

Chronicle - Nov 11/00

Saturday

KENORA

## Land ambulance fate to be decided

NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Kenora District Services Board will decide Wednesday how land ambulance service will be provided in the Kenora district after Jan. 1.

KDSB administrator Sten Lif said yesterday that the 13 board members from area municipalities will review their options and make a final decision on the matter then.

Those options include: having the KDSB deliver land ambulance service; consider service providers in another jurisdiction; resume negotiations for services with the four area hospitals; or contract the service out to a private company.

Paramedics have said they are opposed to privatization.

Municipalities take over control of land ambulance services across the province on Jan. 1 as part of a provincial downloading exercise.

District hospitals currently operate the land ambulance services in the Kenora, Sioux Lookout, Dryden and Red Lake areas.

While the KDSB has negotiated land ambulance agreements with Sioux Narrows and Pickle Lake, it failed to get agreements with the four district health centres during talks two months ago.

Area hospitals have issued layoff notices to all their ambulance attendants, effective Jan. 1.

# Ambulance service hunt continues

BY BRYAN MEADOWS  
NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Kenora District Services Board has rejected a Manitoba firm's proposal to provide "privately-run" land ambulance service in the district.

Instead, the board will try to reach an agreement with the four area hospitals currently providing service in the Dryden, Kenora, Sioux Lookout, Red Lake and Ignace areas.

"We've asked to meet with representatives of the hospitals next week" to resume talks for a multi-year agreement to deliver land ambulance services, KDSB administrator Sten Lif said yesterday.

Lif said a proposal from Criti-Care of Winnipeg was rejected because the board felt the company lacked experience in land ambulance coverage in a such a large geographical area in all seasons.

Also, he said, the cost quoted was substantially more than what the Ministry of Health has allocated for district land ambulance service in 2001.

Criti-Care's was the only proposal submitted as of last Friday's deadline.

Lif said the KDSB will continue to pursue certification from the ministry to provide land ambulance service directly, should negotiations with the four hospitals fail.

"We don't have a long time line to this," Lif said, adding there will be service as of Jan. 1 when municipalities take control of land ambulance services under provincial downloading.

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# Extra-sweet victory for Primeau

BY CARL CLUTCHEY  
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

Nov 14/00  
Chronicle -  
The first mayor of the new Town of Greenstone is a 40-year-old motel operator and an embattled survivor of the political upheaval that's racked the region for the last three years.

Victory was extra sweet last night for Longlac's Charlie Primeau because he had been Greenstone's first mayor-elect in 1997 before the sprawling municipality was delayed by various court challenges.

In a virtual repeat performance of the contest in 1997, Primeau edged out rival Geraldton Mayor Michael Power by a margin of 1,369-1,214 in a nail-biter that came down to the wire.

The other two contenders, outspoken developer Mike Malouf and teacher Francois Sarrazin, didn't come close — garnering only about 400 votes combined.

Greenstone, which takes effect Jan. 1, merges Beardmore, Geraldton, Longlac, Nakina and surrounding areas into a town of

5,600 people.

Primeau said during the election campaign one of his first tasks would be to heal the wounds caused by the bitter amalgamation debate.

Ironically, Primeau opposed Greenstone but said he wanted to become the town's mayor "to deal with the hand we've been dealt with" by the provincial government.

Despite inclement weather, strong voter turnouts were reported in Schreiber, White River, Marathon and Manitouwadge.

In the North Shore's three-way races, voters in Schreiber returned Bob Krause for a fourth consecutive term as mayor with more than 300 votes with four out of five polls reporting.

At press time, preliminary results in Marathon showed incumbent mayor Pat Richardson with the lead over two challengers.

Krause, 65, said he would use the new mandate to attract new businesses and make a proposed

railway heritage centre a reality.

Terrace Bay Mayor Mike King was also re-elected easily, beating challenger Bryan McInnes with more than 600 votes.

In separate plebiscites last night, Schreiber and Terrace Bay committed themselves to making smoke-free any public place that children can enter.

Manitouwadge Reeve Jocelyn Bourgoin — who adopts the new mayor title — cruised to an impressive victory with 730 votes, compared to just 167 garnered by challenger Norm Poolton.

The six seats on Manitouwadge council were filled by acclamation.

White River's Angelo Bazzoni was returned to an unprecedented fourth term as mayor, but by a much slimmer margin: 284-264 over opponent Roger Drolet.

Bazzoni, 42, said he would continue to try and solve that town's water woes.

"I got in by the skin of the teeth," Bazzoni admitted.

He said he doubted there would be a recount.

# Rural medical school backed by physicians

Dryden Observer  
Nov 14/00

The Ontario Region of the Society of Rural Physicians has endorsed the concept of a rural medical school. While such a school may add only 12-14 doctors a year to rural Ontario, it is hoped that will raise the bar for the other medical schools.

As the society sees it, only in conjunction with an increase in the other medical schools and reform of their training towards more rural-friendly, can a significant change occur throughout the medical educational system.

Dryden's Dr. Carl Eisener said, in a news release, "One of the problems of the existing system is that the schools are accepting a disproportionate number of

students from southern and urban Ontario, even though studies clearly show that they are unlikely to practise in the rural north. We need a school in the North for the North, but also to change the South."

The current shortage of physicians in rural Ontario, estimated at 400 doctors, will double by the time a northern/rural medical school graduates its first physician. The society notes that, even if the school achieves a 40 per cent rate of students remaining in rural or northern practices — unprecedented in Canada — there will be far too few graduates to make a significant difference. That is why a northern school would help in changing the outlook of existing medical schools, observes the physicians' group.

The concept of a rural medical school, based at Thunder Bay and Sudbury, is now before the Expert Panel in Ontario. The panel is expected to report to Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer by the end of November. ☆



# Welfare drug testing in the works

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — The Ontario government has unveiled a controversial plan which would make it the first province in Canada to force welfare recipients to undergo drug testing before giving them their cheques.

The move has raised the ire of activists who say such a move would violate human rights, and harm children and single mothers.

Under the proposal, released yesterday by Social Services Minister John Baird, individuals who tested positive and then refused treatment would be ineligible for assistance.

Baird insisted the plan is designed to help drug addicts rather than punish them. "It's tough to get a job and hold a job if you're addicted to drugs," he said.

The proposal is subject to a six-week consultation process during which the

province will meet with municipalities and legal experts to hammer out details.

Critics were immediately skeptical of the plan, denouncing it as a ploy to pare down Ontario's welfare rolls.

Andrea Calver of the Ontario Coalition for Social Justice said mandatory testing would have a serious impact on single mothers and children, who make up a large segment of the 450,000 Ontarians currently on welfare.

*"It's tough to get a job  
and hold a job if you're  
addicted to drugs."*

**John Baird**

*Social Services Minister*

"Half of the people on welfare are children, and they're going to be impacted by this legislation because the government wants to kick more people off welfare," said Calver. "It's wrong."

When asked what form of testing and what types of "treatment" were being proposed, the minister's press secretary said Baird plans to travel the province to consult with experts and "the general public" before deciding. "Nothing has

been ruled out," said Dan Miles.

The proposal has already been questioned by Ontario's Human Rights' Commissioner Keith Norton.

In a confidential letter to the government last year, Norton warned that drug users cannot be denied welfare benefits because addiction problems are considered a handicap under the province's Human Rights Code.

And people who work with the province's drug addicts say they're already stretched to their limit dealing with current case loads, and do not have the resources to treat more patients.

"We have a significantly over-stressed system where we have waiting lists that are sometimes as long as six months," said Dennis Long of the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction programs.

"And we really have a struggle trying to keep up with the work we currently have."

When asked whether the government had budgeted for additional treatment facilities, Miles said Baird was aware the proposal would require a significant cash commitment.



# Mail-in voting under scrutiny

*Municipal clerks have some ideas for making the system better*

BY BRYAN MEADOWS  
NORTHWEST BUREAU

The jury is out on whether mail-in balloting is the best voting system in a municipal election.

Dryden city clerk Linda Lemieux said yesterday that while counting the ballots was a slower than usual, more voters seemed to embrace the concept than three years ago.

Mail-in balloting was approved this year by Dryden and Fort Frances councils after the province approved the method for municipal elections.

Lemieux said ballot counting was slowed by the two extra steps required.

"We had to open the envelopes and remove the ballot" which took time, she said.

However, she said, the ballot count was still completed about an hour earlier

than in the last election when polling stations were set up across the city.

Voter turnout was up six per cent over the 1997 election at 57 per cent, she said.

"I think (mail-in balloting) is worthwhile."

Under mail-in rules, eligible voters can mail their ballots or drop them off at the municipal office prior to the voting deadline.

In the past, voters received a package containing a declaration and oath, and a secrecy envelope in which a ballot was sealed until the vote count.

Fort Frances' voter turnout was about the same as in 1997, with about 50 per cent of eligible voters returning mail-in ballots.

"On the surface it seemed to create more voter turnout," Fort Frances administrator Bill Naturkach said, adding a lack of issues may have softened voter interest.

"There were no hot issues and a lot of incumbents were running" for council, he said.

Naturkach said the system appeared to be "fairly voter-convenient."

"Counting of the ballots went off without any glitches," he said.

"In hindsight, we could have had more ballot counting teams or three people to a team" to speed things up.

Fort Frances had six teams of two counting ballots Monday.

Naturkach said the system "is more controllable" for scrutineers, "with not as many people and sites involved."

"Cost-wise is about the same, maybe a little less," he said.

Lemieux does have some suggestions to improve mail-in balloting.

"We should have three people instead of two (on the ballot counting teams) . . . one to open the ballots and two for counting and recording," she said.

"If we do it again, an extra person would cut time down considerably."

She said the school board and city should meet to finalize the voters' list prior to the mail-out of voter packages to prevent duplication.

The latter was a concern expressed by some who felt parents of children away at university could have voted for their offspring, or people could have voted more than once via unused packages they came across.

Lemieux said she felt there was little, if no, abuse of the system.

"It's hard to say — the onus is on the voter to obey the rules and not to vote twice," she said.

Naturkach said abuse of the mail-in "was a question, not a concern" in Fort Frances.

"There's always the potential for abuse" in any balloting system, he said.



# All election results finally in

## NORTHWEST BUREAU

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The following are the election results in municipalities west of Thunder Bay: (Note: \* denotes incumbent in that position; † denotes candidate was acclaimed).

## ALBERTON

**Reeve —** John Milling†  
**Council (4 to be elected) —** Roger Simmst, Wayne McKay†, Doug Mitchell†, Bill Morrisont†.  
**Plebiscite:** Are you in favour of construction of a new community hall in the Township of Alberton? — 217 opposed, 37 in favour, one spoiled ballot.

## ATIKOKAN

**Mayor —** Dennis Brown\* 1,028, Robert Davidson 611  
**Council (6 to be elected) —** Cathie Hoszowski 1,439, Bill Bell\* 1,393, Garry McKinnon\* 1,347, Dave Maynard\* 1,263, Charles Vidla\* 1,039, Fred Wilson 742, Miles Brown 647, Darin Hanlon 621,  
**Rainy River District School Board (1 to be elected) —** Judy Eluk†  
**Northwest Catholic District School Board (3 to be elected) —** John McInnis 240, Ken Sawchuk\* 221, Marie Warren\* 213, Edgar Morrisette\* 166

## CHAPPLE

**Reeve —** Cecil Wilson\* 129, Ron Forbes 55  
**Council (4 to be elected) —** Ward 1: Bill Clink\*†; Ward 2: Jackie Champagne\*†; Ward 3: Peter Van Heyst\* 30, Stephen Szeeder 19; Ward 4: Rick Neilson\*†

## DAWSON

**Reeve —** John Amundson†  
**Council (4 to be elected) —** Worthington Ward: Linda Armstrong\*†; Dilke Ward: Alphonse Langlais\*†; Atwood Ward: John Sanderson 81, Archie Wierssema\* 51; Blue Ward: Charles Johnson†.  
**Northwest Catholic District School Board (1 to be elected) —** Marc Chojko-bolect

## DRYDEN

**Mayor —** Sid Wintle 3,179, Emil Lippert 266  
**Council (6 to be elected) —** Bill Brown\* 2,416, Brian Collins 1,943, Brian England\* 1,931, Velma Silver 1,916, Anne Krassilowsky 1,823, Joe Delaney 1,636, Al Hymes 1,524, Murray Nephew 1,145, Eva Watts 1,111, Don Latimer 1,057, Don Skomoroh 1,055, Vaughan Cochrane 1,023, John Greer 647  
**Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (1 to be elected) —** Ed Arnold\*†  
**Northwest Catholic District School Board (2 to be elected) —** Wade Petranick 443, Cynthia Bernie-Cossais 351, Joanne Kusnick 334

## FORT FRANCES

**Mayor —** Glenn Witherspoon\* 2,245, Allan Beaud 1,008  
**Council (6 to be elected) —** Deane Cunningham 2,906, Dave Bourgeault\* 2,798, Roy Avis\* 2,619, Sharon Tibbs\* 2,556, Struchan Gilson\* 2,485, Neil Kabel 2,215, Bill Martin\* 2,130  
**Rainy River District School Board (2 to be elected) —** Dan Belluz†, Gordon McBride†  
**Northwest Catholic District School Board (3 to be elected) —** Anne-Marie Fitzgerald†, Gerry Rousseau†, Cheryl Louisat†

## IGNACE

**Mayor —** Suzanne Smith 571, Andre Tardiff\* 386  
**Council (4 to be elected) —** Dennis Smyk 596, Rudy Huina 563, Charlene Ramage-Fluet 482, Hugh Broughton\* 461, Erik Thingstad\* 435, John Taddeo\* 415, George Manchulenko 392, Steve Baker\* 119  
**Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (1 to be elected) —** Dave Penny†

## KENORA

**Mayor —** Dave Canfield\* 4,036, Chuck Tyrrell 2,896, Alan Miller 1,033  
**Council (6 to be elected) —** Rory McMillan 5,290, Ted Szajewski\* 4,908, Ron Lunny 4,432, Don McDougall 3,990, Colin Wasacase 3,837, Ingrid Parkes\* 3,346, Cynthia Delaney 2,940, Bert Alcock 2,692, Russ Desjarlais\* 2,587, Ed DeGagne 1,769, John O'Flaherty 1,764, Barry Brown 1,447, Bob Edlund 1,300, Emily Tachnyk-Roulison 1,034, Richard Green 706  
**Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (3 to be elected) —** Jim Dunphy 3,689, David Gibson 3,301, Cecile Marcino 3,194, Chris Poate 2,515, Lothar Romstedt 1,984, Vic McQueen 1,256, Bar-

ry Wilwand 1,083

**Northwest Catholic District School Board (5 to be elected) —** Jim Amest†, Michael Favreault†, Patricia Hudson†, Paul G. Lunny†, David McCann†.  
**Lake of the Woods District Hospital Board (10 to be elected) —** Fern Penner 5,615, Annette Romanek 5,141, Pete Sarsfield 4,562, Dave Schwartz 4,459, Robert Aitken 4,242, Joe Fregeau 4,160, Joan Reid 4,041, Laurell Nickel 3,707, Phil Mostow 3,669, Chester Scott 3,304, Beverley Ann Treusch 2,706, Bill Richardson 2,524, Art Mior 2,384, Blair Hutchings 2,159

## LAKE OF THE WOODS

**Reeve —** Valerie Pizey\*†  
**Council (4 to be elected) —** Ward 1: Bill Lundgren\* 95, Alfred Gate\* 56, Glen Anderson 42, Leonard Larson\* 48, ; Ward 2: Joann Moen\*†, Ken Pentney\*†

## LAVALLE

**Reeve —** Ken McKinnon\* 194, Emily Watson 115  
**Council (4 to be elected) —** James Belluz 249, Frieda Carmody\* 233, Tom Morrish 221, Richard Seidel 204, Dale Stamarski\* 183  
**Rainy River District School Board (1 to be elected) —** Martin Darrah†

## MACHIN

**Mayor —** Arne Bratland 247, Tom Doherty 173, Barbara Beernaerts\* 87, Roy Anderson 69  
**Council (4 to be elected) —** Sandra Walkey 329, Loreta Proskan 254, Bill Wiedenhoef\* 239, Garry Parkes\* 182, Chris Rodgers\* 177, Lou Murray 170, Brad Munford 158, Gordon Barker 151, Conrad Musyl 131, Chris Malloy 87  
**Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (1 to be elected) —** Bill Dawest†

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