HARBOUR AUTHORITIES FORUM

JUNE 2004 — VOLUME 10, NO. 1

# FORT AMHERST: SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Fort Amherst has served the community of St. John's and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador for more than 200 years. The fort itself was built in the 1770s to defend the entrance of "The Narrows," the channel leading to St. John's Harbour. Though the original fort has disappeared, the same location, high on a hill overlooking The Narrows' southern shore, was used during World War II for gun placements to protect the harbour from German U-boats.

Today, the Fort Amherst Small Boat Basin serves the fishers of St. John's and other nearby communities. "St. John's is Canada's oldest city and its harbour is Newfoundland's largest fishing harbour, and Fort Amherst plays an important role in both the city and harbour," says Bill Jenkins, Program Officer, Eastern Newfoundland.

Fishing vessels have long used the south side of St. John's Harbour, explains Mr. Jenkins, while larger ocean-going commercial vessels use the north side. As the fishery (and the size of the boats) grew, the increasing shortage of space and modern services prompted local fishers and Small Craft Harbours to search for additional berthage. "No location was a good location," he comments. "Eventually, we settled on the Fort Amherst site and built the entire Small Boat Basin out from the coast line."

With the site chosen and the necessary funding applications to the federal government approved, a full year of construction work followed. To create berthage and service space along the sheer cliff and rocky coastline, tonnes of rock were dumped and levelled to create roads, parking and building space, and breakwaters, and the site was fitted with crib-work wharves and finger piers. At the time, it was the largest project Small Craft Harbours had ever undertaken, says Mr. Jenkins, costing $8 million. The Harbour Authority of Fort Amherst Small Boat Basin was incorporated and the facility opened in August 1991.

**The Fort Amherst Small Boat Basin, including a large paved area for trucks (seen at left), space for the Harbour Authority's offices and workshops, and breakwaters and wharves, was built out from the steep rocky shoreline of "The Narrows," the channel leading to St. John's Harbour.**

Today, of the approximately 150 fishing vessels using St. John's Harbour in the summer, 75 tie up at Fort Amherst, says Harbour Supervisor Dan Mullett.

Since its incorporation, the Harbour Authority's board of directors and harbour personnel have worked hard to develop a comprehensive range of services for fishers. These include berthage, vessel storage and launching, and oil disposal. Fishers also have access to facilities for electrical hook-ups and off-loading, a fork-lift, a fully equipped welding shop that they can rent, and supplies such as water fiberglass and other materials. All of this benefits both the fishers (many of whom are transient, returning to their home ports in the winter) and the Harbour Authority. "Whatever they need, it's here on-site for them," explains Mr. Mullett. "If we see a chance to make a few dollars, we'll take that opportunity."

*Continues on page 2*

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# Consultations and Good News on NHAAC Agenda

The fall 2003 National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee (NHAAC) meeting was held from November 19 to 21, in Ottawa.

SCH will need to explore opportunities and pursue ways of operating in an effort to not only reduce costs but also to increase revenues.

George Da Pont, Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources and Corporate Services, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, provided an update on the Departmental Assessment and Alignment Project. He advised that, due to government-wide financial restraints, Small Craft Harbours (SCH) will need to explore opportunities and pursue ways of operating in an effort to not only reduce costs but also to increase revenues. He informed NHAAC members of an internal workshop that had been held earlier in the fall, with participants from within the Department as well as former SCH employees, to brainstorm and develop options for new ways of doing business. He pledged that NHAAC would be part of the consultative process. The following day, Mr. Da Pont rejoined the group, providing the five regions an opportunity to present their specific regional views and concerns to him.

A number of other significant items were discussed at the two-day meeting, including insurance matters and the potential impact on harbour authorities of a revised *Canada Corporations Act*. Good news for harbour authorities came from SCH's promise to investigate the various avenues through which bodily injury insurance coverage could be purchased for harbour authority board members.

Presentations were also made on the new online HA Discussion Forum and, based on a national survey of harbour authorities, improved fee collection strategies to increase revenues.

## Share Your Views

Through the HA Discussion Forum, harbour authority members, SCH staff and interested members of the public across Canada can share their views, comments, concerns and ideas about anything related to harbour authorities.

To find out more and join the Forum, just go to the SCH Web site: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch/ha-listserve_e.html.

## Fort Amherst — *continued from page 1*

Much of the Small Boat Basin's revenue is made from its off-loading facilities and services. The Harbour Authority charged half a cent per pound on the approximately 6 million lbs (2.75 million kg) of scallop, crab, monkfish and lobster off-loaded at the Fort Amherst facility in 2003, about a quarter of the total catch entering St. John's Harbour. The catch is then trucked away to processing plants in other communities, such as Port de Grave, 50 km away. The Harbour Authority leases space to a fish purchasing company and it has also bought and re-sold scallop fishing gear in the past.

Designed when most fishers used trapfish boats of less than 14 m, the Fort Amherst Small Boat Basin was a tight fit for today's larger boats almost as soon as it was built. "We save some space and protect the boats by using the outside wharves for off-loading, and reserving the inside wharves and finger piers for docking," says Mr. Mullett. Small Craft Harbours and the Harbour Authority are discussing an expansion of the Small Boat Basin to accommodate more and larger vessels. This will both increase the Harbour Authority's revenue and improve its ability to provide services.

The work that went into creating the Small Boat Basin, developing its many services, and current efforts to expand the harbour will allow Fort Amherst to continue to serve St. John's and Newfoundland as ably in the future as it has in the past.

*Photos, contact information and a list of services offered at the Fort Amherst Small Boat Basin can be viewed at the Harbour Authority's Web site* (www.smallboatbasin.nf.net).

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# Quick Action Contains Spill

Small Craft Harbours-sponsored training, spill kits and emergency procedures made quick work of a small fuel spill in Port Saunders, Newfoundland and Labrador, in June 2003. "Harbour authority personnel took quick and correct action to contain the spill and contact the appropriate agencies," says Jim Cheeseman, Area Chief, Small Craft Harbours, Western Newfoundland and Southern Labrador.

When the oil slick was first reported, Harbour Supervisor Maurice Ryan suspected unauthorized bilge pumping. Within minutes, however, the slick's source was discovered to be one of a pair of fuel pipelines installed by Imperial Oil in 1961 to transfer the community's fuel from transport ships to storage tanks on shore. Capped when the system was shut down in 1993, the pipelines under the wharf had deteriorated extensively from continuous exposure to salt water. Mr. Ryan immediately placed a bucket under the leak and deployed an absorbent boom to prevent the slick from spreading further.

> "Without a harbour authority in place, there's no one in charge at the harbour."

Small Craft Harbours, Imperial Oil, the provincial environmental and labour departments, Environment Canada and the Port Saunders Town Council responded quickly to calls from Mr. Ryan and Mr. Cheeseman.

Within five hours, representatives from all of the contacted agencies were on site. An Imperial Oil oil recovery unit arrived later that same evening, coming from three hours away.

The Imperial Oil team deployed a large boom around the wharf to prevent seepage beyond the affected area. An oil recovery pumper truck removed all the fuel from the harbour and the leaking pipeline within three days. The second pipeline was pumped empty about two months later, recovering approximately 1,000 gallons of fuel and 50 gallons of fuel-contaminated water.

The entire incident highlights the importance and value of a harbour authority to the community and the environment, concludes Mr. Cheeseman. "Without a harbour authority in place, there's no one in charge at the harbour. It's easy to assume that 'someone else will take care of it' with possibly disastrous results."

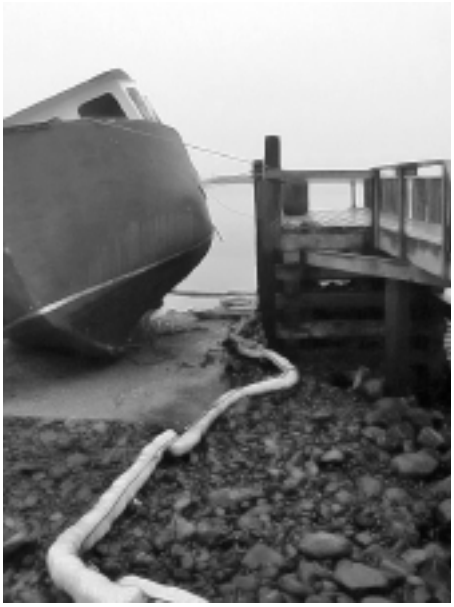
# Cooperation Averts Environmental and Economic Damage

Serious environmental and economic damage seemed imminent when a vessel undergoing repairs on the slipway at Lockeport Harbour in Nova Scotia went awash and released fuel into the harbour in November 2003.

Fortunately, the harbour escaped any significant consequences. "Several factors worked to our advantage," explains Bill Malloy, Business Manager, South Eastern Shore, Maritimes Region. A good working relationship between all the relevant agencies and a knowledgeable on-site harbour authority representative were the most important factors, he emphasizes.

In addition, wind and tide conditions that contained the spilled diesel (which dissipates quickly) to approximately one quarter of the inner basin of the harbour helped the situation. "All we really had to do was contain the spill and let nature take care of it."

"It was lucky that it happened when it did," adds Eugene Scott, Lockeport's Harbour Supervisor, who first reported the spill, early on the first day of lobster season. "A day or even a few hours later and there would have been full lobster cars to protect."



**Quick action prevented contamination of wooden lobster holding cars and the harbour from diesel fuel and engine oil that leaked from a boat that went awash on the slipway of Lockeport Harbour in Nova Scotia.**

A flurry of phone calls brought representatives of Small Craft Harbours, the Canadian Coast Guard, the Nova Scotia Department of Environment, the Canada Food Inspection Agency, local Conservation and Protection officers, and two environmental companies to the harbour within hours to assess the situation and start the clean-up.

Absorbent spill booms placed around the vessel contained further leakage. These were followed by double layers of non-absorbent booms around the other areas of the harbour, including the harbour's 13 lobster holding cars. "The fuel would have soaked into the wood and made them unusable," explains Mr. Malloy.

# Quick Response to Hurricane Juan

On September 30, the day after Hurricane Juan stormed its way across Maritimes Region, Small Craft Harbours personnel were inspecting and assessing the havoc left in its wake. Damage was extensive throughout the region. For example, "almost every harbour facility between Queen's County and Halifax County [approximately 350 km of coastline] was damaged," describes Business Manager Bryce Duggan.

After making initial assessments, Small Craft Harbours personnel contacted Public Works and Government Services Canada for the engineers and technicians needed to plan and execute the necessary repairs (using approximately $1.5 million of emergency funding). "It was urgent to complete the work in time for the opening of the fall lobster season on November 25," emphasizes Mr. Duggan.

This deadline was met, says Bruce Holland, Chairman of the Harbour Authority of Terence Bay/Lower Prospect, though much work remains to be done.

**Hurricane Juan left a trail of destruction in its wake but quick action and cooperation by government agencies and community organizations restored harbours to working condition in record time.**

"The government wharf [lifted off its blocking and buckled by the storm surge] was repaired immediately. We were very pleased that the response and the funding came so quickly." Private wharves and buildings, also eligible for emergency funding, are being repaired and rebuilt as time allows.

Individual harbour authorities and community organizations also worked together to clean up their towns and harbours, hauling away the numerous fallen trees, heaps of ocean vegetation and debris that lay scattered everywhere. Of special mention for their clean-up efforts are the communities of Terrence Bay/Lower Prospect, Three Fathom Harbour, Sambro, United Communities, West Berlin and Feltzen South.

## CBC Visits Port de Grave

**There was more than the usual excitement around the fifth annual Boat Lighting Night in Port de Grave, Newfoundland and Labrador. On December 8, the CBC news program *The National* broadcast live from the Morgan and Hawe Memorial Building, home of the Port de Grave Harbour Authority. It was the first of *The National*'s six "Road Stories" episodes. The broadcast, with Peter Mansbridge, Rex Murphy and Carl Wells, featured a special "preview" boat lighting event, held in advance of the scheduled community celebration later in the week.**

## Health and Safety Training Leads to New Career Opportunity

A new interest and career opportunities have developed for one person who took an occupational health and safety course organized by Small Craft Harbours. The course was offered in July 2003 in Hermitage, Newfoundland and Labrador (see "Training creates 'Ambassadors for Safety,'" in the fall 2003 issue of *Forum*).

"I just found it fascinating," says Etta Loveless of Seal Cove. "Safety is something that so many people take for granted, but the course helped put safety and prevention in a different light." Ms. Loveless took further courses and is now qualified as both an occupational health and safety representative on work sites with more than 10 workers and as a trainer. She received her licence in October 2003 and now teaches courses sponsored by Small Craft Harbours. "I hope to go on to become an occupational health and safety work site inspector," she explains.

# Economical Floating Docks Replace Wharf

A project to replace the old timber pile wharf at Winnipeg Beach on Lake Winnipeg will be completed by this summer. "The old wharf was built 50 years ago, and parts of it were completely rotted," explains Ed Isfeld, President of the Winnipeg Beach Harbour Authority Inc.

This summer's work will complete a project begun in 2001, when nearly 92 m of the wharf were replaced with floating docks, says Mr. Isfeld. The harbour's remaining 61 m of timber pile wharf will be replaced with more economical floating docks. Before building and installing the new floating docks, the old rotted piles will be removed and the underwater area covered with rock and rubble.

Keith Freeman, Program Development Officer, Central and Arctic Region, describes the composition of the new floating docks: "The 2.7-m-wide floating docks are built in 6.1-m-long sections from pressure-treated Douglas fir and extruded polyethylene tanks filled with Styrofoam." The floating docks are anchored to the shoreline with steel pilings, he adds, such that the docks can move up and down with the change of water elevation. The water elevation in the south basin of Lake Winnipeg can vary by up to 1 m when a strong north wind blows excess water into the south basin.

**New floating docks at Winnipeg Beach harbour replace a 50-year-old timber pile wharf. The floating docks, made of Douglas fir and Styrofoam-filled tanks, are anchored to the shoreline with steel pilings. The anchoring system allows the docks to move up and down freely with the change in water elevation.**

Winnipeg Beach is home to approximately 56 boats, including 50 skiffs between 6 and 7 m in length used to fish for pickerel and sauger in the southern part of Lake Winnipeg, and 6 larger boats, between 14 and 19 m long, which are used for whitefish in the northern part of the lake in the spring. The new floating docks are called "whitefish floats" because they are large enough to berth a whitefish boat, explains Mr. Freeman.

# Firefighting Plan Clears Smoke Quickly

Recent firefighting training in Queen Charlotte City, British Columbia, could not have come at a better time. Volunteer firefighters responded within minutes when smoke was reported billowing from a vessel moored in the Queen Charlotte City harbour on November 21. They moved quickly and without hesitation, thanks to taking a course on marine firefighting techniques and subsequent practice sessions (see "Where There's Smoke . . . There Should be a Firefighting Plan," in the spring 2003 issue of *Forum*).

"Two hooked up the dry fire lines, another two suited for smoke, while the Officer in Charge assessed the situation," reports Bob Olsen, Queen Charlotte City Harbour Manager. "The fire was reported at 11:05 a.m., and by 11:20 it was out." Thanks to quick action, the vessel sustained minimal damage, Mr. Olsen reports. A frayed and previously burnt electrical cord was the suspected cause of the fire.

The firefighters' training and follow-up planning and practice sessions played a big part in the quick response and control of the fire, says Mr. Olsen.

Also, he continues, recommendations arising from the course led to the installation of dry fire lines connecting the harbour facilities to the city's water system, a fire hydrant at the top of the wharf and stanchions along the wharf. This system, installed just before the fire, means that every point in the harbour can now be reached with a 15 m hose, a great improvement over the 400 m of hose formerly needed to connect to city hydrants across a busy road.

"It was an impressive performance," Mr. Olsen concludes. "The training really paid off."

**The refurbished Bayfield Harbour and how it looked in 2001 (inset).**

## Grand Opening at Bayfield Harbour

The Harbour Authority of Bayfield, Nova Scotia raised public awareness of Harbour Authority activities and showcased Bayfield's renovated and extended facilities with a grand opening of its new wharf on July 5, 2003. Hundreds attended this event: families, community members and local dignitaries enjoyed boat rides, games, raffles, music, First Nations drummers, free refreshments, displays and more. Two retired fishers cut the ribbon to open the wharf.

## Local Fishers Have Voice in Regulatory Agency

Members of the Freshwater Harbour Authorities Advisory Council have a voice in the marketing agency that governs the pricing and sale of their catches. Ron Balantyne, a commercial fisher, former band councillor with the Grand Rapids First Nation and current president of the Grand Rapids Fisherman's Co-op, and Edward Isfeld, a commercial fisher, past president of the Lake Winnipeg Fisherman's Association and current president of the Winnipeg Beach Harbour Authority, were appointed to the board of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) in November 2003.

As a provincially recommended appointee, Mr. Balantyne will represent the interests of Manitoba fishers on the FFMC board. He replaces Mr. Isfield, who, after 13 years as a provincial appointee to the board, was re-appointed as a federal representative, replacing a retiring federal appointee.

Created in 1969, the FFMC is a self-sustaining federal Crown corporation that acts as buyer, processor and marketer of freshwater fish from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwest Territories and part of northwestern Ontario. The Corporation distributes its profits annually to participating fishers.

## Recovery of Crashed Plane Aided by Port Dover Vessel

Nadro Marine Services' tow tug *Vigilant 1*, from Port Dover Harbour in Port Dover, Ontario, in Central and Arctic Region, helped recover the wreckage of a downed plane from Lake Erie in late January.

"We were there to render assistance to the *Samuel Risley*, the Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker on the scene, by keeping any loose ice away from the recovery teams and equipment," explains Bill Nadrofsky, operations manager of Nadro Marine Services. The 26-m, 1,500 horsepower *Vigilant 1* was the only tow tug available to help with such an operation, since other tow tugs on Lake Erie were already frozen in, and ice had closed river and canal access from other lakes, he explains.

The vessel's 3.7-m draft was also a consideration, says Mr. Nadrofsky. "The Coast Guard vessel draws over 6 m and the crash site was in about 8 m of water."

Georgia Express flight 0126, which crashed into Lake Erie on January 17, shortly after takeoff from Pelee Island, claimed the lives of eight men returning from a hunting trip on the island, a dog, the pilot and his friend.

## Web Site Promotes Communication

Central and Arctic Region covers a vast territory, stretching from Ontario to Alberta and north to Nunavut. Its 28 existing and 6 proposed harbour authorities face enormous challenges communicating with each other.

The Freshwater Harbour Authorities Advisory Council (FHAAC) Web site (www.fhaac.com) is intended to help improve communication among harbour authorities, explains Kelly Beech, administrative student at the Small Craft Harbours office in Winnipeg.

The site also carries PDF versions of the FHAAC newsletter, *Anchors Aweigh*, news items of interest to Central and Arctic Region harbours and useful links, such as to the national Small Craft Harbours Web site (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch) and the Weather Network (www.theweathernetwork.com).

# New Storage Tank Regulations

New regulations governing the storage of petroleum products and allied petroleum products are expected to come into effect in 2004 and will be enforced by the Environmental Protection Branch of Environment Canada.

The new regulations require the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to register, possibly upgrade, and monitor all the storage tanks owned on federal lands (including storage tanks managed by regional harbour authorities). Privately owned fuel storage tanks situated on federal lands also require registration with Environment Canada, and are the full responsibility of the owner.

Once in effect, these regulations give responsible parties one year to register applicable storage tank systems with Environment Canada, and up to four years to upgrade underground and shop-fabricated aboveground storage tank systems currently in use to meet the new standards.

Enforced under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, these regulations are stricter than those they replace. In addition, a wider range of storage tanks will require registration (and compliance with the standards set out in the regulations).

For example, while the previous regulations stated that all underground and aboveground storage tanks (with a capacity of 4,000 L or more) required registration, the new regulations apply to all underground storage tank systems *and* to outside aboveground storage tank systems of 2,500 L or greater. The only storage tanks not included in these regulations are aboveground storage tank systems with a capacity of 2,500 L or less that are connected to a heating appliance or emergency generator. All waste oil tanks are covered by the registration requirements.

Specifications and information required for registration include the following:

- plans, drawings and specifications stamped and signed by a professional engineer;
- a signed statement by a certified installer ensuring that the tank complies with design and installation requirements;
- as-built drawings identifying the location of the tank on the updated site plan for each location; and
- environmental emergency plans for each site where storage tank systems are located.

For more information, consult the Storage Tank Systems for Petroleum and Allied Petroleum Products Web site at www.ec.gc.ca/st-rs/.

## Keeping Harbour Washrooms Clean

The Pacific Region's second Environmental Fact Sheet, *Initiative 2: Guide to Harbour Washrooms*, provides guidelines and suggestions for the construction and maintenance of sanitary facilities.

### Structure

- Site your washroom on land, for fire safety and to avoid frozen pipes.
- Make it accessible by people with disabilities, complying with barrier-free design.
- Use the *National Building Code of Canada* and those of the local jurisdiction.

### Design

- Create an aesthetically pleasing design that blends with existing structures.
- Design for ease of maintenance, cleanliness and attractiveness.
- Emphasize efficient and economical heating, lighting and ventilation.
- Incorporate storage, public telephones or bulletin boards.
- Include a wide roof overhang in the design to provide useful outdoor space.

### Access

- Make it convenient for boaters to walk to/from their vessels.
- Situate it close enough for harbour staff to supervise.

### Maintenance

- Plan for low maintenance, cleaning and efficient use of space.
- Include wall-mounted sinks, urinals and trash receptacles.
- Eliminate daily refills with high-capacity towel and tissue holders.
- Minimize waste and daily cleaning with electrical sensor-operated hand dryers.

### Operation

- Post clearly recognizable washroom symbols.
- Post emergency contact telephone numbers.

For copies of these environmental fact sheets, contact Small Craft Harbours, Pacific Region: Tel.: (604) 666-4875; fax: (604) 666-7056.

# Dear Harby

## Our Harbour Authority is relatively new and we do not have any directors with accounting experience. What can we do to ensure that we are handling our finances correctly?

"While many fishers are small business owner-operators and are familiar with business practices, there are some differences between an owner-operated business and a harbour authority," says Robin Richardson, Program Officer, Pacific Region. "As a non-profit, the harbour authority may have differing accounting practices and requirements, often with more people involved. As a result, harbour authorities should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication," he comments.

Or, as was the case for one harbour authority in New Brunswick, the potential for fraud, adds Alain Noel, Business Manager for Northeast New Brunswick. There, the harbour authority's board of directors did not realize that its wharf manager had embezzled $67,000 over three years, until the harbour lights went out one evening. NB Power had cut off the harbour's electricity service for non-payment. After an accountant and the RCMP were called in, the harbour manager was charged and convicted of fraud. The accountant and Small Craft Harbours then guided and advised the board through the long process of paying off the accumulated debts and re-organizing its accounting practices.

To help avoid this situation, harbour authority accounting practices should include financial controls, such as a well-defined separation of money-related tasks, recommends Mr. Richardson. For example, the harbour manager might collect payments, but a director would make the bank deposits. Another control is to have two directors review the invoices prepared by the harbour manager before issuing two-signature cheques to pay the bills. "This not only limits any one person's ability to handle funds improperly, but it also maintains regular communication between harbour personnel and directors about the harbour authority's financial operations."

In addition, sequentially numbered and dated receipts should be issued for every transaction with one copy given to harbour users and another retained by the harbour authority in a secure place. Employee monitoring and conscientious record-keeping is essential. In one harbour, when the regular employee was on vacation, the harbour authority was surprised to see its revenues increase significantly. The replacement employee had been much more diligent about recording and receipting each transaction. In addition, harbour users should be encouraged to ask for a receipt for every payment they make.

Regular audits (done by a professional accounting firm) at least once a year also help keep everyone organized and informed, Mr. Richardson adds. The audit results can then be presented at the harbour authority's annual general meeting, and provide assurance to the membership that the board of directors is practising due-diligence as the financial managers of the harbour authority.

Mr. Richardson also recommends that, as much as possible, harbour authorities reduce the "liability" of having cash in the office by doing the following:

- requiring a bank deposit when the cash in the office exceeds a set amount (e.g. $200);
- collecting harbour fees through automatic deductions, credit cards or post-dated cheques;
- handling visitor and tourist transactions through a credit card or debit card system (weigh the expense of such a system against the convenience for the harbour and for your visitors); and
- keeping any on-site cash in a secure place and limiting the number of people who have access.

"The best advice I could give to a harbour authority director," says Mr. Richardson, "is to review your financial operations on a regular basis and if you have questions about your harbour authority's finances, seek the advice of SCH or a qualified accountant."

Here is a useful Web site with information about financial management:

- The University of Victoria School of Public Administration, Voluntary Sector Knowledge Network: Financial Management: www.vskn.ca/fimgt.htm.