



CVRD Team

Financials

Sustainable
Environment

Sustainable
Health

Sustainable
Governance

Sustainable
Services





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CVRD TEAM

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PHOTO: Sunflowers at the CVRD Comox Valley compost
education centre

PHOTOGRAPHER: Patty Rose

COVER PHOTO: Taken from Dyke Road, looking west at south
Courtenay and the Beaufort mountain range

PHOTOGRAPHER: Hans Peter Meyer



Message from the CAO

It's my pleasure to write this message as the second year of the Comox Valley Regional District's operation comes to a close. It was — as was the year before — a time of challenge, reward and progress.

During the year, the CVRD partnered with the K'omoks First Nation (KFN) to share resources for the first-ever liaison officer between our two organizations. This position — held by a KFN member — has proven valuable in facilitating the flow of information, in coordinating joint meetings and presentations and in improving awareness and understanding of First Nations and local government roles and responsibilities.

In addition to continuing work on the protocol agreement with KFN, the CVRD also continued work on the plans for the key regional strategies: growth, sustainability, water and sewer, all of which will — along with our other operational efforts — help us to be what this annual report is all about: becoming a sustainable region.

From improvements to the Black Creek/Oyster Bay water system to developing a public forum on water that was attended by hundreds of Comox Valley residents to implementing a pilot program for rebates on low flow toilets, we continued to look for — and to find — ways to provide for better service, better information and better practices to those who live in the region.

The CVRD provided support services for some operations of the Strathcona Regional District, as 2009 was the last of the two "transition years" set by the province after it restructured the former Comox Strathcona Regional District into the two new districts in February 2008. In 2009, a great deal of work was undertaken to ensure that the SRD would be able to operate on its own

beginning in 2010. We put five of our staff in parks, planning, building inspection and emergency planning in the SRD office to work on SRD-related items. At the end of the year those staff ceased to work for the CVRD, and have been hired by the Strathcona Regional District. We entered into an agreement with the SRD for provision of select services from January to the end of June 2010, and into a contract with the SRD for the provision of GIS (electronic mapping) for one year (2010). After that time, the CVRD will be able to focus 100 percent on providing service to its residents who make up the large majority of the users of our functions, including parks, planning, building inspection, water, sewer and bylaw enforcement.

Collaborative work continued at our board table and with the member municipal governments to ensure good governance for everyone in the CVRD. A strategic planning session involving both the board members and CVRD senior staff produced a new 'purpose statement' for the organization out of which were developed key strategic and operational goals.

We continued to listen to the public, whether in one-on-one meetings, in letters and emails, in telephone conversations, in board meetings and also via social media outlets such as facebook and Twitter. We will continue to listen, to engage and to work toward further improving the delivery of service and information to the Comox Valley.

Finally, at the staff level, everyone has worked long and hard to get everything done in 2009 that we were required to do — and then some. It's been a year of effort and encouragement . . . and it's been a pleasure.



Debra Oakman,
Chief Administrative Officer



Message from the chair

On behalf of my colleagues on the Comox Valley Regional District board of directors, I am pleased to introduce the annual report for the year ending December 31, 2009.

The theme of our annual report this year is "Toward a sustainable region". Very fitting given the in-depth focus the CVRD has had on the topic of sustainability over the past year.

The CVRD continued to work toward the development of a sustainability strategy, the principles of which will form the framework for most of the decisions we make, as Comox Valley local governments. While the provincial government mandated the CVRD to undertake the regional growth strategy, the CVRD board proactively decided to undertake the sustainability strategy. The draft was made public at the end of October and is the result of collaboration between four local governments, input by dedicated community members, and review by the public and various government agencies. The sustainability principles will inform the regional growth strategy, which will focus on the overall pattern of land use in the Comox Valley and the creation of a sustainable human settlement pattern.

The sustainability strategy will be what sets us apart from other local governments in other parts of BC, and it's already being noticed. The CVRD's work in the area of sustainability reached an international audience in 2009. In October, the organization's chief administrative officer and I travelled to

China to participate in delivery of a training program based on the Comox Valley sustainability and regional growth strategies to over 35 mayors of that country.

There have been close to 2,000 hours of direct involvement time committed by elected officials, local government staff, stakeholder groups and the general public to the work toward developing these strategies. That is a phenomenal effort and indicative of how important it is that we develop and employ strategies that are forward-thinking and innovative in looking at how we live now and what we need to do to get ready for liveability in the future.

I would encourage citizens, groups, and politicians to get very involved in the regional growth strategy. There is no doubt that it is one of the most important issues affecting our future in the Comox Valley.

This will be my last year as chair of the board, and I want to thank my colleagues, the staff from the CVRD and the other Comox Valley local governments and members of the public for their dedication, hard work and creativity. I'm excited about the next phase of life in the Comox Valley and I'm convinced that our local governments are on the right track to make the future a place we all want to be.



Fred Bates,
Chair



2009 Comox Valley Regional District board of directors

BACK ROW, L to R: Jim Gillis, Lazo North — Area 'B', Bruce Jolliffe, Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands — Area 'A', Don McRae*, City of Courtenay, Larry Jangula, City of Courtenay, Edwin Grieve (vice-chair), Puntledge-Black Creek — Area 'C'.

FRONT ROW, L to R: Paul Ives, Town of Comox (CSRHD vice-chair), Patti Fletcher, Town of Comox, Greg Phelps, City of Courtenay, Fred Bates, chair, Village of Cumberland.

*Murray Presley replaced Don McRae as director from the City of Courtenay in June 2009



2009 Comox Valley Regional District
executive management team

BACK ROW, L to R: Beth Dunlop, corporate financial officer; Leigh Carter, general manager public affairs & information systems branch; Debra Oakman, chief administrative officer; Teresa Warnes, executive assistant; Gaya Laflamme, executive manager of human resources.

FRONT ROW, L to R: Ian Smith, general manager community services branch; Kevin Lorette, general manager property services branch; James Warren, corporate legislative officer; Geoff Garbutt, manager of strategic and long range planning.



Management's responsibility for financial reporting

These summarized consolidated financial statements have been prepared by management from the complete consolidated financial statements for inclusion in this annual report. They provide a brief financial overview of the regional district's financial position at December 31, 2009 and the results of its operations for the year ended December 31, 2009.

Management maintains a system of internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded and that transactions are authorized, recorded and reported properly. Management also maintains a program of proper business compliance.

The board of directors is responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements and for ensuring that management fulfils its responsibilities for financial reporting and internal control.

Meyers Norris Penny LLP, Chartered Accountants, the regional district's independent auditors, have conducted an examination of the financial statements in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and have expressed their opinion in their report which accompanies the complete audited financial statements available at the regional district office or online at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca.

E.J. Dunlop, CGA
Officer responsible for Financial Administration,
pursuant to Section 199 of the Local Government Act



Auditors' report

To the Board of Directors of the Comox Valley Regional District:

The accompanying summarized consolidated statement of financial position and statement of operations are derived from the complete consolidated financial statements of the Comox Valley Regional District as at December 31, 2009 and for the year then ended on which we expressed an opinion without reservation in our report dated April 9, 2010. The fair summarization of the complete consolidated financial statements is the responsibility of management. Our responsibility, in accordance with the applicable Assurance Guideline of The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, is to report on the summarized financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements fairly summarize, in all material respects, the related complete consolidated financial statements in accordance with the criteria described in the Guideline referred to above.



MEYERS NORRIS PENNY LLP

These summarized financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the Regional District's financial position, results of operations, changes in net financial assets and cash flows, readers are invited to obtain a full set of audited financial statements, from the Regional District office or online at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca.

Meyers Norris Penny LLP

Chartered Accountants

Campbell River, British Columbia
April 9, 2010



Summarized consolidated statement of financial position as at December 31, 2009 (audited)

	December 31, 2009	December 31, 2008 <i>(Restated)</i>
Financial Assets		
Cash and temporary investments	\$ 51,863,037	\$ 46,097,274
Receivables and inventory for resale	6,045,926	5,967,824
Debt recoverable from member municipalities	21,852,261	20,288,213
Total Financial Assets	79,761,224	72,353,311
Liabilities		
Payables and other liabilities	4,831,380	4,768,915
Short-term debt	1,890,000	-
Long-term debt	55,992,009	56,649,144
Deferred revenue	7,806,935	6,460,911
Provision for landfill closure and post closure	3,377,235	2,963,371
Total Liabilities	73,897,559	70,842,341
Net Financial Assets	5,863,665	1,510,970
Non-Financial Assets		
Prepaid expenses	75,066	30,513
Inventory of supplies	77,604	65,358
Tangible capital assets	87,463,085	83,146,775
Total Non-Financial Assets	87,615,755	83,242,646
Accumulated Surplus	\$ 93,479,420	\$ 84,753,616



Summarized consolidated statement of operations *year ended December 31, 2009 (audited)*

	December 31, 2009 Actual	December 31, 2009 Budget (Unaudited)	December 31, 2008 Actual (Restated)
Revenue			
Frontage and parcel taxes	\$ 181,464	\$ 182,227	\$ 159,761
Grants in lieu of taxes	400,436	316,726	394,363
Tax requisitions - electoral area and municipal	17,299,119	17,299,119	14,294,214
Transfers from other governments	3,310,343	5,345,478	695,095
Sales of services and other revenue sources	16,285,029	14,310,008	13,218,085
Investment income and actuarial adjustment	1,496,947	120,000	1,748,034
Total Revenue	38,973,338	37,573,558	30,509,552
Expenses			
General government services	3,452,036	4,506,865	2,667,892
Protective services	2,553,266	2,774,891	2,202,240
Transportation services	1,767,979	2,383,564	1,584,904
Environmental health services	11,376,783	11,520,065	10,580,391
Public health and welfare services	66,352	116,912	10,090
Environmental development services	3,304,546	4,843,009	2,092,363
Recreation and cultural services	7,726,572	7,802,964	7,038,250
Total Expenses	30,247,534	33,948,270	26,176,130
Annual Surplus	8,725,804	3,625,288	4,333,422
Accumulated Surplus, beginning of year, as previously stated	131,811,392	131,811,392	124,770,804
Less: Prior period adjustments	(47,057,776)	(47,057,776)	(44,350,610)
Accumulated Surplus, beginning of year, as restated	84,753,616	84,753,616	80,420,194
Accumulated Surplus, end of year	\$ 93,479,420	\$ 88,378,904	\$ 84,753,616



PHOTO: Dove Creek vicinity (Area 'C')
PHOTOGRAPHER: Hans Peter Meyer



Working to change climate change

The Ministry of the Environment's Youth Climate Leadership Alliance (YCLA) offered community workshops on the "Trees for Tomorrow" program and facilitated youth climate action within the school system. The appointed facilitator for this region promoted climate change learning resources and activities to K-12 teachers of School District 71. The role of this facilitator was to identify and share opportunities for funding, contests, curriculum guides, training, presentations and the use of online tools. The initiative helped ease the way for implementation of projects by helping stakeholders work together.

PHOTO: YCLA facilitator Dawn Fizzard
PHOTOGRAPHER: Elaine Jansen



Earth Machines help our world

The Comox Strathcona Waste Management service hosted a two-day sale of backyard composters in the spring and fall. Approximately 1,000 "Earth Machine" composters were sold at the compost education centres in the Comox Valley and Campbell River. The success of these events is significant as composting keeps household waste out of the landfills and residents can expect to reduce their amount of garbage up to 30 percent by composting organics. Also, when we use compost our soil holds water better and discourages weeds, and gardens and lawns become less dependent on chemicals. The region benefits because composting is recycling. Encouraging residents to recycle their food and yard waste reduces greenhouse gases and extends the life of our landfills.

PHOTO: Stacks of composters ready for sale.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Zac Whyte



Come together,
right now ...

In June the CVRD, Town of Comox and provincial government signed their second memorandum of understanding for the co-management of the Northeast Woods-Lazo Marsh conservation area.

The purpose of the conservation area, which is made up of parcels owned by different bodies, is to protect endangered wildlife and maintain the park in its natural state.

L to R: Pat Halliday, Comox Town Residents Association; Jim Gillis, CVRD director for Lazo North (Area 'B'); Andy Smith, BC Parks; Paul Ives, Mayor, Town of Comox; Barbara Price, Friends of Comox-Lazo Forest Reserve Society.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Sheila Van Nus



Bag it! (the sustainable way)

CVRD chair Fred Bates proudly displays a Comox Valley eco-bag, one of 15,000 re-useable bags that were purchased and distributed by the CVRD, through participation with the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce's Bag Free Comox Valley Initiative to encourage the public to reduce waste. Approximately 9,000 of the bags were distributed to students in School District #71 and the remainder of the bags supported the launch of the Grab Your Bag campaign as well as other solid waste events held throughout the year.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Wendy Schebel





Hazardous waste be gone! (safely)

On May 23, in the parking lot of Home Depot, the Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM) service hosted a household hazardous waste cleanup that succeeded beyond anyone's expectations! Hazco was contracted to manage this event which turned out to be the largest one day event that they have ever delivered in a community. The event collected 117 barrels of packaged hazardous goods - compared to 39 last year - and over 70 totes of paints, solvents and pesticides. Further to that, the CSWM staff dealt with the disposal of car batteries and propane cylinders.

PHOTO: Hazardous waste clean up

PHOTOGRAPHER: Wendy Schebel

The Comox Strathcona Waste Management service is a function of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and is responsible for two regional waste management centres that serve the Comox Valley and Campbell River, as well as a range of transfer stations and smaller waste-handling and recycling facilities for the electoral areas of the CVRD and the Strathcona Regional District. The CSWM service manages over 100,000 tonnes of waste and recycled material and oversees a number of diversion and education programs.

Protecting the "jewel in the crown" of the Comox Valley

In May, the CVRD regional board directed staff to begin various initiatives to encourage the environmental protection of the Courtenay River estuary. These approved projects included the development of a new local area plan for the Comox (Dyke) Road area, the establishment of a new environmentally sensitive area development permit for the estuary as well as a review and update of the draft Courtenay River Estuary management plan (CREMP).

The CVRD will lead the way with the update and revision of the draft CREMP which was completed in 2000 but never adopted by the board. The intent of an estuary management plan is much like an official community plan in that it provides goals and objectives to guide human activity and economic development. However, it is more focussed upon providing direction on the maintenance and enhancement of the estuary's environmental values. The main objective of the original plan was to achieve integrated management and coordinated decision-making amongst all governments and First Nations.

This initiative is particularly timely given the number of changes since the CREMP was drafted in 2000. New provincial statutes, plans, regulatory documents and policies have come into effect since that time. New scientific data has been received on issues ranging from health of resident fish to water quality to archaeological history. The estuary has changed in terms of land use, with most land surrounding the estuary allocated or planned for with recreation as a prime shoreline use. The Comox Valley as a whole has experienced continued population growth, as witnessed by the push for more housing developments. Industrial development has changed with the disappearance of the Lafarge cement silo, Field Sawmill and log booms in the Royston area. Given these changes, the purpose of the proposed review process is to update the draft CREMP as the first of several steps to lead to better environmental protection of the Courtenay River estuary.

If not pesticides . . .

As part of its "better choices, better future" the CVRD conducts public education on the use of alternatives to pesticides. In July, our contract educator Patty Rose took the message — and the mediums — on the road to Denman Island Market Day. This was part of her display to show the myriad of things — that are not pesticides — that you can use for healthy soil and plants.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Patty Rose





Smashing pumpkins SkyRocket

After this year's annual Pumpkin Smash event hosted by Thrifty Foods and the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) over 3,650 kg of pumpkins were transported to the CVRD compost facility where the organic matter will be used in the production of SkyRocket, a nutrient-rich soil amendment for lawn and gardens. Timed to coincide with the festive time of year, the Pumpkin Smash event attracts a larger crowd each time it is held. The goal of the event is to promote composting as a means of waste reduction, to educate people about how to compost, to work with like-minded partners such as Thrifty Foods and, most importantly, to divert this organic waste from the landfills.

PHOTO: Truckload of smashed pumpkins

PHOTOGRAPHER: Patty Rose



Trees for Tomorrow . . . today

On Thursday, June 25th at the Trees for Tomorrow's celebration at the CVRD Compost Education Centre, the Campbell River Noon Rotary were cooking up hamburgers and hot dogs with all proceeds supporting the local food bank. Over \$400 was raised, and in addition non-perishable food contributions were collected.

PHOTO (L TO R): Dawn Fizzard, climate action facilitator for the BC Ministry of Environment, Elaine Jensen, CVRD compost educator, and Koreen Gurak, CVRD manager of communications proudly acknowledge the completion of the Trees for Tomorrow project thanks to the contribution of local volunteers and businesses.

ARENA #2



Ya gotta love it!

Just in time for Valentine's Day, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) launched a Love Living Healthy contest to promote healthy lifestyle choices. Residents who chose to walk, bike, bus, blade or carpool to the CVRD sports and aquatic centres not only made a healthy choice for themselves and the environment, but also had a chance to win recreation passes. Living healthy means making better choices like eating nutritiously, having positive social relationships and staying physically active. Love Living Healthy encouraged residents to incorporate physical activity into their day and recognized residents who chose to make active living a part of their lifestyle.

LEFT TO RIGHT: RaeAnne Munro, Gary Airton.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Carl Tessmann



Community partnership with heart

In March, the CVRD's sports centre helped to get the message out that choosing to make regular activity a part of your life is a vital link to a healthy heart. People of all ages and fitness levels joined together in a special two-hour aquacise class to raise awareness and funds for the Heart & Stroke Foundation.

L to R: Janice Krall, area manager Vancouver Island, Heart & Stroke Foundation, Laura Thede, CVRD program leader, Donna Stevenson, community team leader, Heart & Stroke Foundation
PHOTOGRAPHER: Beverly Nelson



Reconstructive surgery breathes new life into sports centre

A revitalization of the CVRD's sports centre will improve the functionality and accessibility of the pool and arena #1, as well as upgrade essential mechanical infrastructure. The total cost of the project is expected to be \$1,448,000, with \$400,000 coming from Government of Canada's Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RInC) program, \$1,030,000 from the Comox Valley Regional District and \$11,900 from the World Under 17 Hockey Challenge legacy. The improvements are scheduled to be completed in fall of 2010.

L to R: CVRD chair, Fred Bates; CVRD marketing specialist, Sheila Van Nus; MP, Vancouver Island North, John Duncan; CVRD sports commission chair, Paul Ives; CVRD senior manager of recreation, Darcy Walters.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Koreen Gurak.



We are what we eat

In September, the vending machines at the CVRD's sports and aquatic centres underwent a healthy choices transformation. The goal is to ensure that 75 percent of the food and beverages offered in the recreation facilities meet the "choose most" or "choose sometimes" guidelines developed by the provincial nutritionist's office. These snack foods are those that are not at all or just moderately sweetened, salted or processed. This conversion was made possible by a provincial grant that identifies recreation centres as one of the key resources to influence healthy, active lifestyles.

World hockey gets local

From December 28, 2008 to January 4, 2009, the CVRD's Comox Valley sports centre played host to one exhibition and two sold out tournament games of the 2009 World Under 17 Hockey Challenge. As an organizing facility in one of the six communities partnering to bring the 2009 challenge to Vancouver Island, the sports centre shared in a \$250,000 legacy from the hockey challenge organizers. The \$14,400 portion the sports centre received provided funds for an automatic external defibrillator and upgrades to the area seating areas. The improvements are scheduled to be completed in fall of 2010.

How do we spell success? We spell it "10"

The CVRD's aquatic centre celebrated its 10th year of success in recreation programs for the community on Sunday, October 4 with a good old fashioned birthday party. About 220,000 people a year use this facility for adult and child swim lessons, water fitness, aquatic rehab classes, yoga programs and lifeguard training. It has truly been a success story in providing residents with access to a quality facility where everyone can go for fitness, education, socialization and relaxation.



Step-by-step: the way to new consultation procedure

The CVRD's property services branch created a new consultation procedure for official community plan amendments that will ensure that all future consultations with applicable adjacent regional districts and municipalities, First Nations, school and improvement districts boards, and provincial and federal government agencies will be early and ongoing.

The procedure is based on section 879, "Consultation during OCP development", of the Local Government Act (LGA). This Act sets out requirements that local governments must follow during the creation or amendment of an official community plan (OCP). In particular, section 879 outlines that during the development of an OCP, or the repeal or amendment of an OCP, a local government must provide one or more opportunities for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities that it considers will be affected.

The adopted procedure will ensure that elected officials would be able to endorse a list of organizations at the onset of the referral process as well as provide input into which agencies are consulted. The procedure also ensures that the CVRD regional board will be able to consider a recommendation that outlines that the consultation process is deemed concluded. Although the new procedure may require additional processing time and result in costs to the development community, it is expected that the expanded scope of consultation should help mitigate costs should legal challenges arise.

Partnering for the future

In 2009 the CVRD partnered with the K'omoks First Nation (KFN) to share resources for the first-ever liaison between our two organizations. The liaison officer, Katherine Frank, a KFN member, has proven valuable in facilitating the flow of information, in coordinating joint meetings and presentations and in improving awareness and understanding of First Nations and local government roles and responsibilities.



CVRD board adopts multi-year strategic plan

In September, the members of the CVRD board came together with members of the CVRD executive management team to create and agree upon a strategic plan to carry through the end of 2011.

The session included the board agreeing on a new “statement of purpose”. It was timely that the board developed this statement late in the year, as 2009 was the last of the two “transition” years with the Strathcona Regional District after the provincial government created the two entities in 2008. The CVRD was poised to be a completely stand-alone organization by year end.

The statement of purpose says:

The Comox Valley Regional District is a federation of three electoral areas and three municipalities providing sustainable services for residents and visitors to the area. The members of the regional district work collaboratively on services for the benefit of the diverse urban and rural areas of the Comox Valley.

The board's strategic goals focused around six key areas: governance, regional policy, organization, community services, property services and public affairs and information services. The goals themselves can be summarized in this way:

Governance: To develop efficient, effective and harmonious intergovernmental relationships to enable the board to make community decisions that respect cultural diversity, fiscal accountability, environmental responsibility and social equity.

Regional policy: - To complete regional growth management, regional water, regional sewer and regional sustainability policy initiatives as directed by the regional district board and mandated by the provincial government as outlined in the CVRD letters patent.

Organization: To develop a regional office facility which could provide shared space with partners, including local governments, and will be designed to maximize efficiencies, promote customer service, incorporate environmental best practices and innovation in green building technology and provide a forum to support community discussion.

Public affairs and information systems: To provide professional communications support and issues management for the organization's operational and corporate services.

Community services: To promote and develop a healthy community within the Comox Valley by developing a framework to deliver recreation and cultural services that are cost effective and equitable for all residents.

Property services: To protect the long-term environmental, social, economic, and cultural benefits of the Courtenay River estuary.



Growing smarter

The regional growth strategy (RGS) began in 2008 with all four Comox Valley local governments entering into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in July 2008. An approved RGS policy document is to be adopted by December 31, 2010.

The past year has been one of great activity around RGS, beginning with workshops in January and February that focused on providing an overview of the process and developing a list of key issues that the strategy should address. The workshops were held with intermediate and secondary school students, community stakeholders and elected officials.

Workshops later in the spring focused mainly on long-term growth issues for the Comox Valley from a range of stakeholder perspectives, plus a special briefing for members of the local media.

By the fall, the background report was complete and put forth four conceptual approaches to growth with policy recommendations for RGS topic areas.

PHOTO: RGS discussion with K'omoks First Nation June 2009

L to R: Ron Frank, co-negotiator working with KFN treaty team, KFN Chief Ernie Hardy, CVRD Chair Fred Bates, KFN Councillor Stewart Hardy, CVRD director for Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C') Edwin Grieve





Let's get sustainable . . . sustainable . . .

The Comox Valley sustainability strategy (CVSS) is a regional plan that is intended to create new knowledge and leading approaches to sustainability for communities in the Comox Valley. The strategy will guide the policies and plans of regional and local governments. It will also recommend specific actions to be undertaken by a variety of partners, including community organizations. The CVSS is the result of collaboration between the four Comox Valley local governments, input by dedicated community members, and review by the public and various government agencies.

In 2009, input on the strategy was received through two public events, three local government staff workshops, one business community workshop and one combined working group and staff workshop.

The draft of the strategy was made public at the end of October, and recommendations for next steps will come to the CVRD board in February

2010. The board will be asked to consider the strategy's terms of reference for establishing a multi-government steering committee that would be charged with advising local government on sustainability actions, for creating a detailed five year implementation plan and a sustainability checklist for development applications and for developing a process for monitoring and reporting out that would measure the performance of the CVRD on sustainability targets within its direct areas of responsibility. The board will also be asked to consider sharing the sustainability strategy with its local government partners, school district 71, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), post secondary institutions and the Comox Valley Economic Development Society.

PHOTO: CVRD chair and CAO in China, participating in delivery of a training program based on the Comox Valley's sustainability and regional growth strategies to 35 mayors of that country.

Water, water ...

When the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) was established in 2008, the provincial government required, through letters patent, that the CVRD (excluding Hornby and Denman Islands) develop a comprehensive regional water strategy. Over the course of 2009 work was undertaken on this strategy. A multi stakeholder advisory committee and a steering committee made up of the four Comox Valley chief administrative officers report to the regional water supply commission which is made up of elected officials from each local government in the Comox Valley. The commission's mandate is to provide recommendations to the CVRD board on regional water supply.

To date, much of the background work has been completed including assessing the hydrology of Comox Lake, looking at climate change impacts on water supplies, as well as analyzing water user profiles, water systems and alternate water sources within the CVRD. Various options are now being developed that will lead to recommendations on which water sources are to be used, which systems should be interconnected, what capital improvements are needed and how a potential regional water supply should be governed.

2010 will see a preferred option recommended to the board so that implementation planning may begin. This will involve development of strategies for governance, financing and funding, capital asset planning, demand management and watershed source protection.

Black Creek / Oyster Bay water system gets even better

In February, the Strathcona Regional District (SRD)'s Oyster River Nature Park was the scene of improvements to the Black Creek/Oyster Bay water system infrastructure. The construction was done with minimal disruption to park users and included a new water process station to house a back-up generator for power outages, and upgrades to the river and groundwater wells. The Black Creek/Oyster Bay water system water originates in groundwater wells and draws directly from the Oyster River. The system delivers water to 2,600 year round residents in both the Strathcona and Comox Valley Regional Districts and up to 6,000 people in the summer.

PHOTO: Edwin Grieve, CVRD director for Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C') and Brenda Leigh, SRD director for Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (Area 'D')

PHOTOGRAPHER: Hans Peter Meyer





Feel safe ... feel the power!

Members of the Oyster River Volunteer Fire Rescue Association took a major step towards making the community better prepared for a natural disaster by purchasing an auxiliary power generator for the fire hall from funds raised by the association.

In the event of an extended power outage, major earthquake or other disaster, auxiliary power is essential to ensuring that a fire hall can continue to operate. The completely contained Ingersoll Rand 260 generator was purchased from Ritchie Brothers auction in Prince George for \$21,000, and was installed in July. Installation of the auxiliary power unit was the last remaining part of the new

PHOTO: Oyster River fire department — Chief Niels Holbeck and crew with Genset auxiliary power unit

PHOTOGRAPH supplied by Oyster River fire department

fire hall to be completed, and all the switch gear for auxiliary power was installed during construction of the hall about five years ago.

The CVRD provides financial support for fire protection services in this area and worked with the volunteer fire department on the design and construction of the fire hall.

The auxiliary generator, a GPS response system, a wildfire response trailer and the “jaws of life” auto extrication equipment are among the many items that have been purchased by the members of the Association over the years.

Making our water more efficient

In September the CVRD water efficiency plan was adopted by the board for 2010 implementation in the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox and various CVRD water local service areas connected to the Comox Lake system. The plan is motivated largely by the desire to reduce the scale of future infrastructure upgrades and associated costs, as well as by the need to stay below licensed water volumes, defer or potentially eliminate source expansion projects, reduce system operating costs, provide ecological benefits and better enable CVRD to adapt to possible climate change impacts.

System wide annual consumption is targeted to be reduced by approximately 27 percent compared to the forecasted 2014 consumption. To accomplish this, a series of measures are incorporated into the plan including increased education, rebates for low flow toilets, rain barrels and cisterns, a faucet/showerhead retrofit program, a leak detection and pressure management program, increased water restrictions and enforcement, and retrofit of local government facilities.

In September the CVRD launched a pilot toilet rebate program as part of the water efficiency strategy. The program allowed homeowners to take advantage of a \$75 rebate when they took out their old water-guzzling toilets and replaced them with a CSA-approved new low-flow model. Over the last few months of 2009 just over 260 rebate applications were processed on a first come, first serve basis. The rebate program applied to installations that were connected to the Comox Valley water system including the Town of Comox, the City of Courtenay and the Arden, Comox Valley, England Road, Marsden/Camco, and Greaves Crescent water local service areas. Pending budget approval, the toilet rebate program has been included as part of the water efficiency strategy for 2010.

The draft water efficiency plan was released for public feedback at the CVRD-hosted public water forum on June 15 at the Florence Filberg community centre in Courtenay. The intent of the open house on water was to provide the public with a forum to gather information, ask questions and develop informed opinions about the future of water quality, water quantity and water infrastructure. An enthusiastic crowd of over 400 people turned out to engage in discussions with on-site experts and ask questions about the cost of water, engineering, fish management, quality and safety, the use of water for power and much more. Those that attended were particularly interested in knowing more about the water efficiency plan, deep water intake, water metering, current water billing and costs associated with future infrastructure.

PHOTOS: CVRD senior waterworks technician Dennis Cassin talks water with residents at the water forum
Lynn Farmer and prize rainbarrel she won at the water forum

PHOTOGRAPHER: Beverly Nelson



Planning ahead: regional sewer master plan

In April 2008, the CVRD board directed that, subject to available financing, the existing sub-regional sewer master plan be expanded to align with the provincial initiatives for Comox Valley regional water and growth initiatives. Over the course of 2009 further work was undertaken on the regional sewer master plan to develop options for providing sewer service to both the core area and surrounding rural electoral areas.

These options, which vary with respect to collection, conveyance, treatment and discharge of sewage, have now been analyzed and interim recommendations on a preferred option have been developed. The draft master plan is being held at the 90 percent completion stage in order to allow the ongoing regional growth strategy work to be completed so that it can be incorporated into the master plan. This will occur during 2010 and will lead to a finalized sewer master plan which is consistent with regional growth and sustainability strategies and from which implementation planning can begin.

The birth of twins

CVRD began construction on the east Courtenay reservoir twinning project, a new 7,300 cubic metre concrete reservoir adjacent to the existing east Courtenay reservoir. The project will help provide sufficient water pressure and flows throughout the Comox Valley water system as well as help improve fire protection and emergency water supply storage abilities.

The project costs are approximately \$3.6 million of which two-thirds will be provided from a provincial/federal infrastructure grant. The project is now approximately 75 percent complete and is scheduled to be finished by April 2010.



CVRD Team

Financials

Sustainable
Environment

Sustainable
Health

Sustainable
Governance

Sustainable
Services



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PHOTO: Under the 5th Street Bridge
PHOTOGRAPHER: Hans Peter Meyer

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