



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY

Media Release

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For immediate release

Ice chiller at Castlegar & District Community Complex to be replaced

Castlegar, BC: At its previous meeting, the Castlegar and District Recreation Commission made the decision to replace the chiller at the Castlegar & District Community Complex arena. The existing chiller—a shell-and-tube model—has been in service for 22 years and has reached the end of its useful service life. The new chiller will be a plate-and-frame model that provides enhanced safety and efficiency.

“The safety of our staff, patrons and the larger community is our top priority, so when we received reports from the refrigeration professionals who recommended that we replace the chiller, we knew what we had to do,” said Lawrence Chernoff, Chair of the Commission. “We considered other alternatives but the plate-and-frame model provides the best option for safety and efficiency.”

The Commission considered moving the Pioneer Arena chiller to the Complex, since it still has several years of service life remaining. This would have meant the immediate closure of the Pioneer Arena. If the upcoming referendum on enhancements to the Complex is successful, this would mean that the community would be without a second ice sheet for at least three years.

Director Chernoff noted that the decision to replace the chiller had to be made now, in order for the Complex arena to be operational in time for fall ice programs. The work will take place this summer.

Following on the tragic incident at the Fernie Arena last October, ammonia refrigeration plants, including chillers and their maintenance and operations, have come under scrutiny. The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) proactively engaged Strong Refrigeration to review refrigeration plants in the region. The recommendation for the Castlegar & District Community Complex arena was to plan for the replacement of the existing shell-and-tube chiller with a plate-and-frame chiller, which requires a considerably smaller ammonia charge. In the event of a catastrophic failure, there would be less risk to the community. This type of chiller is also more efficient to operate. With a lifespan of 20 years on average, the savings through this efficiency is significant, particularly when taking into account the substantial costs involved in moving the chiller from the Pioneer Arena.

In anticipation of an inspection of the ice plant by Technical Safety BC, the Commission directed staff to complete a physical inspection of the existing chiller at the Complex. The inspection confirmed the chiller needed immediate replacement and could not be put back into service. It supported the recommendation that the chiller should be replaced with a plate-and-frame model. The report from Strong Refrigeration also recommended the Commission conduct further safety repair work related to the refrigeration plant at the Complex. The total cost is estimated at \$258,000.00, with the funds to conduct this work coming from

reserves.

“The Commission looked at alternative refrigeration options besides the plate-and-frame chiller, such as freon or geothermal, but those alternatives are significantly more costly and/or less efficient, so they were not considered viable options,” said Director Chernoff.

The Commission will consider the closure date of the Pioneer Arena and whether to complete the further required safety repairs following the June 23rd referendum.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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