

## President's Message

I think that I was 8 years old when I watched a fire prevention infomercial on CBC (it might have been CTV, but those were the only two options) that featured cartoon characters who accidentally started a fire which rapidly spread throughout the globe.

From that time forward I had a small paranoia about fire. Alright, it might have been a large paranoia, as at my next birthday I asked for an escape ladder to be installed in my bedroom window. Never mind that an escape ladder is all I asked for on my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday – my room was on the ground floor.

Regardless of whether that was start of my emergency preparedness career, that attention to escape routes (some still call it paranoia) still exists.

I need to have the pathway to the exits in my house be clear of shoes, boots, bags and pets. I need my kid's rooms to be clean enough to at least have one clear path to the exits. Perhaps small rodents live in the bedding, but if there is at least a clear escape path to the door, then I can be satisfied with that.

At Christmas time while staying at my parents' house

with nine other family members, there were shoes and boots, coats and outdoor gear piled alongside presents and all sorts of Christmas flotsam.

If I had been at home, I would have tidied everything up. In the event that I had gotten into bed without checking on the pathways to the exits, I would have had to get out of bed and double check in order to settle into sleep.

At my parents' house I looked at the pile as I was getting ready for bed and thought that my parents would deal with it and clear a path and I went to bed without another thought. My father had been a volunteer fire fighter for years and a training officer for search and rescue – I was raised in a prevention and awareness environment. Imagine my surprise when I rose the next morning and discovered that the front entrance was still the cluttered hazard that it had been the night before.

I had a few things confirmed in that moment: (1) prevention and awareness must be continuously exercised in order stay sharp – even on the home front, and even when someone has 30 years' experience; (2) we all know it, but it bears repeating that prevention is everyone's responsibility. I saw the cluttered doorway, and I left it for someone else to take action; (3) for all the effort that

we as emergency managers put into ensuring that we have plans and contingencies for our communities, we also need to take some time and protect ourselves and put plans in place for our own families and home lives.

I enjoy EMO meetings and training courses because I can meet with like-minded people and share stories and learning experiences. These are ideas that we can take home to our communities, regions, families and friends.

The line-up for presentations at the upcoming SEPA conference has come together in recent weeks. Shannan Saunders is going to speak about the importance of emergency responders putting contingency plans into place for their families; Don Webster will educate us on ways we can help families of elderly and vulnerable people develop strategies to assist SAR in the event that someone is missing. Janelle Graham will provide details on protecting ourselves and our responders from the risks of fatigue management.

I am really looking forward to hearing the speakers and seeing some of you at the conference. Until then, hope for the best, prepare for the worst, never panic just react and do the best you can. 🍀

Kathleen  
Henderson  
President, SEPA

## What's New at S.E.M.S.A?

Mary Huebert, Chair  
Professional Development  
Committee, S.E.M.S.A.

It has been an exciting year for Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association (S.E.M.S.A.) Professional Development Committee. In 2007 Accreditation Canada conducted an EMS survey including each province and territory. This survey was done to set the first standards for EMS, on a national level that would become our first true set of benchmarks. The report was released in 2008 to be implemented in 2010.

Within the document, it was identified that mutual aid agreements, written disaster response plans and exercising on an annual basis become a standard for the industry. The Professional Development Committee began the task of working with operators and health regions to meet the criteria.

A team of eleven individuals comprise the Committee with a Chair and Director. This has allowed a provincial cross section of both private and regionally operated services to be involved in this process. Saskatchewan Health Emergency Planning Branch representation and Office of the Fire Commissioner EMO

Specialist are participants with EMS providers to make this a team effort and provide answers to questions and guidance where needed.

To date a survey to meet training needs for emergency management has been developed and completed.

The survey allowed the Committee to gain information on how many services actually have written disaster plans and how often they have exercised, thus giving direction to the team. Currently, ICS and B.E.M. programs have been forwarded to the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics to apply for Continuing Medical Education credits in order to support the training requirements for EMS providers.

One of the upcoming tasks, to accompany the ICS training schedule, is the indoctrination of EMS resources for the province. The Professional Development Committee will be working with an on-line program provided by Saskatchewan Health Emergency Management Branch to allow members to work between meeting dates. To compliment work being done on the ICS programs, S.E.M.S.A. representation will be at the ICS Summit coming up in the near future.

Accreditation Canada has set standards for the EMS industry and our team is rising to meet some of those challenges. This is a long term project that takes commitment and dedication, and through S.E.M.S.A.'s efforts and team work, we are looking forward to positive changes within our industry. 📧

### Updates from around the province:

**Shaunavon** sent 2 people to attend Critical Incident Stress Debriefing training held in Kindersley

**Kindersley** has conducted a table top exercise based on a scenario from their Airport Emergency Response Plan

**Canora** is working on preparations for "wet feet" season

**Coleville** is working on updating their ERP and resource lists

**Maple Creek** is sharing the podium with Yorkton and Kindersley at the SUMA convention

Care to share what's new in your town? Email Kathleen at [highlight@sasktel.net](mailto:highlight@sasktel.net) 📧

## Emergency Planning

Wendy Gowda, Division 5  
RMAA Director, Administrator,  
RM of Buckland No. 491

2010 has been a year for awareness of emergency services in Saskatchewan. Whether wind, rain, hail or fire, many Saskatchewan municipalities are still recovering from the effects of the extreme conditions over the spring and summer of 2010.

Beginning in May with the Nesbit Forest Fire in the Rural Municipality of Buckland, experiencing a 1 in 200 flood level from Spring precipitation, managing the effect of cumulative levels of more than 40 inches of rain over the 2010 growing season, and damaging plough winds have combined for an extremely challenging year for elected officials, maintenance crews and administration. It is phenomenal that one municipality could be impacted by so many extreme factors in one year, and know too, that the disastrous effects are widespread throughout the province.

The damage to municipal and provincial infrastructure, personal property and

livelihood was far reaching and the costs not fully known, nor damages fully repaired. In the RM of Buckland, some losses were immediate, such as the home lost in the Nisbet Forest Fire, others will extend into the future, such as the impact to future crop production and

infrastructure due to excessive precipitation in 2010. Individuals, producers and municipalities have required assistance from provincial and federal assistance programs and resources, as well as insurance claims.

The municipality's role in emergency management; dispersing information, ensuring public safety, maintaining infrastructure management cannot be overstated and has never been so fore front as is evident in this year of natural disasters.

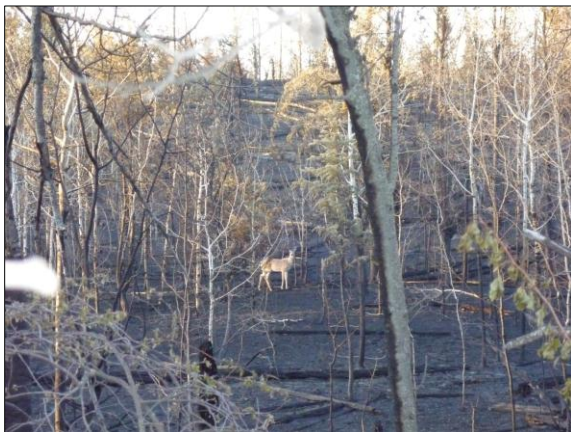
The type of disaster will dictate the type of response required, whether immediate, such as evacuation planning as in the Nisbet Forest Fire, or for infrastructure planning as necessitated due to failed infrastructure from cumulative or immediate precipitation, such as road closure, detours and repair.

No matter what the emergency, an up-to-date emergency plan with contacts, resources and authoritative appointments is a tremendous asset at any time, let alone in an emergency. No one can predict when an emergency response will be required, to what situation, or the type of resources that may be necessary in any given situation. Besides emergency contacts with protective services such as police, fire and ambulance and health care, include neighboring municipalities, local contractors, livestock facilities, animal organizations, pounds, housing, and transportation organizations in your emergency plan.

By participating in an emergency planning session, the administrator, or the emergency measures operations officer (whomever may be appointed for individual municipalities may be), can plan ahead for "known" situations and build a data base or an emergency plan to assist with managing emergency situations. Knowing who to call, who will call, who is responsible for what function, who will be informed of what, when and where is all important information to be disseminated in an emergency.

By keeping the Emergency Plan up-to-date, precious time can be saved in a time of disaster. With key personnel keeping up-to-date with emergency planning, individuals will know their roles, contacts can be maintained, information can be communicated on an accurate and planned basis. It is important to consider individual appointees that are being made, and the value in continuity.

Through this year, the RM of Buckland has learned valuable information and taken measures to be better prepared – the importance of alternate resources, up-to-date contacts, liaisons with other provincial and community groups and organizations in responding to an emergency, all of which are maintained for the next emergency. 📍



A deer wandering through an area cleared of brush by a recent forest fire.

*Photo submitted by Wendy Gowda, Division 5 RMAA Director, Administrator, RM of Buckland No. 491*

### Lacking time...to catch up on industry reading?

Here are some highlights from Fall/Winter 2010 Frontline Security magazine that we feel are worth your time, both personally and professionally:

1. Concerns about teenagers sending explicit and personal text messages are on the rise, without adequate safety-related messages. This situation is changing with the safe texting tips found at [www.TextEd.ca](http://www.TextEd.ca)
2. Recognizing the vast numbers of small (less than 100 employees) companies in Canada, a new program found at [www.B-ReadyNow.com](http://www.B-ReadyNow.com) walks companies through emergency and contingency planning steps.
3. Partnerships Towards Safer Communities Online (PTSC-Online). Page 30 of the most recent magazine, or [www.ptsc-online.ca](http://www.ptsc-online.ca)

## Expanding our Knowledge

15th Annual Conference  
Saskatchewan Emergency Planners Association

**Regina Travelodge**

**4177 Albert Street**

**March 15, 16, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Pre Conference workshops starting March 14,  
2011

For more details contact Heather  
(306) 735-4281

Or email Kathleen @[highlight@sasktel.net](mailto:highlight@sasktel.net)