

Here we are at the start of yet another year, one which I'm eagerly anticipating because there are going to be so many important, exciting things happening.

One of the biggest events of 2010 will be the celebration of the centennial of the Canadian Navy.

This 100th birthday will be marked by events from coast to coast and all points between.

Helping Canadians give three cheers for their Navy will be The Queen herself. Her Majesty is coming to Canada June 28-July 6 and will visit Nova Scotia at some point during the Royal Tour.

It goes without saying that the salute to our Navy will be a particularly warm one in HRM, given the close links our community has had with those who guard our seas, first with the Royal Navy and then our own, during the last 261 years.

This year, residents of HRM will have numerous opportunities to personally pay tribute to the Canadian Navy, especially during May.

That month, we'll pause as we always do and remember those who fought and won the Battle of the Atlantic.

That same month, our Navy will exercise its right to Freedom of the City in Halifax and, a few days later, we'll cheer as members plant 100 oak saplings in Point Pleasant Park. Even this year's Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo will feature a naval theme.



This summer, downtown metro will be heaving with sailors from many different navies, all here to help our own sailors celebrate their centennial. Get ready to splice the mainbrace!

This is also the year when those of us who work for you reach out to learn what's on your mind, in order that we may serve you better.

To that end, we have been mailing out invitations, asking a representative sampling of you to take part in a detailed survey and tell Council and I how you feel about living here in HRM.

In all, 26,601 households are being invited to provide us with feedback to a wide range of questions. We'll be asking you how you like to receive information from the municipality and your thoughts on living in HRM. We'll also be seeking comments on the topics of recreation, leisure and culture, community infrastructure and the environment. We really do want to know what you think and let me assure you, what you tell us is of great importance because it will have a direct impact on our major budget and planning decisions in 2010 and beyond. In other words, by helping us, you'll be helping yourselves.

To quote one of my personal philosophies: "Anyone who provides feedback is giving you a gift because, without it, you wouldn't know what you should change."

Another much-anticipated event on the horizon is the recommissioning of the Halifax wastewater treatment plant.

A flood-induced power failure last winter damaged the facility so severely that this key component of our \$333-million Harbour Solutions had to be taken off-line.

Major repairs have been ongoing and I'm pleased to report five new raw-water pumps have arrived from Germany and will be installed soon. Their \$2-million price-tag is covered by the Builder's Risk Insurance.

All being well, the Halifax plant should be fully operational again by this spring, possibly as soon as May.

When the new treatment plants in Dartmouth and Herring Cove finish commissioning and become operational, HRM's visionary Harbour Solutions – the biggest capital project in our history - will make a huge difference to the quality of water in Halifax Harbour.

Once we reach that stage, you're all invited to join me for a swim at the Dingle Beach in Sir Sandford Fleming Park, off Purcell's Cove Road in Halifax. I'll let you know the date, right here in this column, just as soon as I know it myself.

Something else I'm eagerly anticipating this year is the completion of many new infrastructure projects, not least of which will be the \$40-million Canada Games Centre on the Mainland Common in Clayton Park.

This huge new community sports complex is expected to be finished by November, ready to be the centrepiece for the 2011 Canada Winter Games which HRM will be hosting Feb. 11-27 next year.

This is our first time hosting the Winter Games and I'm looking forward to the honour very much. It will be the largest sporting event in our history with some 3,600 athletes, managers and coaches joining us, along with thousands of spectators, media and other visitors.

The new 4-Pad Arena in Bedford should also be operational this year, bringing to 20 the number of ice surfaces HRM provides for citizens.

Construction is well underway and should be completed by fall. When the new \$39-million facility is ready, there will be a community access plan in place to ensure everyone has an equal chance for ice time, regardless of sport or gender.

HRM has also built new community recreation centres in East Dartmouth and Fall River and another is being constructed on the Prospect Road in the Hatchet Lake area, near the elementary school. This 22,800-sq. ft. community asset should be finished by late spring and, like the other two centres, is designed to meet stringent energy-efficiency standards.

We're also planning to rebuild the community centre in Beaver Bank/Kinsac where residents lost their previous one in a fire, last fall.

In addition, HRM has three new fire halls in the works this year. One is slated for Dutch Settlement; one for Hubley and the third will replace Herring Cove Fire Station 60.

This year, as always, HRM will be the setting for a number of important international events, one of the most exciting of which will be the 2010 Silver Economic Summit in Halifax.

Hosted by the provincial Department of Seniors, the event will be held May 13-14 and will bring together people from many countries to discuss the challenges and business opportunities presented by the world's aging population.

Within just a few decades, the sheer mass of “boomers” reaching senior status will have a staggering impact on the world’s economies, on the market place and on the demand for services provided by all levels of government, particularly here at the grass-roots level.

This is the first time this summit has been held outside Europe, where the Silver Economy movement began, and it will take place, right here in HRM.

As I was saying earlier, it’s only January but already 2010 is shaping up to be another great year to be alive and thrive in HRM. If yours turns out to be one of the households to receive that survey, I do hope you’ll take the time to complete it. The more you share with us, the better Council and I, working with the hundreds of dedicated HRM staffers, can make things for everyone.

If you have a comment or concern, I’d really like to hear from you. You can reach me here at City Hall at kellyp@halifax.ca or by phoning 490-4010.

Happy New Year, everyone!

Respectfully, I remain,

Peter J. Kelly

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