



Settle down.

November 26, 2013

**MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RE: RESIDENTIAL WATER METER PROJECT**

**Grand Forks, BC** – Residents in Grand Forks will have the opportunity to control how much they pay for their water, now that Council has approved a plan to expand the water meter program to residential customers.

Water meters have been recommended as a key water-saving measure in several of our community plans that were developed through extensive public consultation, including the recent Kettle River Watershed Study, the Asset Management Plan and the Sustainable Community Plan. Water meters have become common practice as a way to better understand water consumption across the city, promote water conservation and save most customers money.

“We often don’t realize just how much water we use when we sprinkle our lawns or wash our cars,” says Grand Forks Mayor Brian Taylor. “Yet, maintaining our water infrastructure – the system to treat and deliver water to our homes and businesses and remove wastewater – is one of the most expensive services we provide as a City. Conserving the amount of water we use will save everyone in terms of the tax dollars needed to replace the system. Plus, water meters give residents the ability to control their costs based on how much they use.”

Grand Forks is ahead of the curve, having installed water meters over the past decade in all industrial, commercial, institutional and multi-family properties in Grand Forks. With the program expanding to include residential, each Grand Forks homeowner will have the ability to better control their usage allowing them to conserve and save more.

The average Grand Forks resident uses about 720 litres of water per day—that’s more than 3,000 cups of water every day. That’s also one-third more than the average British Columbian. If the trend continues, the City will need to spend millions of dollars upgrading and expanding its water and wastewater facilities.

Taylor says water meters will also save the City money on electricity costs and from having to invest in expensive capital upgrades.

“Water meters have been shown to reduce water consumption by nearly 25 per cent in other communities. Using less water means we also use less power to run our well pumps. Conserving water will reduce peak demands and help reduce the cost to maintain and operate the water system,” adds Taylor.

Grand Forks will join a growing list of communities across BC that have installed water meters, including West Kelowna, Oliver, Penticton, Summerland, Peachland and Lumby. All residents supplied by the City of Kelowna water utility are on water meters, Vernon has universal metering, and Kamloops is currently undertaking a meter installation project.

And in Richmond, 70 per cent of residents have voluntarily converted to metering over the past seven years, with 87 per cent of those who made the change seeing their water bills decrease compared to their previous bills under the flat rate.

The estimated cost of the universal water metering project in Grand Forks is \$1.3 million, and will be financed through gas tax funding, which means there will be no impact to taxation. The project will occur in three phases starting in Spring 2014 and is scheduled for completion in Fall 2015.

Residents will have many opportunities to learn more. To kick off the information program, the City will host an open house on January 22, 2014, providing more information about water meters, the process for installing, comparative costs and how the community and customers can use them to their benefit. Watch for more information at [www.grandforks.ca](http://www.grandforks.ca).

“We’re excited about moving forward. We want to let residents know how water meters can really make a difference for us as a community now and in the future,” adds Taylor.

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For media information, please contact:

Sarah Winton, City of Grand Forks  
250-442-8266

If you have any questions please contact: [info@grandforks.ca](mailto:info@grandforks.ca)