

Even small communities have a voice

By Sarah Sobanski

At 5 p.m. last Monday, Nov. 21, almost 30 took to Riverside Park to stand in solidarity against the Kinder Morgan (KM) pipeline. In the dark, cold and blowing wind they were united in their fight against climate change.

Bancroft local Deb Jeffery organized the vigil. As many as 48 other protests were held across Canada to speak out against the pipeline in partnership with groups including 350, Leadnow, Greenpeace Canada, the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition. From Peterborough to Edmonton, no matter how small or how large, people took to standing for what they believe in.

For those of us who are just coming up to speed on the KM pipeline: the Trans Mountain Expansion Project was announced in 2012 by Kinder Morgan Canada. It will connect Edmonton and Burnaby, increasing oil productivity from 300,000 barrels per day to 890,000 barrels per day if it is approved.

In order for the pipeline to come to fruition, the National Energy Board (which approved the pipeline in May), and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have to allow it. Trudeau's decision is set to come out on Dec. 19, according to the *Calgary Herald*, after his administration added an additional review process for pipeline's approval. It's to hear and consider Canadians' opposition to the pipeline, and to further investigate its possible impacts on the planet. It's suggested the pipeline would see a capital investment of \$6.8 billion. The paper reported that's a \$73.5 billion increase in revenue for oil producers over 20 years.

Of the groups opposing the pipeline, a few major arguments stand out. According to 350, "if built, the KM pipeline will steamroll indigenous rights and make it impossible for Canada to meet the global climate change commitments in Paris. It would make an oil spill in the Pacific Ocean almost inevitable." According to Leadnow, the suggested inevitable oil spill would "threaten tens of thousands of jobs in the coastal economy." Leadnow is working towards a petition with over 210,000 Canadian signatures to deliver to Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna in partnership with the Canadian Youth Delegation. It suggested the pipeline "pose[s] a direct risk to some of the most fragile and diverse coastal ecosystems in the world [and that it could] unleash global warming pollution at 56 times the rate of the entire City of Vancouver, putting all our communities at a greater risk of climate disasters "just as the world is breaking heat records month after month."

Air temperatures are 20 degrees hotter in the Arctic right now than they were this time last year. It was colder the night of the protest in Bancroft than it was in the Arctic the same night. I'm not a meteorologist, but I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest that's bad "to put it on the simple side of the spectrum.

Without a degree in meteorology, or in the sciences, I can't claim to be an expert on climate change. The only thing I can say for certain is that there is something terribly wrong with the way humans are impacting the Earth. Animals are going extinct, ice caps are melting and never recovering, droughts are killing crops, extreme weather is taking more and more lives every year "the list goes on and on.

Can we really afford to develop further fossil fuel infrastructure? How can we shut down coal plants across the country only to delve further into the world of oil? Isn't that a little counter-productive?

The KM pipeline is the two steps backward we were warned about.

I just hope that when the prime minister makes his final decision, he remembers how strong his constituents are. No one should be surprised if the west sees its own Standing Rock protests.