum has overseen the construction of two pools, three arenas, a $30M Sewage Treatment and Interceptor facility along with numerous other smaller capital projects.

In addition, he has served as Editor of the Municipal Officers’ newsletter and President of the Municipal Officers’ Association (now called the Local Government Management Association). He has also seen service on numerous committees to review various components of the Local Government Act.

STAFF ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN (SARDCO)

During the early years, staff of the Regional District felt it was necessary to form an organization which could represent them collectively with respect to salaries and
benefits. The Regional District had a Personnel Policy in place which provided benefits not unlike those included in a Collective Agreement under a formal union, which commonly represents municipal employee groups in British Columbia. On October 26, 1982 the staff of the Regional District registered as a society within the terms of the Society Act. At the time of registration, there were 34 eligible voters. The Association was registered under the name Staff Association Regional District of Central Okanagan (SARDCO). SARDCO appointed officers who annually met with the Administrator and Treasurer of the region to negotiate amendments to the Personnel Policy. The Association remained in place until December 21, 1990 when SARDCO received certification for Collective Bargaining through the Industrial Relations Act of the Province of British Columbia. Membership at this time consisted of 53 eligible voters. Following certification, SARDCO was recognized as a collective bargaining agent to act on behalf of non-exempt staff of the Regional District. It is apparent that this arrangement has been most satisfactory for staff and the Regional District in that there has been no work disruption and only a few grievances. This record speaks for itself. Obviously the relationship between Regional District staff, its senior officers and the Regional Board has been amicable and therefore credit must be given to all parties involved. It should also be noted that negotiations each year to reach agreement on amendments to the Collective Agreement between the Regional Board and SARDCO lasted only a few days which again proves harmonious relationships between both parties. It is fair to say that the Regional Board in past years recognized the value of SARDCO and its members and the mutual benefits received by its members as a whole. In past years there were three ‘locals’, being The District of Lake Country, Westbank Irrigation District (WID) and the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO). WID joined in 1999 and Lake Country joined when it incorporated in 1995. Lake Country left SARDCO in 2005 when they joined CUPE. 2006 membership has 133 members (RDCO) and 7 members (WID). SARDCO continues to oversee the union functions of both organizations.
GALLAGHER CANYON AGREEMENT

As stated earlier in this review, the Westbank First Nation, several years ago, purchased approximately 2500 acres in the Gallagher Canyon area in Southeast Kelowna and subsequently made application to the Federal Government to transfer this land to reserve status. This land lies within the Regional District of Central Okanagan and abuts and transcends the boundary of the City of Kelowna. It also lies within a portion of those lands that are in the watershed of Southeast Kelowna Irrigation District and Black Mountain Irrigation District. A substantial number of concerns were brought forward by those jurisdictions as it was understood that there was potential to develop these lands for residential and commercial use.

The Regional Board and City Council were informed that a Federal Government policy was in place which provided local government the opportunity to express its concerns regarding the transfer of lands to reserve status. It was noted that concerns could be expressed by letter of a Mayor, resolution of Council or by an Agreement. The position taken by the Regional District and the City of Kelowna was that their concerns would be expressed through an Agreement while at the same time not agreeing to the transfer of the lands to reserve status.

The team representing the four local jurisdictions was formed including Mr. Harrison representing the Regional District, Mr. Born representing the City of Kelowna, Mr. Pike representing the Southeast Kelowna Irrigation District and Mr. Ruskowsky representing Black Mountain Irrigation District with Mr. Harrison acting as Chair of the negotiating team.

The Westbank First Nation agreed to negotiate an agreement and was anxious to reach a solution to local government concerns. The negotiating team was encouraged by the attitude of the First Nation negotiators.

Some of the issues and concerns that were discussed at the table included the following:

- Public access
- Protection of water quality
- McCulloch Road access through the lands
- Land Use
- Rights-of-way and easements for irrigation district purposes
- Easement for Linear Park along Mission Creek
- Parcel sizes
- Sustainable water quantities
- Dispute resolution

Residents of South East Kelowna were particularly concerned with the impact that development might have upon their community. However, persons expressing those sentiments did not appear to understand or recognize that unless an agreement was reached in the negotiations, concerns of local government, including the irrigation district,
would not be resolved. Fear that local government had was that the Government of Canada would likely proceed with considering a transfer of the lands to reserve status without further input from local communities.

Negotiations continued for some time resulting in reaching agreement on a majority of the concerns expressed by local government, much to the satisfaction of all parties. With the conclusion of these very sensitive and time-consuming negotiations, it demonstrated that First Nation people and local government could jointly resolve issues of concern. The agreement was finalized and entered into on the 28th day of July, 2000.

**CLOSING STATEMENT**

Looking back over the years from incorporation of the Regional District of Central Okanagan in 1967 to present day, many issues, both political and operational, occurred. Many services, facilities, programs and regulatory bylaws were implemented or provided, too numerous to mention in this review. Suffice to say that the Regional Board has acted very progressively and has reached many milestones in a relatively short period of time. Some were of historical significance and importance while others were more of a day to day operational routine and not historical. It is difficult to determine what might be of historical significance. It is hoped that the choices set out in this collection of stories and events will be looked upon by readers as interesting and important activities conducted by the Regional District of Central Okanagan over the years and will indicate the positive role that this level of government has had upon the growth and development of the Central Okanagan
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