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PENTICTON

New funding not enough to save schools from closing

By JAMES MILLER
The Okanagan Saturday

Trout Creek and West Bench Elementary Schools will close on June 30 as scheduled.

Okanagan Skaha School District 67 trustees met behind closed doors, Friday, where they discussed how to spend the promised \$266,527 in provincial funding along with the Ministry of Education's offer to pay for an independent "special adviser" to review the lengthy school closure process.

"While we certainly appreciate the \$266,000, or any funding for that matter, it isn't enough money to keep open both schools or even one of the two schools," board chairwoman Linda Van Alphen said in an interview following the meeting.

"It is a done deal considering we have had third reading but we still need to wait until June 13 to see what the trustees have to say. In order to keep the schools open we need a minimum of \$500,000 more for the one year."

Van Alphen said trustees will discuss how to spend the money at the next regularly-scheduled public meeting on June 13 at the IMH building located at 425 Jermyn Ave., beginning at 6:30 p.m.

At a press conference staged on the grounds of the school board office, Tuesday, Penticton MLA Dan Ashton suggested the new funding be used to keep Trout Creek and West Bench elementary schools open, adding that the board is sitting on a \$1.9 million surplus.

The \$266,527 funding bonus will be on an annual basis, Ashton said.

He referenced concerns by both school communities of how the process was conducted and recommended the independent third party be brought in. The special adviser would be paid for by the Ministry but the request would have to come from the Board.

"The Board is currently participating in a review being conducted by the Office of Ombudsperson, British Columbia's Independent Voice of Fairness about its processes leading to the decisions on school closure," trustees wrote in a statement released to the media, Friday.

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— David Dunham

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GARY NYLANDER/The Okanagan Saturday

This gas station was one of many that ran out of fuel on Thursday, due to an unexpected shutdown at a Suncor refinery in Edmonton.

KELOWNA

Wildfire, refinery problem blamed for shortage of gas

By ANDREA PEACOCK
The Okanagan Saturday

Several Kelowna gas stations have run out of gas because of a refinery outage in Edmonton and the Fort McMurray wildfire.

Petro-Canada stations on Glenmore Road and next to Orchard Park mall were both out of gas on Friday morning.

"We ran out yesterday for premium gas and the day before for diesel and regular," said Vicki Lomsdalen, manager for the Glenmore Road location on Friday morning. "Most people understand once we tell them, but there is the odd person that thinks it's a conspiracy for gas prices."

The reason for the gas shortage is a

combination of the effects from the fires near Fort McMurray and an unplanned outage at Suncor's refinery in Edmonton on May 27, said Sneh Seetal, spokesperson for Suncor.

"Our Edmonton refinery typically receives crude oil from the oilsands on the Fort McMurray region and it takes that crude oil and it processes that into a number of refined products, including gasoline and diesel," said Seetal.

"But because of the fires that impacted the oilsands region and the operations there, we weren't able to get enough volume of crude oil that we would normally receive."

Gas stations in the B.C. Interior, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have been experiencing a temporary shortage, said Seetal.

To help fill the gap, Suncor is bringing in more gasoline and diesel by truck and rail from its own network outside the Northern Alberta region, as well as from third parties.

There is no timeline as to when gas stations will be replenished with gasoline and diesel, said Seetal, adding Suncor is prioritizing supplies to stations it deems critical, where there are either few or no other refuelling options for customers.

Suncor has restarted some of its oilsands operations near Fort McMurray, but not all of them are up and running, said Seetal.

"That will offset the situation a little, but we do need to get that unit that produces the gas back into service."

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VERNON

Charges laid in 4 arsons from 2014

Charges have been laid against a Vernon man in connection with four 2014 arson cases.

The charges include damage to property, a Chevrolet Lumina minivan, a new home under construction at 8712 Hofer Dr., a duplex under construction at 2706 41 Ave., and damage to tires and a trailer at the Go Kart Association.

These charges cover part of the rash of arson cases Vernon experienced in 2014.

On June 1, Vernon RCMP arrested 55-year-old William Munton of Vernon.

He has since been released from police custody to appear in court at a future date.

"It is the dedicated efforts of several investigators over the past two years that has resulted in charges being laid," said Supt. Jim McNamara.

Vernon RCMP are continuing their investigation and anticipate additional

charges to be forwarded for approval.

Investigators are completing a search of a residence in the 2000 block of 33 Street in association with the arson investigation, said Cpl. Dan Moskaluk in a press release.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Vernon RCMP at 250-545-7171 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 to remain anonymous.

— Okanagan Saturday staff

CRIME

Kelowna man convicted in killing of gang member

BY KIM BOLAN
Vancouver Sun

A Kelowna gangster has been quietly charged, convicted and sentenced for his role in the 2011 Jonathan Bacon murder, all without the public ever being told about his case.

The Vancouver Sun has learned that an indictment against Shane Timothy Dankoski was sworn in Vancouver Supreme Court on Jan. 4, 2016.

Three days later Dankoski appeared in New Westminster Supreme Court and

pleaded guilty to one count of "enhancing the ability of the said criminal organization to facilitate or commit an indictable offence in the murder of Jonathan Bacon and the attempted murder of James Riach, Larry Amero, Leah Hadden-Watts and Lindsay Black."

The organization is not named in the indictment, but is described as being "composed of, among others, Manjinder Hairan, Jujhar Khun-Khun, Jason McBride and Michael Jones."

Hairan was shot to death in Surrey in January 2013 in Surrey. Khun-Khun,

McBride and Jones have been charged with Bacon's murder. They were back in a Kelowna courtroom Thursday, but there is a ban on publication on pre-trial proceedings.

Their trial is scheduled for November. Bacon, a Red Scorpion gang member, was shot to death outside a Kelowna casino on Aug. 14, 2011. In his vehicle during the attack were Amero, a Hells Angel, Riach, of the Independent Soldiers, and the two young women.

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