



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Longtime town engineer Ben Pitman retires

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Ben Pitman has left his office at Amherst town hall for the final time.

The longtime town employee decided Nov. 19, 2021, – his 62nd birthday – would be his last day on the job after a 34-year career with the Town of Amherst, the last 13 as its town engineer.

While he officially joined the town fulltime in 1987 as an assistant engineer to Ron Patterson, then the town's engineer, his association with the town actually began four years earlier while he was a student going to Mount Allison University and the University of New Brunswick, getting degrees in engineering as well as geology and mathematics.



BEN PITMAN HAS RETIRED AFTER A 34-YEAR CAREER WITH THE TOWN OF AMHERST, 13 OF THEM AS THE TOWN'S ENGINEER. (TOM McCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)

“During my student years, I worked on the wellfield project,” Pitman recalled. “We were relocating the water supply of the Town of Amherst outside of the town to a protected water area. During those years, between 1983 and 1986, I drilled 30 wells, further and





further from town until we got to the North Tyndal wellfield. At that point we were able to start developing the project for the town.”

His work on the wellfield continued after joining the town fulltime.

“It was a big project and a long project,” he said. “We started construction in 1988 and finished it in 1993. We’ve been using that water supply ever since.”

The North Tyndal wellfield wasn’t the only major project Pitman was involved in over the years. He also played significant roles in the development and construction of the town’s sewage treatment plant that is located on the marsh just outside of town as well as the current Amherst police station, the redevelopment of 5 Ratchford St. into the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre and the redevelopment of the historic building at 98 Victoria St. E. into the current town hall.

“In my time as town engineer, I also installed literally kilometres of water main throughout the county and the town and thousands of metres of sidewalk,” he said. “I also paved every street in town at least once.”

Looking back on those projects, Pitman said the most challenging was the wellfield.

“We built that from the ground up,” he said.

Prior to becoming the town’s engineer in 2008, Pitman spent many years as the town’s operations manager in charge of managing the outside workers who developed and maintain the town’s streets and sidewalks as well as its sewer and water systems.

During his 34-year career, he witnessed many changes, the biggest being the introduction of computers.

“When I joined, there was only two computers in the whole town,” he recalled.

Pointing to the wellfield as an example, he noted it was state-of-the-art back when it was built.





“It was the first to have a computerized SCADA system, which stands for system, control and data acquisitions. It controls the water supply,” Pitman said. “Before that, we had to have a guy go around to turn the wells on or off and check the elevations.

“Now it’s all done by computer, as the water goes down, the computer turns on the pumps to pump in more water as is needed. Before 1990, all that was done by hand. Even on weekends.

“Today, all of our water production and sewage management is controlled by computer.”

Pitman said he plans to spend the next six months relaxing before deciding what his next challenge will be. However, painting and art – two things that have been a passion of his for decades – will play a role.

“What I will miss is the everyday chatting with people and working with them on different projects,” Pitman said. “There are really good folks all through the organization, from the guys that work on the streets and parks to the folks who work here at town hall. They’re all great people.”

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