

RAY BOYER

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Developer denies flood responsibility

By JOE DARY
of our staff

Clairmont Country Estates developer Larry Mugford has refuted statements by County of Grande Prairie officials that his development north of Clairmont caused flooding there this week.

Mr. Mugford said the flooding began on property outside his development.

He said water began running into his mobile home park from the east, where the county had constructed a drainage ditch. Water had also come in along the northern boundary where the county was to have constructed another drainage ditch, but didn't, he said.

"As soon as the county opened the southern ditch, the water on my property drained off into the county," he said.

He said he noticed water was beginning to run Friday afternoon and told a county employee to contact Ray Boyer, county public works superintendent, to open the ditches. He also said the northern ditch should be constructed.

Mr. Mugford said the employee, who was not identified, told him Mr. Boyer would be contacted, but when he checked the site Saturday morning he found nothing had been touched.

By Sunday afternoon, he said his

property was beginning to flood.

Early Monday, he called in four employees and rented equipment to open a railway culvert as well as a culvert along the northern road allowance.

They also opened up about 400 yards of the northern ditch, he said, to get the water flowing.

He said he told county officials he was prepared to assist in the clean-up operations and had rented a large portable pump which cost him \$25 an hour.

Mr. Boyer said earlier three manholes on the property were tagged as the cause of the problem because they were improperly constructed.

Mr. Mugford strongly denied this, saying the manholes were "built to government rules and regulations."

He would not name the contractor who built the manholes or admit there were cracks in the structures, which Mr. Boyer said were there. The county official said a personal inspection showed the manholes had cracks ranging in size from one-quarter inch to three-quarters of an inch.

Detour!

Motorists heading to the Procter and Gamble Cellulose pulp mill tomorrow will find they'll be taking a new route to the mill site, eight miles southeast of the city.

The County of Grande Prairie will close the road south of the golf course to allow construction crews to work on the Bear Creek crossing on the Resources Rd.

As a result, all mill traffic will be diverted on a series of detours.

The traffic will be forced to travel 1/2-mile west of the city, one mile south, 1/2-mile east, three miles south on the Wapiti Rd. to the correction

line, and about two miles east along the correction line to the Resources Rd. From there, the road leads directly to the pulp mill.

Ray Boyer, county public works superintendent, said the road would be closed for about a week to allow construction of the crossing.

Meanwhile L.G. Grimble and Associates Ltd., the consulting engineers on the \$1 million project, says construction is progressing on schedule.

Completion date is slated for late September.

County public works superintendent retires

County council received its third major resignation in just over a month Friday when public works superintendent Ray Boyer announced his retirement plans.

His resignation becomes effective Oct. 31.

Mr. Boyer, 59, has served with the county since 1954 when he started in construction.

In 1959 he became a construction foreman and a year later he was elevated to his current post.

Mr. Boyer has seen numerous changes in the county in his time.

For one, he said, "I've worked under 49 different county councillors, five secretary treasurers and one county manager."

A native of the city, Mr. Boyer started in a time when the county had just two local graders — now there

are 22.

And, he said, the machinery is all modern and crew sizes are much larger.

As well, he added, "there were 22 miles of pit run gravel put on when I started. Now there are 500 miles of crushed gravel."

Mr. Boyer said he and his wife Rita have several things planned including going to this winter's Silver Broom curling championship in Scotland.

He told councillors Friday he would be interested in helping them develop their parks.

Schools superintendent Lawrence Beaudry resigned last week to take a similar post in the St. Albert protestant school system and county manager John McGowan resigned five weeks ago as he is moving to the municipal affairs department in Edmonton next week.

Interest growing in county election

By DAVID OLINGER
Herald-Tribune staff

Nomination day for municipal elections is two months away, but County Division 11 already has two people after the seat to be left vacant by retiring councillor Jim Stewart.

Ray Boyer sat at the county council table for 24 years as the public works superintendent, now he wants to return as a councillor.

"I'll decide the first of August, but I'm quite sure," said Boyer, who would be seeking the Division 11 (Teepee Creek-Bad Heart)."

That seat is currently occupied by Jim Stewart, who has served the division for 21 years. Stewart is adamant he won't be running again.

Norm Hollingworth, also after the seat, is a Teepee Creek area mixed farmer who has been involved in several community activities, including the Teepee Creek Stampede. He is currently the president of the Peace River Stockgrowers Association.

Nomination day is Monday, Sept. 22 and election day is Monday, Oct. 20.

Boyer said while he retired early from the county in December 1984, taking on a county council seat would be a different job.

"You kind of miss being involved after all those years. I like to keep on top of what's happening in the county.

"Several people approached me. I didn't consider it at first. But being retired, I feel I have the time."

Boyer has taken on a job as a land agent, but with the downturn in the oil industry he hasn't had much to do.

"Most of my time has been in construction and municipal work. That's where my expertise is, but I'm also interested in recreation, hospitals and schools."

Boyer, 61, was involved in the planning and design of Pipestone Creek Park.

Hollingworth, 60, said he decided to get involved in county politics because, "I like public work.

"I've been involved in several aspects before. This is another step up the ladder. I've lived here a long time and I feel I know the needs of the community."

Hollingworth said roads are a priority.

On any issue, "I'm not afraid to not go with the flow."

New councillor on familiar ground

By DAVID OLINGER

Herald-Tribune staff

Newly-elected Teepee Creek area county councillor Ray Boyer is back on familiar ground.

Boyer sat around the county council table for 25 years as public works superintendent before retiring in 1984.

Now he'll be taking his constituents' concerns to administration instead of having councillors come to him.

"I don't see a problem with being on the other side," said Boyer after his narrow victory over Norm Hollingworth in yesterday's county election.

"I sat in on many meetings over the years

and I know how the system works."

Boyer felt it was his many years of experience with the county that landed him the post as county councillor.

The 61-year-old native of the Teepee Creek area said he expected a close race between himself and Hollingworth.

"I knew it would be close. We were both born in the same area and we are about the same age."

While the Division 11 race could have been forecast to be close, other divisions provided interesting battles for the poll watchers.

Returning officer Stan Moe said he's never seen county council see such a changeover (five new councillors).

"The people have spoke and that's the way they want it," said Moe. "The voters were looking for change, but it all came at once with five new councillors. (However) the county will keep on running. They were all good candidates."

Moe said he didn't expect to see 53 per cent of the county's 4,222 voters turn out to the polls. "I only had half a dozen calls about the election."

"I thought if we got a 35 per cent turnout we'd be lucky. I'm really happy to see this."

A large voter turnout couldn't have been predicted by the campaign itself, said Moe, because there wasn't much of a campaign.

"But then we normally don't in rural elections."

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Kleskun School bell rings on

Resurrection of one-room building brings back memories for former students and teachers

TODD NOGIER
Herald-Tribune staff

*Now hey, we can't let this go to waste,
All the work that's been done.
So if I ring that bell this September,
Will anybody come?*

It has been a long time since Noreen Ford rang the school bell at East Kleskun School. This September, she can do it again.

Though she is no longer a teacher and her students are all grown up, the school which closed down 41 years ago is open again.

The one-room freshly restored East Kleskun School was unveiled Saturday to dozens of former students, teachers and history buffs.

The spirit of the school, she says, has never died within her nor has it within the hearts of many former students who learned the three Rs there.

But now, all those who didn't live with the school — those curious lookers back — can appreciate a past when the school was a stalwart in the community 29 kilometres east of Grande Prairie.

"I have wonderful memories of the school and the people I met," says the 74-year-old Ford, then known as Miss McConnell.

The old school stands on some pretty hallowed ground.

It is a place where time and people intersect.

It is where dinosaurs lived, breathed and died.

Historian David Leonard notes the area also contains Native burial grounds and stone circles, raising the possibility Beaver Indians once made this their home.

It was also a battleground.

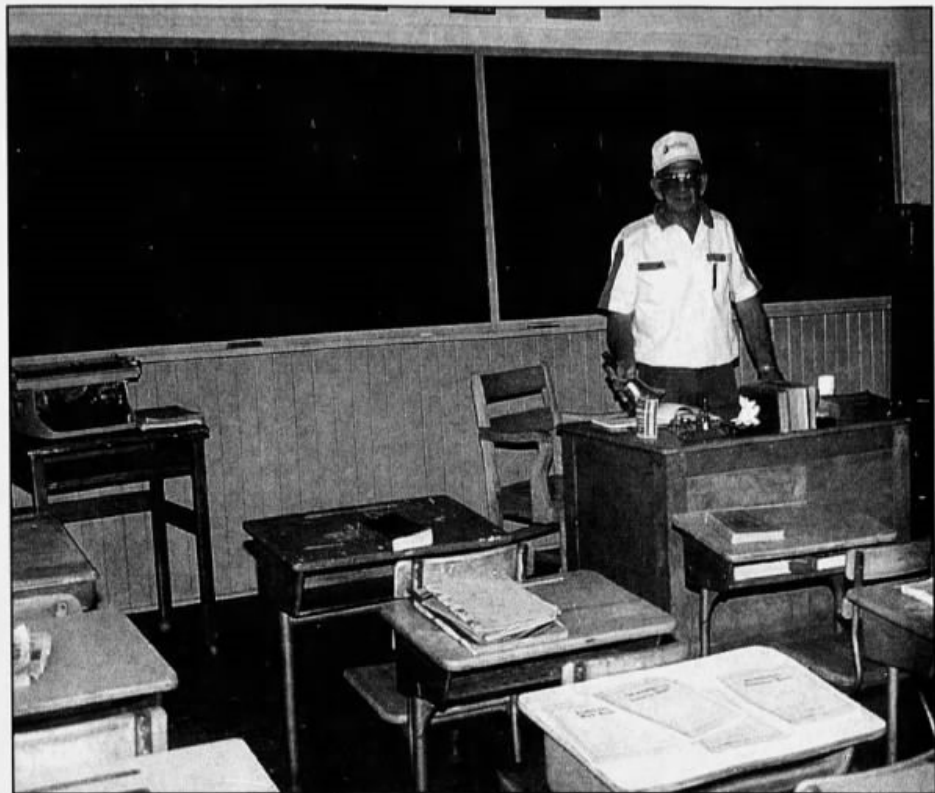
Leonard, who is northern project historian for Alberta Community Development, accounts how the gun-toting Cree Indians pushed the Beavers with their more primitive weaponry west into what is now B.C.

"It is relatively rare that they'd be this far eastward at the turn of the 20th Century," says Leonard who drove from Edmonton to attend the opening ceremonies.

Another piece of history linking us to the past also linked the Peace Country to the south - Edson Trail.

In 1909, surveyors came north to divvy up the land to give it to settlers for free.

In 1911, the Edson Trail was built and soon after, Peace River Country, the last remaining major unsettled area in North America, was opened for homestead.



Staff photo by Todd Nogier

Ray Boyer, who spent nine years at East Kleskun School, was instrumental in a restoration project which came to fruition Saturday with the ringing of the school bell.

"When I first saw the school again after many years, the floor was caved in and the roof had fallen - I knew I just had to do something."

— Ray Boyer

conditions were so rustic, the tiny building hadn't even a door.

"I was wondering if I had made the right career choice," laughs Ford.

But, she says, once a door was installed and she began teaching, she learned to enjoy the two years she spent at the school.

Ray Boyer spent nine years at East Kleskun as a student from 1931 to 1940.

He can still smell the smoke-leather scent of his damp moccasins drying on the wood stove. He can still recall racing his horse on his way to and from school.

And he can still feel the pain of getting "the strap" once as a young boy for throwing a ball through a school window.

Stepping into the classroom now, Boyer looks above the blackboard where a picture of the Queen is hung. He recalls saying the Lord's Prayer and singing God Save the King every morning.

In 1957 the school was closed but it was these enduring memories that compelled Boyer to do what he could to ensure the school lived on.

In 1993, Boyer began a crusade to resurrect the school, rallying former teachers and students to raise money for the project.

He and a band of handy history hobbyists restored the old building which, at its original site three kilometres northeast of its current resting grounds in the Kleskun Hills Park, had become overrun with field mice and pigeons in its 41-year vacancy.

"When I first saw the school again after many years, the floor was caved in and the roof had fallen - I knew I just had to do something," says Boyer who still lives just five kilometres from the school.

It took Boyer and company nearly three years to finish the job.

Their efforts were rewarded Saturday with its opening.

The school bell shall ring on.

1999 promises to be a good year for 'older persons'

Seniors everywhere to be honored by United Nations and gov'ts

SCOTT SEYMOUR
Herald-Tribune staff

Organizers are looking for local input on how to celebrate a year dedicated to seniors.

1999 has been designated the International Year for Older Persons by the United Nations, the federal government and the province.

The UN's General Assembly created IYOP in 1992 to recognize that the world's population is aging and that such a change in demographics holds social, economic and spiritual significance.

Four years later, the Canadian government followed suit. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for seniors established a volunteer body to begin planning for 1999. Premier Ralph Klein launched IYOP activities at a ceremony in Lethbridge last month.

Former County of Grande Prairie councillor and public works superintendent Ray Boyer is heading up the effort to rustle up interest across northwestern Alberta.

Boyer, 73, is a member of the provincial board of directors for IYOP activities. Both he and city alderman Margaret Heath, a member of the provincial senior's advisory council, will be working with local businesses, educators and seniors groups to organize activities and secure local donations to their cause.

"We're trying to get older people to work with younger people and older people to work with older people, too," said Boyer, 73.

"Sometimes construction and other businesses think that once a person gets to 65 or 70 they are done. We want to let them know that there is a lot of information that older people can give the public or business."

Although the province won't be kicking in any money for IYOP, Boyer is co-ordinating his efforts with the Department of Community Development office located

QUICK FACTS

Some facts about senior citizens in Canada:

- In 1995, 3.6 million seniors lived in Canada, comprising 12 per cent of the total population. In 1981, seniors made up 10 per cent of all Canadians, in 1921, five per cent. By 2041, an estimated 23 per cent of the population will be over 65.

- Women make up a large part of the senior population. In 1995, women made up 58 per cent of seniors aged 65 and over and 70 per cent of the population aged 85 and over.

- A large majority of seniors live at home rather than in institutions. In 1996, about 92 per cent of people aged 65 and over lived in a private household.

- Many seniors live alone. In 1996, 29 per cent of people 65 and over lived by themselves, compared with just nine per cent of those aged 15 to 64. Senior women are most likely to live alone. In 1996, 38 per cent of all senior women and 50 per cent of those aged 85 and over, lived on their own.

- In 1991, seniors aged 65 had an average continued life expectancy of 18 years. That's one year better than 1981 and almost five years more than the period from 1921 to 1941.

(Source: Statistics Canada)

ed in the provincial building.

"We do a lot of community work within the seniors sphere and we will certainly be spreading the news that the year is coming and will encourage groups to participate," says Richard Hayward, a community development officer for the northern region.

For more information about setting up IYOP activities, contact Boyer at 567-2446.



Ray Boyer, centre, unfurls the 1999 International Year of Older Persons banner along with Northern Community Development officers Lucy Willard and Richard Hayward.

1999 is the International Year of Older Persons

CLARISE KLASSEN
Herald-Tribune staff

One goal of the United Nations 1999 International Year of Older Persons is to encourage older people to get out and about.

Well it has succeeded already

with one area senior.

Ray Boyer, IYOP co-ordinator for the northwest region, has hit the road travelling to various communities in the area to encourage seniors associations, city and town councils and health units to celebrate the year.

Boyer, 74, travelled to Beaverlodge and Hythe Wednesday to meet with municipal politicians and encourage them to schedule events to mark the year. He has already been to Peace River, Valleyview and High Prairie and must still visit Slave Lake, Fox Creek, Hines Creek and Grande Cache.

"A lot of people are buying pins and flags to celebrate with and hand out," Boyer said, adding he has been pleasantly surprised by the response.

"It's more than I thought. The

health units and museums, they have big plans ahead."

Some events scheduled include a Grande Prairie Museum booth at Evergreen Park during the upcoming ag show. Older people will be demonstrating some of the pioneering skills used to open up the territory, Boyer said.

Kleskun Hills Park will be the site of IYOP related celebrations with games for seniors, oldtime music and the unveiling of some new plaques, one being for Senior of the Year. A cairn will also be unveiled by the local oldtimers association to commemorate the Edson Trail. The event is being hosted by the Kleskun Hills Museum Society.

Sexsmith will format its annual Chautauqua Days festivities around International Year of Older Persons, Boyer was told.

The national theme for IYOP is Canada, a society for all ages. Canada's senior population is among the



Grande Prairie Mayor Gord Graydon signs a proclamation declaring 1999 to be International Year of Older Persons for the city while Ray Boyer looks on.

fastest growing in the world. Today it makes up 12 per cent of the country's total population, but by the year 2041, it will account for an estimated 23 per cent of all Canadians.

Canada's IYOP organizing committee sees this year as an opportunity for Canadians to think about the changes a shifting demographic will make to society and how they can re-

spond to it.

"It's to bring the older and younger people together and to realize the value of both," Boyer said adding it's to let younger people know that older people have valuable knowledge to pass on.

The IYOP kickoff event for Grande Prairie will be a tea at Wild Rose Manor, Feb. 23 at 1:30 p.m.

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Everett McDonald (left), Marion Clarkson, Margaret Ladwig, Keith Ladwig, Bruce McDonald, and Jennie McDonald were on hand for the unveiling of a plaque in honor of relative Douglas Clarkson at Kleskun Hills.

Clarkson honoured

LAURA TESTER

Herald-Tribune staff

Ray Boyer and the rest of the Kleskun Hills Museum Society couldn't ignore that this is the International Year of Older Persons.

So they invited young and old to the Kleskun Hills museum site east of Grande Prairie Saturday to commemorate the efforts of pioneers. Boyer, the museum's president, celebrated with others for the unveiling of two plaques — one honouring all the settlers who came over the Edson Trail and the other in recognition of Senior of the Year for 1999.

Dorothy Ireland from the Grande Prairie & Area Oldtimers Association unveiled the Edson Trail plaque after travelling by horse-drawn cart to the destination— just like the pioneers would have done.

Then the family members of Douglas Clarkson, who died in March at the age of 85, unveiled a plaque in honour of him. He was selected as the Senior of the Year.

"Douglas did give us a generous donation for our society," Boyer said. "He did a tremendous amount of work for this area. He located native burial grounds and we have fenced them in now."

Clarkson was a tireless volunteer who also contributed time and materials to the Grande Prairie Museum. He also helped extensively at Evergreen Park for which a hall was named after him.

"I think it's a great honour," his 96-year-old sister Jennie McDonald said of Saturday's unveiling.

Boyer also said this was the day to celebrate all the pioneers who came over the Edson Trail in 1911.

Visitors were able to take a look around on the grounds to see the tremendous changes over the past year. A school, originally opened in 1919, was moved to the site. Along with that, a Catholic church once situated along Highway 43 now sits on the grounds. The Hubert Manning building on the "Fourteen Mile Farm" east of Grande Prairie was also relocated there.

The structures, with the exception of the Manning building, have been renovated. Boyer did a lot of the work and received help from Jack Fitzpatrick.

"He's got more expertise with carpentry work than I have," says a humble Boyer.

Then there were others who provided much needed equipment for the endeavour to move buildings and level the ground — Lynne and Jerry Oe, Annie Bulford, Albert and Pearl Klimack, Danny Antonio, and Bruce Fenton.

Fran Moore of the DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum presented a book on the Edson Trail to the Kleskun Hills Museum Society.

Bezanson-area's **Boyer** recognized as part of Seniors Week

ELLEN LAWRENCE
Herald-Tribune staff

Ray **Boyer's** calendar doesn't give any indication he's retired.

The 75-year-old Bezanson area resident's schedule is tighter than any Bay Street executive's, and it shows no signs of loosening up. A former County of Grande Prairie councillor and public works superintendent, **Boyer** has since volunteered countless hours of time to various community organizations. His hard work and dedication will earn him one of two Minister's Seniors Service Awards from Community Development Minister Stan Woloshyn in Edmonton Wednesday in honour of Senior's Week June 4-10.

"When you have something that you're happy with, it's very easy to do," said **Boyer**, adding, he wouldn't be happy if he wasn't busy. "Sometimes the days get pretty long and I wonder 'What am I doing this at my age?' but the next day you're ready to go back again."

'Busy' doesn't fully describe **Boyer's** active life. He cur-

rently sits on the County of Grande Prairie Development Appeal Board, is chairman of the Seniors Travel Committee that organizes local bus tours and picnics, and drives seniors to events and medical appointments in Grande Prairie or Valleyview. He spear-headed and helped organize the drive to preserve Kleskun Hills Park—now complete with a museum and several restored heritage sites and buildings.

As county councillor, **Boyer** assisted in the location and set up of six individual seniors housing units in Bezanson, and in 1988, promoted and helped build the Bezanson Seniors' Centre.

Last year **Boyer** organized and volunteered the Bezanson Golden Years Club members to work at the Children's Festival in Muskoseepi Park. His extensive volunteering earned him the job as Northwestern Alberta co-ordinator for the International Year of Older Persons in 1998-99. He travelled across the region promoting senior participation and educating the public that seniors have much to offer to their communities.

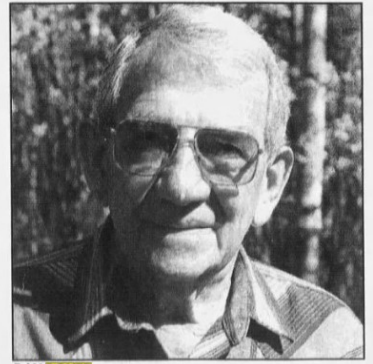
As if that isn't enough, at home, Ray and his wife Rita help look after her 80-year-old mother.

Through it all, **Boyer** has remained humble, pointing out that there are many people who have worked just as hard as he has, maybe even harder.

"There's so many people who could be getting this same award because so many people do a lot of volunteering too, but I was just lucky I guess," he said simply, adding regardless of age, there's something to be learned through volunteering and leading an active life. "I think it's such a great feeling when you know that you've accomplished something like that. I think you want to prove it, that it can be done, and you just put your heart into it."

He thinks if seniors are physically able to get involved in the community, they should, because it not only helps them enjoy life, but it also inspires the younger generations.

"I think that the younger children find that older people have a lot to give if they just sit down and talk with them," he noted, explaining how he is both proud and honoured to be representing his age group and his community. "So I think you should get them (older and younger people) mixed as often as possible, it's a real big help to both young and old."



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County secures caretaker for Kleskun Hills Park

NEAL TALBOT
Herald-Tribune staff

After two months of searching for a caretaker for Kleskun Hills Park, Grande Prairie county council announced Monday that they have found the right person – and the price is right.

Alvina Benn was appointed the new caretaker for Kleskun Hills Park after she agreed to take the job without accepting a wage, as long as the county provided her with housing.

The county will now have to provide a three-bedroom mobile home worth between \$65,000 to \$70,000, as well as pay for the unit's power, gas and water.

Benn's offer was far cheaper than the other three bids the county had received of \$1,992, \$2,700 and \$22,000 per year – all of which also demanded housing be provided.

County council was happy to have their search end and at the same time have very little impact on local taxpayers.

"We were really lucky to find someone like Mrs. Benn

for this job," said Grande Prairie county councillor Everett McDonald.

"Not only is she doing the job for next-to-nothing, but I'm sure she'll do a great job for us."

Kleskun Hill Museum Society president Ray Boyer said he is thrilled that council was finally able to find a full-time caretaker for the park.

"I'm sure everyone will be very pleased to hear that a caretaker has been hired on to look after the park," said Boyer.

"We just didn't feel that the park would be safe from vandals without someone being there all the time."

PETITION

Boyer had earlier sent in a petition to county council, signed by 83 people who use the area, demanding a year-round caretaker for the area, after the longtime caretaker left in August.

Boyer had stated the Kleskun Hill Museum Society did not want everything it has done to be destroyed by vandalism and theft.

He pointed out that previous to an attendant living at

the park there was continuous destruction.

Boyer said that tables were burnt, toilets smashed, snowmobiles were going all over the hills and fences were cut and winched down before the park had a full-time caretaker and the group didn't want to deal with those sort of things again.

With the appointment of Benn, Boyer says he will not have to worry so much about the area's safety.

"Now I won't be losing sleep, worrying about if anything bad will happen to the area," said Boyer.

"I had feared that vandalism would have been terrible this winter had council not been able to find someone."

County council and Benn are set to sign a three-year contract and McDonald is hoping to have something set up for the start of next month.

"Right now we are hoping to have have housing in place and Benn moved in there by Nov. 1," said McDonald.

"Hopefully this will be the start of a great partnership."