

Presentation to Inverness County Municipal Council

By

The Strait Area Mutual Aid Association

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The Strait Area Mutual Aid Association

BACKGROUND:

- Formed in 1976 by 9 Area Fire Departments
- Mission: continuous improvements to Fire and Emergency Services in the Strait Area
- Current membership 28 Departments from Richmond, Inverness, Guysborough and Antigonish Counties, the Town of Port Hawkesbury, Town of Antigonish and Mulgrave
- A highly dedicated **Team of Volunteers** operating Emergency Services while providing critical help as needed – **an asset to local residents, businesses, industry, schools, municipalities, the provincial government and guests to the region.**

AFFILIATIONS

- Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia
- Maritime Fire Chiefs Association
- Nova Scotia Firefighters School
- Emergency Health Services
- Office of the Fire Marshall
- Training for our Association organized by our Training Chairperson

HOW THE STRAIT AREA MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION ASSISTS INVERNESS COUNTY

PROJECTS ACHIEVED

- **Purchased, paging equipment in 1983 and have been maintaining it since that time. This equipment is used to notify members of emergencies**
- **Acquired and maintain the equipment for an air bottle filling station that enables departments to fill bottles 24/7 for emergencies**
- **Mutual Aid Agreement enables neighboring fire departments to respond to other coverage areas when requested:** allowing cost savings to municipalities and departments
- **Dispatch capabilities** with local dispatch (via 911) through **Canso Dispatch**
- **Initiated a Provincially recognized Ground Search & Rescue unit which responds to searches both within our coverage area, as well as, other areas as requested.** Originally primarily firefighters, it has grown to become **it's own identity** purchasing a **Training Center and Command Post** to respond to lost parties.



PARTIAL LIST OF EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO COUNTIES DURING EMERGENCIES

12 sets of Extrication Tools (Jaws of Life)

4 in Richmond County

1 in Town of Port Hawkesbury

2 in Inverness County

1 in Town of Antigonish

1 in Guysborough County

3 in Antigonish County

These units regularly respond to Motor Vehicle Collisions outside their regular fire coverage area providing coverage to area departments that do not have this type of equipment



2 Ladder Trucks

Town of Antigonish

Town of Port Hawkesbury

Both these units have responded well to emergencies inside and outside their respective coverage areas



ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

- Several ATV / Snowmobile Rescue Sleds
- Ice and Water Rescue Equipment
- High and Low Angle Rescue Gear
- Confined Space Rescue Gear
- Gas Testing Equipment
- Infrared Heat Cameras

This is a partial listing of SAMAA equipment operated by Volunteer Personnel which are essential to respond to Inverness County Emergencies.

They are the tools used to protect our families, properties, local business, and workplaces.



WHAT INVERNESS COUNTY COULD DO TO ASSIST EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN COOPERATION WITH THE STRAIT AREA MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION

ASK #1

Meet regularly with our Association to discuss Concerns: For instance; We now have Seaside Communications on board since January of this year to provide some of their internet Towers to enhance our paging capabilities for the Fire Departments within SAMAA. We have also received a ball park figure of \$70,000.00 for New Paging to relace our aging system. We are currently undertaking measures to approach all levels of government to obtain the necessary funding. **NO SERVICE NO RESPONSE.**

Ask #2

Provide us with information on how the Municipality could fund, engineer, design, supply labor and equipment to ensure Dry Hydrants are in place for areas in Inverness County that do not have Municipal Water Hydrant systems available. This is of the utmost urgency. Also to ensure Municipal Systems are tested, repaired, maintained, and cleared of snow in the winter, to make the firefighters job much safer and more efficient. **SAFETY OF THE FIREFIGHTERS IS OF THE UPMOST IMPORTANCE WHEN DRAFTING FROM WATER SOURCES**

Ask # 3

Consider how it is possible for Inverness County to assist with the purchase of needed equipment which could be shared amongst departments, Such as hose testing equipment, which would save individual departments money and ultimately preserve lives.

PROVIDING MONEY FOR THIS ESSENTIAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE ALLOWS VOLUNTEERS TO HAVE SAFE AND RELIABLE EQUIPMENT AS NEEDED.

Ask # 4

Consider how the Municipality may be able to free up more funding for the Volunteer Fire Service within the County. Possibly looking at passing on the Provincial Grant money given to the Municipality in lieu of the Fire levy to the Departments that have provincial or federal buildings within there Districts instead of it going into the General account. Another possibility could have these funds go into a Fire Service capital account to fund Fire Service Equipment. FUNDING FOR THE FIRE SERVICE, HAS NOT KEPT UP TO THE COST OF STANDARDS THAT NOW HAVE TO BE MET BY THE FIRE SERVICE.

**ADDITIONAL
COVERAGE FOR
RESPONSE
CAPABILITY TO
OUR RURAL AREAS.**



**INVERNESS
COUNTY
CONTINUED
SUPPORT OF OUR
VOLUNTEER
FIREFIGHTERS AND
EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TEAMS**



**INCREASE EQUIPMENT
MAINTENANCE CAPABILITIES**

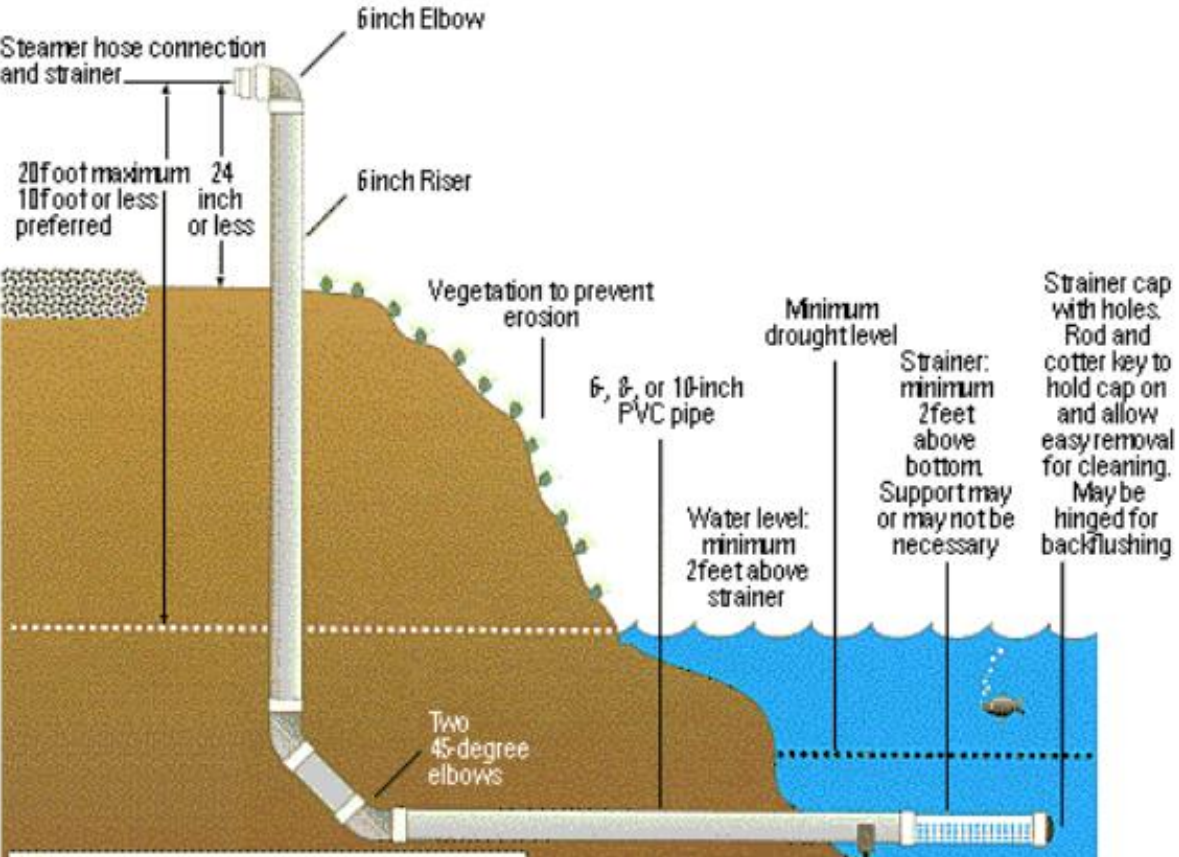


Video Courtesy Bryan Lopez

DRY HYDRANT REPAIRS AND INSTALATIONS FOR INVERNESS COUNTY

Urgent need at this time for Repairs to the Dry Hydrant located in Glendale Inverness County.

Below is a diagram of a typical dry hydrant installation:



WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER.

Over the past several decades, Fire Departments have evolved and become an Emergency Service, responding to a lot more than just fires. Our VOLUNTEERS, and I stress VOLUNTEERS, may not always be available to respond to Emergencies due to family, work or other commitments. This is a big reason why we feel that our Association is critically important, to ensure adequate help is available during an emergency.

In summary, our Association strongly believes that because of Mutual Aid, Emergency Services in our areas have become a huge asset for people living in, working in and travelling through our coverage areas

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM ATTENDEES OF THIS INVERNESS COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

Thank you for your time listening to this presentation and considering ideas how we may collaborate to continue mutually **SERVING** Inverness County residents, property **AND THEIR** protection.

We await your contact to discuss what is possible.

**ON BEHALF OF THE MEN AND WOMEN VOLUNTEERING, FIREFIGHTING, MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDERS
AND EMERGENCY SERVICES IN OUR STRAIT REGION,**

Jim Cavanaugh

President of The Strait Area Mutual Aid Association

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