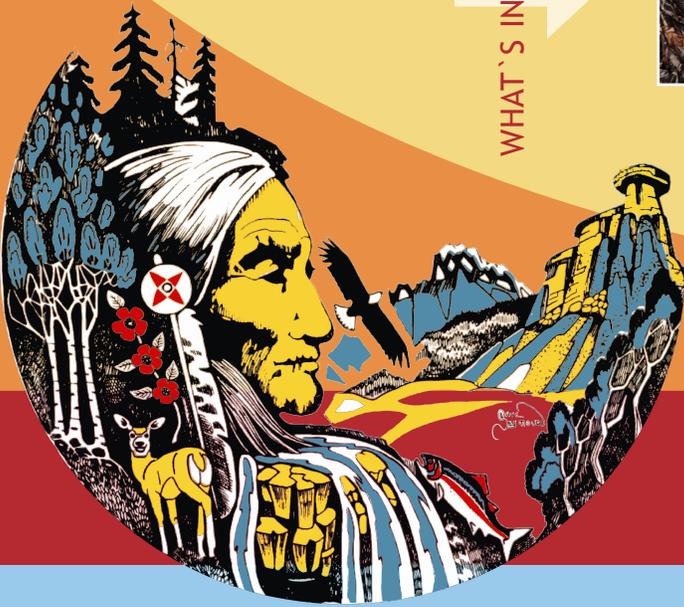


WHAT'S INSIDE:



Justin Gottfriedson explains how long-term asset management will ensure the sanitary sewer collection system remains a reliable community service. **PAGE 2**



Ruby Samson, and Claude Julien are looking forward to the benefits the asset management program will deliver on the financial side. **PAGE 3**



Carey Morin discusses how the asset management program will create efficiencies in information sharing. **PAGE 4**

asset management

# tk'emlúps te SECWÉPEMC

## TteS is taking a new role in managing community assets

What first comes to mind when you think about your “assets”? Chances are you think about your home, car, or furniture. Each of your assets has a value to you and possibly to others. But a big part of managing assets is also considering what they will cost to take care of and use.

Take your car, for instance. If your car isn't too old, it likely holds a certain “book” value based on its age and usefulness. But, every year that value goes down, and the likelihood you'll need to spend money maintaining or fixing it goes up. There are a couple of approaches you can take.

“You can pay for your car once and then drive it until it breaks,” says Don Funk, TteS planning and engineering manager. “Or you can put oil in it



and schedule regular maintenance checks. That will cost more in the short-term but at the end of the day the car will last longer and should cost you less money.”

Simple things that each of us rely on, like turning on our tap and receiving clean drinking water, are made possible through our community's assets (also called infrastructure). The assets the TteS is responsible for include the community's roads, water system, sewer system and buildings (to name a few). As much as they hold a lot of value, our assets also require an investment. Unlike maintaining a car, though, managing the TteS's assets is more complex.

## WHAT IS ASSET MANAGEMENT?

A set of activities that help plan for the current and long-term investment needs of a community's infrastructure (or assets).

Infrastructure includes assets like roads, water system, sewer system, and buildings.

Asset management helps answer questions such as:

- What infrastructure or assets do we own now?
- What are our assets worth?
- What condition are they in?
- Where are we deficient in infrastructure?
- What assets will need to be replaced/ repaired and by when?
- What will it cost?



continued from page 1

The TteS is taking a lead role among BC's First Nations communities by proactively managing our community's assets. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) invited TteS to participate in a pilot project to develop and initiate a long-term asset management program that is tailored to the community's needs. Once complete, the project will also provide an opportunity to showcase the work of TteS and share the successes with other First Nations communities interested in undertaking an asset management program. The pilot project will form the first phase of TteS's long-term asset management program.

"The vision for asset management," says Don, "is to have a long-term strategy that helps TteS proactively plan, construct, operate and maintain all of the Band's assets. It will enable greater organizational efficiency and good fiscal management." He says achieving the vision will require everyone involved to have a good understanding of the components to be incorporated, as each department has unique requirements.



So what is involved in the program? In a nutshell, the first phase is about establishing a team, identifying what assets we have (and what information we have about them), creating awareness around asset manage-

ment, and developing a framework for implementing TteS's asset management priorities. Additional phases will focus on priorities that come out of the first phase. Ensuring reliable community services and budgeting appropriately will be important parts of the long-term asset management strategy.

The asset management team conducting the pilot project is made up of representatives from TteS's Finance, Planning and Engineering, Public Works, Housing, Lands, and Emergency Preparedness departments. The diversity of the team reflects the broad scope that asset management covers. The TteS's integrated approach will enable everyone involved in managing or funding the Band's assets to work together deliberately, and regularly.

One key to effective asset management is having the right information for long-term planning as well as for day-to-day operations. To be effective, information needs to be centrally located or accessed. Building an asset inventory and ensuring the information is easily accessible for each department to use will be a focus of future phases in TteS's program.

Having better information will also help TteS lessen the risks associated with emergency situations.

"When we wait for things to break down before we repair or replace them, it causes an emergency situation. That often means unplanned disruptions in services, more time spent on finding crews and paying them overtime, or people having to fix broken pipes in the dead of winter," says Don.

To find out more, please contact Don Funk, Planning and Engineering Manager at (250) 828-9840 or don.funk@kib.ca.

You can't put a Dodge starter in a Chevy truck.  
All the parts have to be integrated and using  
the same system.

Don Funk



## BENEFITS OF ASSET MANAGEMENT



While it can appear to be more costly at the outset, taking a proactive approach to managing assets brings with it a number of clear benefits.

### Asset Management:

- Provides a direct link between what we invest in and the long-term affordability of the services we offer
- Allows us to create long-term capital and financial plans
- Enables us to make the best use of resources and increase efficiency
- Promotes teamwork and collaboration (because it requires several departments to work together)
- Minimizes risk (like service delays or costly fixes to unanticipated problems)
- Can save communities money in the long-term

# wastewater collection system is key in asset management

While Justin Gottfriedson admits that his job as Wastewater Collection System operator can be a bit routine, he also knows this isn't the type of job where "exciting" is considered a good thing.

"Excitement usually means trouble," says Justin. "My job is to monitor the system and make sure everything keeps running smoothly. Routine is good."

If you aren't sure how good, just imagine a day (or more) of not being able to flush your toilet, take a shower or have the contents of both of those back up into your basement. You get the picture.

The sanitary collection system is made up of a vast network of underground pipes that collect wastewater from all TteS and Sun Rivers

residences and Chief Louis Centre. The pipes carry the wastewater to several lift stations (also called wet wells). Ultrasonic sensors in the wells indicate when the wastewater reaches a critical level and they cause pumps to automatically turn on. The pumps push the wastewater through more pipes and eventually under the Thompson River where it is ends up at the City of Kamloops Sewage Treatment Centre.

Justin collects and analyzes information generated by a



series of sophisticated monitors. If the data doesn't look right, that's a tip off that something in the system isn't working properly

and he needs to figure out what and why. Being able to problem solve is a vital part of his job. Justin also uses the information to continually maintain the system. For example, he will soon be planning the system's first annual "power flush" to make sure the pipes stay clear of build-up and will need to monitor the system during that process.

"The equipment we are operating is expensive, so maintaining it and identifying any issues when they are small can save a lot of money," says Justin. "In an emergency, we have backup pumps if we need to pull one out and fix it, and we can call in a truck to haul wastewater if we need to, but all that is really expensive."

He says the system is only about a year old so there aren't a lot of maintenance issues yet. "If this was a 20 year old system we'd probably be seeing more need for repairs," says Justin.

The TteS's long-term asset management program will help to ensure the sanitary sewer collection system remains a reliable and affordable community service well into the future.

## removing the guesswork

Ruby Samson, accounts receivable technician and Claude Julien, financial accountant, are looking forward to the benefits the TteS asset management program will deliver on the financial side.

"TteS has experienced a lot of growth over the past few years," says Claude. "As one example, property taxes have more than doubled since I started here in 2005. The growth is good, but it is also creating the need for more effective information management." This growth has also resulted in new infrastructure to provide services like water and sewer to customers. This infrastructure requires regular financial investments to operate and maintain.

The Finance department is key in helping to recoup the costs associated with operating the Band's assets. One of Ruby's roles is to create utility bills. She works closely with the

water treatment plant staff who collect the water meter readings and provide the data to her.

"Up until a little while ago, the meter readers would record the information by hand," says Ruby. "Some of the water meters show the numbers in cubic meters and some in cubic feet. From time to time, it was hard to tell by looking at the hand written numbers where the decimals were placed."

Today, water meter readers are typing the data into a spreadsheet, which helps with the accuracy. This information is used to help equitably allocate the costs of operating the water system to the customers who receive water services.

"Creating a digital record of this water use information will allow us to go back and see what the readings have been before. The spreadsheets we are using now don't have

reporting capacity," says Claude.

According to Don Funk, TteS planning and engineering manager, the information Ruby receives about water usage would be helpful to him as well. "It would be helpful if we could also leverage that information to estimate our remaining water capacity, and determine when new infrastructure is needed" Not only will the asset management program lead to more accurate data, but it will also help the Band to better plan for capital expenditures.

"If a sewer main breaks we need to replace it quickly. That is an unexpected expenditure and we need to find those funds somewhere," says Claude. "If we know what to expect of our assets, when they are likely going to need to be replaced or repaired and



how much it will cost, we can set up a capital fund. If that capital fund is based on information gleaned from a fixed asset program, we make better decisions on how much we need to set aside, rather than pulling a figure out of the air."

Ruby and Claude's role in asset management is the link between providing essential services to customers, enabling that information to help with planning for the future, and ensuring TteS is financially sustainable now and for our children.



Tk'emlúps Te Secwépemc  
200 - 355 Yellowhead Highway  
Kamloops, BC V2H 1H1  
Tel: 250-828-9700  
Fax: 250-372-8833

## enhancing efficiencies

Cary Morin is a busy guy. In addition to being Tk'emlúps Indian Band housing coordinator, he and the rest of the Housing Department team are also completing the Certified Property Manager program through the Real Estate Institute of Canada. On top of that, Cary is enrolled in the accelerated certified management accountant (CMA) program at Thompson Rivers University. In his spare time, he participates in Toastmasters. So it's not surprising that making sure things run efficiently and timely is way up there on Cary's priority list.

The Housing Department staff includes eight people ranging in roles from renovations coordinator and tenant relations officer, to journeyman carpenter and collections officer. The team oversees 273 properties and coordinates all construction, renovations, repairs, retrofits and inspections for all of them. The odd time, they also provide client counselling and dispute resolution when conflicts arise. But, what Cary likes the most about his job is the asset management side of things.

"There are a lot of opportunities in housing that people don't know about," says Cary, as he takes a break from working on the Band's latest three-year housing plan. "I like the planning and property management."

Unlike many First Nations communities where land is

communally owned, a lot of properties on TteS land are individually owned by Band members. However, the Housing Department works with property owners to maintain their property. While he says the Housing Department has an advanced database that helps keep track of information like work orders, contractor invoices and inspection reports, he sees a gap in infrastructure information.

"Our planning would be enhanced if we had a database that allowed us to see who is applying for a house, who has been approved for a loan, where the house is going to be built and what the servicing needs are," says Cary. "Right now we have meetings to get that information but having a system to pull what we need when we need it would reduce the paperwork and general clutter."

The asset management program will help ensure that the whole infrastructure system, including Housing information, is better integrated and will give busy people like Cary more efficient access to the information they need.



TteS assets include everything from community buildings, to roads, to culturally significant structures.