

## Annual Report Highlights

- \$1,032,038 of roading assets and \$40,000 of esplanade reserves transferred to Whakatane District Council as a result of the boundary change of 1 July, 2006.
- Infrastructural assets increased in value by \$13.3 million as a result of the revaluation of 1 July, 2006.
- Vested assets of \$1,715,404 most of which related to stage four of the Waiotahi Drifts Subdivision.
- Surplus for the year was \$1.48 million, \$544,000 better than budget mostly through vested assets exceeding expectations.

### Capital works saw:

- 2.9 km of Tirohanga Road sealed
- 220 m of reconstruction of Grants Road
- A compactor installed at Opotiki refuse recovery centre at a cost of \$187,672.
- St John Street north drain piped.
- Public debt reduced by \$1.58 million through internal funding of loan renewals.
- The harbour development project continue.

## Community Plan Acknowledged

Opotiki District Council is one of 16 out of 85 local authorities to receive a discount from Audit NZ in recognition of their work in the preparation of the Ten Year Community Plan.

The 10% discount equates to around \$5,000 and has been awarded to councils whose efficient processes resulted in less work than anticipated for the Auditors. According to Audit NZ director Miriam Travis Opotiki has done extremely well for a council of its size.

## Waioeaka Domain Pavilion

A small group gathered for the blessing of the site for the new Waioeaka Domain Pavilion in September. The cost of this project is \$515,800 and a major funding boost has been received with the Bay Trust (BOP Community Trust) announcing a grant of \$188,000 and a further \$61,000 being provided by the Eastern Bay Electricity Trust. Council has commenced work to excavate and form the foundation for the building which on its completion will provide male and female toilets and changing rooms, storage, a kitchen and utility room for the many sports teams who use the domain on a regular basis.

Construction of the building is being undertaken by Civenco Construction and is expected to be completed during summer.



## Serious Fun Starts Now

**Opotiki is about to get serious about showing city dwellers how to have fun without the aid of fancy electronics and expensive entertainment.**

Funding from the Ministry of Youth Development, Youth Development Project Fund has given the Tourism Product Development Project the boost that it needs to really kick start the Opotiki Coast Fun Unplugged festival. Minister of Youth Affairs, Nanaia Mahuta gave final approval for \$34,000 toward coordination and promotion of the project which aims to give Opotiki people the advice and support they need to establish small businesses in peak holiday periods.

"The Tourism and Promotions Committee's promotional plan recognises that while locals may not have access to highly organised and sophisticated entertainment they sure know how to have fun using the environment around them. We want to offer that to young people and families from other areas, particularly cities where activities are constructed and usually very expensive," says Committee Chairman, Robbie Petersen.

"Young people are experts at having fun and there is opportunity for them through this project to develop their own ideas, learn about business, be part of an exciting community project and to earn a few dollars for their favourite club or project. We will gain from their enthusiasm and fresh perspective."

In her official announcement Mrs Mahuta said "I'm delighted to congratulate the Opotiki District Council whose innovative project, the Tourism Product Development Project, is among those to win funding. I



am excited that the Ministry is able to support this initiative, which will involve, challenge and encourage local young people."

"The fund reflects the fact that councils not only need to develop projects which address the needs of young people in their communities, but that they also need to be innovative and inclusive in their approach if they are to truly engage with young people and keep them involved and enthusiastic."

Continued on page 3

## The Great Rate Debate

**Are rates a burden or the basis of a strong and prosperous community?**

The debate about how, why and how much we should pay in rates has been boiling throughout New Zealand for some time. Opotiki has managed to keep the rate of increase to just above the rate of inflation but some argue that this comes at a cost to the growth and development of our community.

Mayor John Forbes believes that our rates are effectively a contribution to the well-being of the collective community.

"Any group, whether it is a small sports club or a large company, has a number of people managing the day to day activities and operations. Even planning a family gathering requires an organiser and usually some form of contribution towards the event. It is the same for Opotiki district. Council is elected to organise the things we want and our rates are a contribution toward making that happen."



While central government deals with issues relevant to New Zealand and its people local government takes account of local issues, needs and priorities.

"Many everyday activities are dependent on services provided by Council. It is an interesting exercise to consider how your day would go if we didn't pay rates. What would happen when you got to the end of

your drive and there was no road or if your neighbour was noisy, inconsiderate and built his pig sty on your side of the boundary? Even worse, if your neighbour was a large smelly factory? Where would sewerage flow and what would come out your tap?

*Above: Chief Executive, Vaughan Payne waits to see what comes out of the tap.*

Continued on page 2

## Rate debate continued

Our rate notices consist of two types of rates. The general rate, which we all pay, covers the cost of the services we can all benefit from, stormwater, roading public toilets, parks, playing fields and reserves, community projects, the cemetery, library, civil defence, animal, litter, noise, health and liquor control, town planning, the harbour development and running the Council offices.

The targeted rate pays for the services that only some of us receive such as water supply and sewerage.

Generally, if you don't receive the service you do not pay a targeted rate. If your community is collectively prepared to pay for a service Council will help you to achieve it at the best price possible.

What happens when your community asks for something but you don't want it? Council aims to satisfy as many people as possible and is more often guided by the collective will of communities than that of the individual. In saying that, Council does take into account individual needs and opinions and tries to reach a balance between individual and collective wishes.

An example of how Council does this is the portion of a targeted rate a resident will pay if they choose not to hook up to a community scheme. This acknowledges the individuals right not to have the service but also takes into account the communities wish and the subsequent value added to the property by having a service available.

We all pay a targeted rate for our refuse recycling facilities. This meets some of the cost of owning and running the facilities. The rest is met by the fee we pay when we take our rubbish to the RRC or when we pay

a targeted rate to have it collected.

If we are on a water supply we pay a rate for the facilities (pipes, pumps and tanks) and a fee for the product (clean, safe water) which is measured by our water meters.

Increasing rates are an issue in most cities and districts. In some areas communities have to pay more now for their facilities because they have scrimped on maintenance and improvements in the past. The new legislation is also responsible for some of the increased costs as more responsibilities and requirements are passed to local authorities to manage on a local basis.

"The discussion about whether councils should stick to roads, rubbish, water and sewerage is now mute as the new legislation requires us to consider all aspects of our communities wellbeing, including social, cultural, environmental and economic factors."

"This year our general rates will increase by approximately 3.7% which is one of the lowest rates of increase in New Zealand. We can thank successive councils for the long term planning and careful management which has seen our assets and infrastructure well maintained and built to meet our future needs. Opotiki ratepayers do not have to play catch-up like many other districts and cities."

"We are one of the smallest and leanest districts in New Zealand and we have a lot to be proud of and a lot of opportunities we wish to pursue. The rates we pay make this possible and are to the betterment of us all."

So, what do we get for our rates?

"The services we collectively ask for and a strong community with a very strong future," Mayor Forbes says.

## THE BENEFIT OF EVENTS

Council has made a commitment to developing Opotiki district as an event friendly centre by supporting event organisers and building supporting business.

A full time event coordinator has been appointed to Council to help improve the sustainability of events and to develop an environment where the full benefit of events can be reaped.

"Events are a major source of income and promotion for our district," says Mayor John Forbes. "With more than 31 regular, exciting and sizeable events held each year, Opotiki is in a position to become a centre for events and to build business around that."

"We have a dedicated and capable pool of volunteers who give their time and energy over and over again without expectation of reward. Their efforts promote our district and bring many people into the area. We need to ensure they have the support they need in areas such as sponsorship and funding, coordination and planning, administrative assistance and advice. There is also a need to develop business that support events such as those that provide accommodation and food, entertainment and activities, products and related services."

New Coordinator, Sandie Dixon has begun meeting with event organisers to establish their needs and identify opportunities.

Sandie's role also includes the management of the New Years Eve Rodeo festival, Beef an' Beans and the OpotikiCoast Community Contributions Awards which will be staged mid year 2007.

## Opotiki Harbour Project Update

The economic benefits of the Harbour Development are extend beyond employment created by the mussel farm.

While Council works to progress engineering and environmental investigations required for resource consent a team of experts are working to strengthen the business case for the project in order to secure funding. Recognising the benefits to it's own business, Horizon Energy has engaged a business consultant to investigate other commercial opportunities from the

harbour project. These include aggregate mining, property development, tourism, recreation and other aquaculture opportunities. These are being explored.

"The entire Eastern Bay of Plenty, like many other regions, has been experiencing a trend toward declining populations. We need to convince our partners and central government that we can sustain our communities by building our regional economy. It is not just about creating employment for people who currently live here but also for those who want to come home," says Chief

Executive Vaughan Payne.

"The preliminary decision by the Ministry of Fisheries to allow Eastern Seafarms to proceed with the development of the 3,800 ha mussel farm is fantastic news and many more fantastic opportunities will become available to the Eastern Bay when the harbour development is completed."



## Councillor comment

**Adrian Gault**  
Phone: 315 7789

**In this column Opotiki District councillors are invited to share their views with residents. The views expressed are those of the individual councillor and not necessarily of the collective council.**

Over the last couple of months most media around New Zealand have been running stories on the level of rate increases ratepayers are being asked to stump up with. This has been as a result of Councils throughout New Zealand recently completing their Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP) which in some

instances identified some major infrastructural deficiencies and insufficient maintenance of some core assets. The consequence of this neglect has meant some Councils have had to strike huge rate increases, some in excess of 15%.

The good news for the Opotiki ratepayers are that our core assets, water, sewerage and roading have been either recently upgraded or has been maintained to the required standards. The flow on effect of this is a projected average annual increase in rates for this District over the next ten years of about 3.7%.

The not so good news is that the fixed cost of running a small District Council continues to rise, largely due to the extra compliance cost and the new requirements Central Government impose on Local Councils. Most ratepayers would agree that councils core business is about providing those key assets for the District like

roads, rubbish collection and disposal, water and sewerage. However, the intangible processes, district planning and policy development of Council, are often not seen by ratepayers as being an important use of their rates.

Council's fundamental role is to create the right situation for the district to grow environmentally, socially, culturally and economically. Planning and policy development ensures that the impact of growth does not destroy the uniqueness that is Opotiki, it ensures that industrial growth has minimal impact on residential zoning and that our most versatile rural soils are not all consumed for housing or such like.

Planning also enables Council to take a strategic approach rather than an ad-hoc approach to the way it operates. Too often in the past the Opotiki District has embarked on a project, or made a decision without appreciating the long term implications of its actions. The LTCCP process has provided the forum for the community and the Council to develop a strong future for the Opotiki District

## August flooding cost

The cost of the August 2006 floods has reached **\$100,000, \$30,000 over the 2006-07 flood damage Budget.**

Over the weekend of 5-6 August, heavy rain hit the Opotiki District. While weather readings recorded approximately 150 – 175mm over a 24 hour period, some areas e.g. 'Upper Pakahi – Motu - Maungaroa' recorded these amounts and more over a 3 hour period.



In all stormwater pumps operated full time for two days, 11 roads were closed for up to two days and Te Kaha reservoir road was closed for two weeks. Remedial works for the entire district are expected to cost approximately \$120,000.

Council's yearly budget for flood damage is \$70,000 inclusive of LTNZ subsidy. To carry out all works needed, Council has approved the over-expenditure of the flood damage budget.

A claim of approximately \$100,000 has been made to Land Transport NZ and it anticipates this will attract a subsidy of 51% leaving Council to pick up 49% of the unbudgeted costs or approximately \$50,000.

Engineering and Services Manager, Dave Reece is keeping his fingers crossed in the hope that no further flooding occurs in the 2006 - 07 period.

"The budget is spent and any further repairs will require Council approval and result in a direct additional cost to the community and a possible reduction in the roading budget."



"We want to hear from anyone who has an idea for a holiday activity or anyone who can provide professional expertise and advice," says Mr Petersen. "There are a lot of people with talents and skills and others who have the ideas and energy needed to show our visitors how to have fun. This project brings the two together to create a busy and exciting visitor destination and build a stable basis for employment."

Fishing and biking trips, horse riding, tramping, kayaking, sleep outs on the beach, mud slides, rope swings and farm visits are just some of the small business activities that could be created but there is also room for other support business such as a laundry service or mobile salad bar for campers.

Over a series of six business sessions participants will be helped to develop their ideas and business plans and they will be up and operating over the holiday season.

"This could be a fun way to earn funds for your club or organisation, to learn about and experience running a small adventure tourism operation or just to have the pleasure of showing off our beautiful fun-filled district to people from other places," says Mr Petersen.

Phone: Project coordinator Joseph Hayes 315 3030



## TOUGH LINE ON DOGS

The community has had enough of roaming and unregistered dogs and Council is embarking on a tough line for owners of unregistered or roaming dogs.

Council staff have begun a programme of random property visits and dog owners will receive a \$300 instant fine if their dog is found to be unregistered. This compares with dog registration fees of \$52.50 for an urban or rural neutered dog and \$142.50 for an entire dog in the urban area.

"On average one dog is impounded each day of the year and 21 dogs are euthanized each month. Only 15% of dogs that are impounded are claimed and this equates to a considerable cost to the community as impounded dogs must be held and fed for ?? days before being euthanized by council. Impoundment is an expensive option for the community and cost savings can be made by working to ensure only responsible owners, or those that are prepared to have their dogs registered, will want to keep dogs in the first place," says Chief Executive Vaughan Payne.

Desexing is a good option according to animal control officer Alan Wilson, as it ensures you are not repeatedly put into a position where you have to deal with finding homes for puppies or making unpleasant decisions to have them put down. Of the total 1140 registered dogs 744 were desexed but it is expected that the rate of desexing was minimal among unregistered dogs.

"Council has been actively promoting good owner behaviour through education in schools and through a district survey carried out in 2003 / 04. An increase in registrations did result but there is still a long way to go before we have our streets free of roaming dogs."

"This is a community problem and the community can help by encouraging others to have their dogs registered and by helping animal control officers. If people are able to restrain a roaming dog until the Animal Control Officer can get to it a lot of time and expense can be spared. Only by working together will this problem be solved efficiently and effectively in the long term," Vaughan says.



## The Historic Value of Opotiki Confirmed

It's official – experts say that the Opotiki Town Centre has historic heritage values. This has come out of a study that was undertaken last year and contained in a report that came out in March this year entitled Opotiki Town Centre Historic Heritage Study – Parts One and Two.

Council undertook the heritage study in partnership with Environment Bay of Plenty and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Part One of the report said that the Opotiki Town Centre "contains a built heritage resource of regional and national significance" and that "the Town Centre is one of the best surviving examples of a town centre from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century in the upper North Island" because it "retains today a broad range of building types."

The Council has been considering the Report's findings and recommendations. The Report amongst other things, recommends that various buildings should be protected in the District Plan.

The Report represents an exciting phase in the development of our town centre and district. There are many things that we could do to 'enhance' our valuable heritage. The buildings are worth caring for and looking after. Well maintained buildings painted, for example in colours that were around in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, would make the town centre a tourist attraction in its own right. This represents business opportunities for our town.



The way we were is not too distant from the way we are now. With maintenance and a coat of paint, in early 19th century colours, we could make the town centre a tourist attraction in its own right.

## Critical Eyes on Opotiki Entrance

The Waioeka entrance to Opotiki is being studied by eight young sets of eyes with a view to upgrading what they call a boring and untidy first impression of our town.

Opotiki College year 12 and 13, graphics students have chosen this well used site as a project as they wanted to contribute something to the community.

"The area approaching the bridge is boring and muddy," says year 13 student George Barsdell "It looks like we don't care about our town and makes a bad impression on visitors."

"A lot of people stop at this area and everyone coming from Whakalane passes by it. We need to do something about the way it looks," says year 12 student Etham Vanderslik.

Students have considered such things as drainage, traffic flows, amenities, safety and cost while retaining district and heritage values and making a statement about the district.

At this stage the design incorporates, seating, native plantings, paving, signage and a redesigned information

kiosk. A site feature is also planned.

Soon the people of the district will have the opportunity to turn their critical eye on the students work when site plans and alleviations are provided for public comment.

Council will review community feedback on the proposal and consider further action at that point.



Students: George Barsdell, Mania Campbell-Seymour, Tony Clark, Toby McDonald, Loren McKay, Jason Newth, John Stanaway, Witham Vanderslik, Cody Wilson and Anthony Winder promise to provide some fresh ideas for a welcoming entrance to Opotiki Township.



Git on down to  
the OpotikiCoast Rodeo  
Beef an' Beans Festival  
31 Deecember!  
We's be spectin ya'll

Join in and help OpotikiCoast welcome the New Year with a Western style street party. Organisations are underway and interested folk are being asked to rustle up their ideas and get involved.

There'll be,  
Beef an' beans and fun machines an'  
dancin' in the street.  
A shoot-out in town as the sun goes down  
- them injuns show up too.  
An' grub galore, a big ole' band and heaps  
of things to do.  
So polish up your shiney boots an' limber  
up your feets,  
Coz there'll be beef an' beans - know  
what that means!  
An' dancin' in them streets.

OPOTIKICOAST RODEO

## Beef an' Beans Festival

Contact: Sandie Dixon  
Phone 315 3030



### Waiotahi Markets are on

The Waiotahi Markets are on again this summer offering a range of local produce and products, art and craft, talent and entertainment.

#### Market dates:

Saturday, November 11

Saturday, December 9

Tuesday, January 2

Waiotahi Hall from 9am til 2 pm



## with a gift from the OpotikiCoast range



*The people of OpotikiCoast live close to and enjoy a natural setting which features mountains, rivers and ocean. Our environment and our history have shaped the way we live and created our unique culture. We are proud of who we are and where we come from.*

*We are OpotikiCoast by Nature.*



The perfect gift for those that live away from home or those who visit the district. The OpotikiCoast brand sums up who we are and why we live here. View a range of hats, tee shirts, greeting cards and lapel badges at the Opotiki Visitor Information Centre or have your own items labeled.

**All proceeds go towards helping us promote our beautiful district.**



Groups and individuals involved in the Opotiki District arts sector are invited to join an exciting new arts initiative that ODC Corporate Services Manager Donna Adlam has been instrumental in establishing.

Creative Eastbay – Te Taurapa a Toi is the name adopted by a partnership group made up of representatives from the Opotiki, Whakatane and Kawerau District Councils, iwi, economic development agencies and key regional event organisers (including Opotiki's Meg Collins and Dorothy-Ann Wilson). The partnership group successfully applied to Regional Strengths – Maurangi Toi (a joint fund established by Creative New Zealand and the Ministry of Social Development) to fund arts promotion on a regional basis.

Creative Eastbay – Te Taurapa a Toi has appointed Opotiki-born, Kay Boreham (nee Allen) as coordinator.

The development of a comprehensive database is the first stage of the project. This information will then form the basis of a regional arts website. "It's essential that we involve as many examples of art in our area as we can, including individual artists, groups, events, educators and examples of public art," Kay says. There is no cost involved and anyone with information they would like included is invited to contact Kay at [creativeeastbay.co.nz](http://creativeeastbay.co.nz) or by telephone, 07 308 7759 (day or night).

### OpotikiCoast can-do spirit

There was a young boy from the Coast who had a love affair with fireworks. His experiments were a source of great despair to his parents, especially when he blew up the cow shed. He is now a pyrotechnic engineer who travels the world to stage some of the greatest displays for special events.

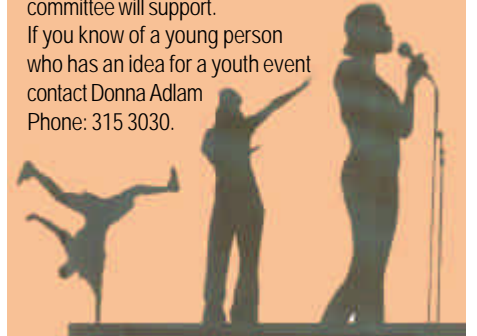
**Do you know a story like this? We want to hear it. Contact Donna at council Ph 315 3030**

## Youth Events

Help is available for young people who have a great idea for an event but are not sure how to make it happen.

The EBOP Youth Projects Committee consists of local youth and community health workers, police, district councils and media representatives who are happy to use their skills and resources to support young people in their efforts to help young people with projects they enjoy. School holiday activities, music and dance events, top town competitions and sports events are just some of the projects the committee will support.

If you know of a young person who has an idea for a youth event contact Donna Adlam  
Phone: 315 3030.



## Opotiki

In the beginning there was no light,  
there was no night,  
there was no sea, or land or trees.  
Until the Word was spoken  
and with a mighty explosion  
the Earth was formed and with tectonic force  
a land was thrust from deep beneath the sea,  
wrestling lovers seeking to be free  
a part of which is Opotiki.

From distant isles the people came  
and saw a land beyond their dreams.  
They named the mountains, rivers, streams.  
Maunga, awa a part of their identity,  
from ancient times through to this century  
a woven living tapestry,  
a place we call Opotiki.

And from above the Eyes do see  
of how this land was, is, could be.  
Darkness covers when there is light  
but light it pierces the darkest night.  
The sea erupts with cyclone gusts  
subsides again, with gentle grace  
zephyr winds caress our face.  
The ebbing of the tides console  
Opotiki nourishes body, spirit, soul.  
The sea, the land, the mountains tall  
the maunga, the awa are in us all.

Robert Schlotjes  
25 July 2006

### Industry at planting time

I hea Koe i te tangihanga o te horirerire?  
Where ere you when the grey warbler sang?  
The Grey warbler sings in spring - the time for  
sowing and planting

Te Arki Amo Amo  
Whakatohea/Te Whanau a Apanui



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