

Thursday April 14, 2011

Saskatchewan Emergency Planner Association (SEPA)

This presentation was conducted by Kathleen Henderson from SEPA.

SEPA is the voice of over 300 emergency planners from all across the province; promotes the cause of emergency planners; Works in the public interest to improve the awareness and preparedness of emergency planners; Works to raise the awareness, knowledge and need for emergency preparedness training in Saskatchewan; Promotes and safeguards the interests of emergency planners.

While the Saskatchewan organizations of Building Officials and Emergency planners have not had a strong association in the past, the link between the two professions is strong and with ongoing interaction will only serve to benefit the interests of the members of communities that we all represent. It is our hope that by communicating with each other – even if it's only at each other's conferences – we can build a stronger working relationship.

One of the greatest difficulties that we all face is the NIMBY factor – Not in my backyard. Depending upon the role that you play with a municipality, you may be reviewing the development applications and deal with people who want to build the maximum allowable house on their lot – or even go for a variance so that they can building it even larger. Of course, they may also be the people who then turn around and say "Not in my backyard", in order to prevent their neighbour from building something too high, too big, or even too ugly....although as you may have been tempted to tell those callers – the National Building Code doesn't prohibit "ugly"

We are all familiar with the stories from Maple Creek and Yorkton. Many of us have worked in those communities and homes – and some of you continue to do so – you are not finished the aftermath from flooding of 2010 as we prepare for runoff 2011. In fact, in looking at pictures it brings back the smells and sights of working in some of the homes in Maple Creek.

Emergency managers and Building Officials may work on separate parts of an emergency, but there are so many advantages if we can work together to mitigate situations.



Todd Russell & Kathleen Henderson

How many of us know of a development which was constructed in a location based on the cost of the land or the land availability rather than considering natural hazards. Even when the site selection was made considering natural hazard, how many of you are aware of situations where earthwork and drainage design were considered to be "optional" depending upon the final budget availability.

SEPA is not suggesting that Building Officials need to take on the role of Emergency Managers. Or that Emergency Managers should become Building Officials. Instead – especially in rural Saskatchewan communities – we should support each other's goals and objectives and act as an extra set of eyes and ears in our communities to ensure that we are all doing our part to protect the communities in which we live, our homes and our neighbours' homes.



A group of Building Officials that were inspecting buildings damaged by the flood for Building Standards and the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP). From left to right Assistant Chief Building Official Len Semko, Remi Boissonnault, Ryan Shepherd, Ron McRae, Chad Freeland, Dale Wagner, Todd Russell, Albert Berube, Dave Hartley, Nicole Deck and Chief Building Official William Hawkins.



Honourable D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert who attended our banquet.