

For immediate release  
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**SQUAMISH-LILLOOET REGIONAL DISTRICT COMPLETES FIRE SERVICES REVIEW:**  
***Fire Services Coordinator hired to begin implementing Review's recommendations***

**Pemberton, BC** – A Fire Services Review commissioned by the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is now complete. The purpose of the review was to provide a comprehensive assessment of the SLRD's six fire services, including operational effectiveness, risk management, administration and governance structures, and for electoral area fire services generally. The review identified several issues with the existing fire services and provided a number of recommendations to address the challenges and provide direction for future development.

One of the key recommendations of the review was to hire a Fire Services Coordinator. Former District of Lillooet Fire Chief, Darren Oike, has been hired by the SLRD on a one year contract; he began his term as Fire Services Coordinator on September 1, 2014.

"The appointment of a Fire Services Coordinator is a critical first step in implementing the recommendations of the Fire Services Review, and will provide on the ground support for our volunteer fire fighters," said SLRD Electoral Area Directors Committee Chair, Susie Gimse. "We look forward to working with Mr. Oike to ensure that current standards are met and that fire fighters are supported and operating safely and effectively throughout the Regional District," added Area B Director, Mickey Macri.

In addition to his former role as Fire Chief at Lillooet, Mr. Oike performed a similar Fire Services Coordinator role for First Nations Emergency Services (FNESS) for 84 First Nations communities across British Columbia where he developed standards for fire departments in the areas of training, operational guidelines, records management systems, operational budgets, bylaws and policies. Along with trainer and instructor certifications, Mr. Oike is also skilled in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

With the hiring of the Fire Services Coordinator, the SLRD will begin working with each of the fire departments to implement recommendations from the Fire Services Review. Changes to existing governance and service delivery models may be required in some cases in order to ensure that the fire services meet regulatory requirements and community objectives. The SLRD will conduct community consultation throughout the process in order to provide information, answer questions and gather feedback regarding the options. More details regarding community engagement opportunities will be announced as the process unfolds.

“The safety of our volunteer fire fighters, residents and their properties is very important to the SLRD and the Regional District is committed to supporting communities that wish to maintain or establish fire services,” said Area A Director, Debbie Demare. “Delivering safe, effective and sustainable fire services is a shared responsibility. We encourage residents being served by any of the existing fire departments to learn more about their fire service and the options for moving forward,” added Area D Director Maurice Freitag.

The SLRD presently provides for rural fire suppression services through five volunteer fire departments and one volunteer fire brigade (Gun Lake), as well as through service extension agreements with member municipalities. The SLRD provides for fire services in the following communities: Gun Lake and Bralorne in Electoral Area A, Seton Valley in Electoral Area B, Birken in Electoral Area C, and Britannia Beach and Garibaldi in Electoral Area D. The SLRD also provides for fire service to parts of Area C under contract with the Village of Pemberton and a small portion of Area B under agreement with the District of Lillooet.

For more information about the SLRD’s fire services, or to download a copy of the [Fire Services Review](#), visit [www.slrd.bc.ca/services/public-safety-health/fire-rescue-services](http://www.slrd.bc.ca/services/public-safety-health/fire-rescue-services).

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