

**You may write to provincial government about this resolution as a private citizen; you may state you are a CWL member, but you cannot state you are writing on behalf of a CWL council, nor can you write to government using League letterhead.”**

## **Community Life**

### **St. Boniface/Notre Dame de Lorette**

#### **Resolution 2013.03      Emergency Communication and Cellular Services for Southeastern Manitoba**

- Whereas,**      In 2011-2012 events in southeastern Manitoba contributed to life and death situations because of lack of communication services with the MTS FleetNet Network as well as weak intermittent cellular phone service; and
- Whereas,**      The province uses and promotes the MTS FleetNet Network as the emergency communication system for fire, police and emergency personnel; and
- Whereas,**      Cellular phone service has become an essential service to the general population and is extremely important in emergency situations; therefore be it
- Resolved,**      That Manitoba Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, urge the Manitoba provincial government to implement reliable emergency communication services for Southeastern Manitoba through the MTS FleetNet Network and improved cellular service; and be it further
- Resolved,**      That Manitoba Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, urge cellular service providers to collaborate with various levels of government to implement improved cellular service to Southeastern Manitoba.

#### **BRIEF                      Emergency Communication and Cellular Services for Southeastern Manitoba**

Recent events in 2011 and 2012 in southeastern Manitoba have contributed to life and death situations because of lack of communication services with the MTS FleetNet Network as well as weak intermittent cellular phone service. According to Jim Swidersky, Reeve of the RM of Stuartburn, “Over the past year, the RM of Stuartburn and our neighbours, the RMs of Franklin, Piney and La Broquerie, have had four emergencies – three wild fires and a power outage due to a severe winter storm. In all four emergencies, communications were inadequate, with cellular service that was spotty to non-existent.” (AMM) Swidersky reported that during wildfires in September 2012, communication started without FleetNet service. "Emergency services such as fire and ambulance and emergency incident command were crippled," he said. (Dueck) "Trying to coordinate safe fire-fighting responses was very difficult and very dangerous." (ibid) Swidersky said, “without reliable cell service, municipalities endanger the lives of residents and those in charge of protecting them in emergency situations.” (ibid) Local firefighters and paramedics can communicate with each other using FleetNet, a separate system, but CBC News learned that the system was overloaded in September 2012 due to firefighting efforts. (CBC)

The province of Manitoba uses and promotes the MTS FleetNet Network as the emergency communication system for fire, police and emergency personnel. (Curtis) “FleetNet 800™ service is an advanced wireless communication solution widely used by contractors, construction crews, transportation and trucking,

farming applications, courier / messenger companies, government and public safety organizations. Available on all major roads and to 98% of Manitoba's population, FleetNet 800 service is one of the most advanced, two-way radio services in the world.” (MTS)

“Cellular phone service has become an essential service to the general population and is extremely important in emergency situations.” (Curtis) CBC reported that, “... hunters and snowmobile users have been injured in the backcountry but could not dial 911 to get help.” (CBC) “People come across the border — tourists, etc. — and all of a sudden they're in a Third World country because there's no cell phone service.” (ibid) Reeve Swidersky has stated “The south eastern part of Manitoba contains vast areas that completely lack service, or receive such weak, intermittent service that one cannot make a phone call.” (Curtis) Stuartburn Councillor, Konrad Narth, is on record as saying that the need for cell service is much more than just for safety reasons because municipalities in the southeast are among the fastest growing RM's in the province and that economic development is difficult when business owners cannot depend on cell service. (Dueck)

The Manitoba provincial government is urged to implement reliable emergency communication services for Southeastern Manitoba through the MTS FleetNet Network as well as through improved cellular services. We also urge cellular service providers to collaborate with various levels of government to implement improved cellular service to Southeastern Manitoba. Those who protect citizens in emergencies, those who work in the affected municipalities, as well as those who visit, pass through, or reside in Southeastern Manitoba deserve reliable emergency FleetNet Network service as well as cellular phone service to the area.

## **WORKS CITED      Emergency Communication and Cellular Services for Southeastern Manitoba**

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**ACTION PLAN      Emergency Communication and Cellular Services for Southeastern Manitoba**

1. Write letters to provincial government, including the premier, the minister responsible, your MLA, leader of the official opposition, urging the implementation of a reliable FleetNet and improved cellular phone service to Southeastern Manitoba.
2. Write to cellular service providers to collaborate with various levels of government to implement improved cellular service to Southeastern Manitoba.
3. Sponsor educational opportunities for members regarding this resolution.
4. Monitor the provincial government’s plan of action in response to the requests contained in the resolution.