

## **Springfield News and Views**

Submitted by: Reeve Peter Skrupski

### **EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

The Councilors Lucko, Lalonde, Thompson, and Vaags and Reeve Skrupski recently toured a number of aggregate companies currently operating in the vicinity of the Moosenose aquifer (along Garven Road) in September, 2008. Joining us were the Provincial environment officials, the Manitoba Heavy Construction President, CAO Tetrault, Public Safety Officer Morfoot, and Manager of Operations Tosh. We selected and visited six active open pit operations with the respective officials from each company. They gave us access to any location or corner of their property that we wanted to visually inspect. We discussed with the various parties the storage of fuels and lubricants, methods for the refueling the heavy and general equipment, the changing of fluids in the heavy equipment and transport vehicles, washing of aggregate, settling ponds, environmental collection and the disposing of used lubricants, environmental protection, and aquifer protection. We questioned the provincial environmental inspection personnel on methods of inspection, frequency, monitoring and potential hazards to the environment. This tour of concerned members of council who took the time to visit the sites, and at the end of the day were satisfied that the company operations that they visited were operating in a prudent manner and had seen no environmental concerns or visible hazards.

Anytime you have a mining operations (gravel pits), heavy equipment, transportation vehicles and humans combined you can conclude that there is a risk. You need to manage that risk by working together with the companies, other responsible government agencies, and your staff to have the correct controls in place. The extraction of aggregates has been taking place for well over 100 years in Springfield. Today the majority of operators are using or switching to electrical powered plants and equipment supplied from utility power lines or stand alone generators instead of the normal internal diesel engines to power dredges, conveyers and related equipment. Storage of fuels is now in tanks with double walled construction. Operators have made several improvements over the years to protect the environment and the water aquifers. I have personally taken the time over the last two years to visit these aggregate operations throughout the municipality as have our public safety officers. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure we protect and preserve the air, soil and water for our future generations. Council's responsibility is to facilitate environmental awareness and protection throughout the municipality from all possible risks to the environment in which there are many. If you have any concerns regarding environmental infractions in your municipality here are some departments you may want to contact. The Manitoba Conservation Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch can be reached at 945-8321 and the Manitoba Conservation Pollution Prevention Branch at 945-8443.