

District names assistant superintendent

CHRISTINE WOOD
Staff Writer

School District No. 46 (SD46) announced this week a new assistant superintendent to take on the role starting in January.

Greg Kitchen, currently a principal in Salmon Arm, has been hired to take over for Stewart Hercus who was filling the position until a replacement could be found.

"I was raised in North Vancouver and look forward to returning to the Coast, particularly a location as beautiful as the Sunshine Coast," Kitchen said. "In my visit to the district, I was pleased with the warm welcome I received

from everybody, and I am excited to work with an excellent district."

Kitchen has been a principal at the secondary level for 18 years. His current role as principal at Salmon Arm Secondary School sees him residing over a dual campus secondary school with students from neighbouring and First Nations communities.

Before working in Salmon Arm, Kitchen held vice-principal and teacher positions in Armstrong, Sicamous and Golden.

He has a bachelor of education degree and master of education degree with a major in administration and curriculum.

A press release from

SD46 noted he has strong interpersonal skills and a solid background in education "and his considerable experience in human resources will be a huge strength to our school district."

Superintendent of schools Patrick Bocking is pleased with the new hire and is excited to welcome Kitchen to the role of assistant superintendent.

"Greg is looking forward to working collaboratively with the staff, students and the Sunshine Coast community to support an excellent educational program for every student in the district," Bocking said.

Kitchen will start with SD46 in January 2012.



PHOTO SUBMITTED
Greg Kitchen has been named the new assistant superintendent for School District No. 46.

ECOMM

Fire departments benefit from co-ordinated system

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Staff Writer

Firefighters in Sechelt, Gibsons, Roberts Creek and Halfmoon Bay are better prepared, safer and able to respond faster, thanks to the Project FIRES electronic records management system.

The four Coast departments are the latest to join the E-Comm project that already serves 11 departments in the Lower Mainland.

"What it is in a nutshell is a software program to help us manage our everyday workings here at the fire hall, not only our operations, but our training and our fire prevention and our public education," said Sechelt fire Chief Bill Higgs.

Project FIRES offers two components — computer aided dispatch and a records management system.

Higgs said that before signing up with Project FIRES, his department was drowning in paper work.

"What we had in place before was a lot of paper. We tracked our training through Excel files and for incidents, really, we just stored them on paper," Higgs said. "This is going to be a big improvement once we're up and understand it fully."

The Coast departments signed on with Project FIRES earlier this year and started using the program in October.

While the system is still new and there are many things to learn, E-Comm is offering co-ordinated training and fire departments are getting more comfortable with the system.

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BILL HIGGS

Higgs is pleased with how it has performed so far.

"We are fortunate because we are geographically placed in a blessed position where, although we're separated from the Lower Mainland, we are dispatched by E-Comm — the same people who dispatch Richmond and Vancouver and other

departments in the Lower Mainland. So we get the ability to buy into this cool high tech stuff and don't have to pay for the infrastructure all by ourselves, because it wouldn't be affordable," Higgs added.

E-Comm, along with partner fire departments in Vancouver and Richmond, originally established Project FIRES in 2005 to create a cost-effective, co-ordinated records management system for fire departments. The specially designed software system holds information related to incidents, property, inspections, preventative maintenance, equipment, permits and personnel. The instant access to shared data improves response time and overall firefighter safety.

"I would like to thank the many individuals who worked so hard on this project, including all the E-Comm team, the members of the four fire departments and SCR D [Sunshine Coast Regional District] staff along with the software provider FDM [Flexible Data Management]," said Dave Mitchell, E-Comm's director of fire services in a news release.

"I look forward to working with more agencies to bring them onto the Project FIRES system in the years to come."

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