

### **Mayor Deb Higgins Column April 5, 2013**

This year, winter seems unwilling to leave but we know sooner or later spring will arrive. The worry is with the heavy snowfall received over the winter, leaves Moose Jaw with the potential for very high runoff and possible flooding. How quickly the snow melts will determine what the risk of flooding actually is this spring.

Preparation has been ongoing over the last few months to ensure the City is ready in case of flooding. The Emergency Measures Organization is coordinating activity along with City departments to be prepared for whatever comes our way. The City Emergency Operations Centre is in a state of readiness and updates through media will only increase over the coming weeks.

The City crews have been removing snow piles from blocked catch basins and clearing snow from ditches and drainage channels throughout the City. Pumping equipment is in top operating condition, logs have been removed from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave dam, and sandbags are being filled for distribution. Full sandbags will be available to residents in River Valley which is a flood prone area and specific areas on the City's east and west side.

While the City and EMO will continue to monitor conditions in Moose Jaw and receive regular updates from the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency, citizens also play an important role in flood prevention. By planning ahead and taking some practical steps to prepare, we can all help minimize the impact of flooding.

Even if you are not in flood prone areas you may still have concerns for excessive runoff and want to protect your personal property, there are things you can do. Move snow away from your home so it drains away from the foundation, clear channels in the ice and snow to allow water to drain away, ensure downspouts are extended to move melt water at least two meters from the house foundation, check to make sure your sump pump is in good working order, consider installing a mainline sewer backup valve and keep basement sewer caps in place. Residents can also help by making sure neighbourhood catch basins are clear and draining properly.

While preparations and planning continue, stay tuned for updates as they are released.

Keep in mind also that while thin ice on waterways is an issue each spring, heavy snow and high water levels this year mean there is an increased safety concern. With spring melt comes fast flowing water and undertows. Please stay safe, keep children and pets away from storm channels, Spring Creek, Thunder Creek and the Moose Jaw River.

Deb Higgins  
Mayor