



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

It is the joyous time of the year and I hope and pray that everyone is doing well, and that they have the Christmas spirit in their hearts and deeds. Remember the less fortunate, sick and frail in this town and region, and those who live in misery, that they too will see the true meaning of Christmas. Share the Christmas spirit with all you meet and it will be returned to you many fold.

I would like to take this time to inform residents that we have hired a new Town Manager, Christopher (Chris) Parker, formerly the Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) in High Prairie, Alberta, originally from Nova Scotia. He will be joined by his wife, Michelle, in January (2012). Please join me in welcoming Chris and family to our friendly, helpful, and giving town.

The Town Council has completed a balanced budget for the 2012 New Year. I am pleased to say there will be no increases in property tax and water/sewer; but, there will be an increase in natural gas, from \$16.30 to \$18.30 due to the major increase in the cost of diesel, according to Imperial Oil Resources (IOR). I don't agree with linking our gas price to diesel since it is a by-product and the cost of natural gas is so low in the south; and, the upcoming cost of conversion is enough for people to worry about besides higher costs for natural gas. We are negotiating with IOR to try and mediate this extra cost.

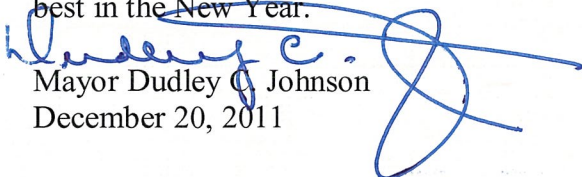
The conversion to a new form of energy for the Town of Norman Wells is still an ongoing struggle to find the cheapest way, the most efficient way, and the most environmentally safe way. Our time is getting shorter every day. I have yet to see any help from any level of government to aid in this major costly project, but I live in hope. I keep asking why the silence. We need to apply more pressure on our representatives so that they become more responsive to our needs. If you have ideas and/or comments, please post them on the Mayor's blog on the town website (www.normanwells.com); they will all be appreciated.

I want to say a big thank you to all who volunteer, those who donate in Christmas for the various events throughout this joyous season, and all year 'round.

I would also like to say a special thanks to the Town staff who worked behind the scenes to make special events take place and occur safely. Thanks for all your hard work throughout the year when many times you go beyond the call of duty to keep us safe.

I wish to thank Councillor Sheppard who has been an invaluable asset on the budget and on council over the past five years, and I am sorry to see him leave council. I extend my thanks to all councillors for their dedication and work – we can never please everyone but as long as we have the best interests of our residents and stand up to our mistakes, we will have done our best.

I will sign off now by saying I hope you have a great, wonderful, and marvelous Christmas and all the best in the New Year.


Mayor Dudley C. Johnson
December 20, 2011