

Eircode News

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Naughton Admitted Eircode Postcode not used for Post

By OIREACHTAS REPORTER

Minister for State Hildegard Naughton TD, who currently holds responsibility in the Department of Communications for Eircode & Postal Policy, previously admitted that An Post does not use Eircode for delivering mail and that an EC investigation identified issues with the Eircode procurement process conducted by Officials of her Department. Minister Naughton, whilst Chair of the Oireachtas Communications Committee, established that an Official of the Department of Communications had misled her in evidence when he suggested that the EC had found no issues with the Eircode procurement. Former Minister for Communications, Alex White, had also made the same claim on the record of the Oireachtas even though he was previously in receipt of a letter from the EC Competition Directorate, sent through the Irish Ambassador to Brussels, identifying the issues found in its investigation and identifying what needed to be done to redress the matter. Minister Naughton also received evidence from An Post directly that they were not using Eircode for mail even though an An Post senior Official had stated on the record of a previous investigation by the Communications Committee that they would be using Eircode in every aspect of their mail business, including auto and manual sorting of mail, by May 2015. Minister Naughton had established that in October 2013, months before the Eircode contract was awarded to Capita PLC and before the end of a procurement process which very un-

usually had lasted almost 3 years, a Cabinet decision had changed the intended purpose for which Eircode was being procured. This meant that the protracted procurement process had been conducted for the wrong intended uses and under EC rules should have been recommenced with the new intended uses as specified in the Cabinet meeting. However, the details of the Cabinet meeting led by Minister Naughton's former party leader & Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, have never been released and the fact that the decision took place at all was held secret until Minister Naughton established it in evidence to her Committee almost 4 years after it happened. The problem now for Minister Naughton as part of her responsibility for Eircode and Postal Policy, is to rectify the fact that the Postal Act still requires the National Postcode to be primarily used for Postal Services which currently is not the case and former Minister Brendan Howlin had given specific permission for the expenditure of Public Money on Eircode on the condition that it fulfilled the specific requirements of the Postal Act which clearly has not been achieved. To date, in excess of 50 million of Public money has been spent on Eircode. Minister Naughton now has to deal with the fact that not only is it the case that Officials in her Department with responsibility for Eircode misled her, the Oireachtas and the Public but also appear to have mis-spent public money on a Postcode for Post which is not being used for that purpose. Minister Naughton, who was also recently embarrassed by a backlash from biking groups as a result of an initiative by her Officials to mark bikes with an Eircode even though that could put personal safety at risk, will have a lot of issues to resolve in relation to Eircode in the next Dáil session. She will have to deal with the rising pressure to reveal the details of the still secret Cabinet meeting which changed the purpose of the National Postcode

in October 2013 and with a new related EC investigation looming. To date Minister Hildegard Naughton has remained tight lipped on these serious issues which could seriously affect her political career if not handled correctly.



Hildegard Naughton

Minister of State with responsibility
for Postal Policy and Eircodes

Reuters

International Moose Count Underway

By BOB O'BOBSTON

The UN-sponsored International Moose Census got off to a flying start today with hopes for an increase in the worldwide moose population compared to last year's disappointing figures. Among the traditional early reporters were Egypt, returning figures of six moose, a twenty percent increase on 2011's figures of five, and Uruguay whose moose population remains stable at eleven.

According to Robbie McRobson, head of the UN Moose Preservation Council, worldwide moose numbers are expected to grow markedly on last year due to the traditional moose strongholds of Canada and the United States, with the larger developing moose ecologies also poised to make gains. The largest percentage increase in moose will likely come from China", says McRobson,

The Chinese government has invested heavily in moose infrastructure over the past decade, and their commitment to macrofauna is beginning to pay dividends". Since 2004 China has expanded moose pasture from 1.5% of arable land to nearly 3.648% and moose numbers are expected to rise to 60,000 making China a net moose exporter for the first time. This is good news for neighbouring Mongolia, a barren moose-wasteland whose inhabitants nonetheless have an insatiable desire for the creatures. The increase in Beijing-Ulanbataar trade is anticipated to relieve pressure on the relatively strained Russian suppliers, but increase Mongolia's imbalance of trade with its larger neighbour.

Historically the only competitor to China in the far eastern moose markets has been Singapore but the tiny island nation is set to report a net loss, expecting a decrease of more than five percent on last year's 50,000 moose counted. The head of Singapore's Agency for Agriculture, Jing-Feng Lau, explained to an incredulous Singaporean parliament yesterday that bad weather had contributed to this season's poor showing, most notably when a cargo of 150 moose were swept out into the Indian ocean in a monsoon.

Yet again the global demand for moose will be met largely by the US and Canada. The recession-hit States is taking comfort in its moose growth figures with gross production expected to break 700,000 and net exports to grow by 2%. The worldwide dominance of Canada shows no signs of abating though with this year's moose population expected to match last year's record figures of one hundred million billion.

Europe's rise as an international moose power will slow slightly this year as a response to the European Union's move towards standardising the European moose. Stringent quality controls are holding back the development of the eastern european populations compared to last year when they contributed significantly to europe's strong growth figures. Norway, which is not an EU member but has observer status, strengthened in numbers relative to the Euro area with numbers of Norwegian moose,

known locally as elk" expected to rise for the tenth consecutive year, particularly thanks to a strong showing in the last quarter.

As moose season reaches its close, researchers world wide are turning to science in an attempt to boost next year's figures. NASA stunned the scientific community today with the announcement of their discovery that the moon is significantly smaller than previously believed. This conclusion, which is the conclusion of a ten-year collaborative project, will have profound implications for the moose community as the gravitational field is now known to be of the right strength to support moose in orbit.

According to John Johnson, head of the NASA Moon Sizing Experiment the first delivery of moose into low moon orbit could be achieved as early as the third quarter of next year. The technology to nurture moose in space is available now", he said, "all that is needed is political will".

Granny wins World Wrestling Championship

By ROY MCROYSTON

Records were smashed in Nicaragua's World Wrestling Championship last night as 78-year-old Maud Johnson, grandmother of five, became the first woman for fifty-six years, and the oldest competitor ever, to claim the gold medal. She walked away with her million dollar share of the prize money, runner up Tommy Thompson from Nigeria taking half a million, and third place New Zealander John Smith receiving a warm handshake from the umpire.

Having started the tournament a rank outsider she began to impress in her second match when she took US number three Ron Ronson by surprise and subdued him in twenty seconds with her unique move that has been dubbed "Maud's Death Grip". The injection of a new wrestling style into the tournament was welcomed by spectators and Johnson's pre- and post-match breakdances have proved

entertaining to fans. However, she was still not expected to win in round three last Wednesday, facing off against title-holder Paulo "Spine-Snapper" Lutti, of Vatican City. Underdog Johnson was soon showing her worth with stamina and agility easily matching last year's winner. Lutti's experience paid off initially as he took the first two rounds, but as Johnson became more confident her superior strength came to the fore and she clawed back two rounds to take the contest into a decider. By this time Lutti's body language indicated that he already felt overawed by the pretender to his crown, and the newcomer took advantage of this to engage a mutual headlock which she held for three hours until the Vatican man retired from exhaustion. The next seven matches were barely a contest as the news of Johnson's supremacy overawed all her opponents who became too intimidated to fight properly.

Nigerian Tommy Thompson is also a relative newcomer to the wrestling scene, but with his 210lb frame he was expected to fare well against Johnson who weighs in at only 90lb. However Johnson's lithe and slender, some would say scrawny, figure belies her agility and strength which she demonstrated by holding Thompson above her head several times during the bout and throwing him into the crowd once. With the scores tied at 2-2 time ran out and the contest went to a panel of judges to be assessed. They awarded Thompson a C grade whilst Johnson received an A, becoming the first grandmother to ever win the title.

The new champion explained her success as the result of a strict training regimen instituted by her coach and grandson five-year-old Sammy Johnson. "I've been drinking ten raw eggs for breakfast every morning, sprinting fifty miles a day and carrying my daughter's car to the end of the road and back whenever I felt my arthritis was OK" she said. Sammy added "I always knew she could do it. She's my grandma.". The youngster is also her manager and has reportedly arranged sponsorship deals which will dwarf her one million dollar prize fund. Her new contract with

headband designer Nike alone is set to earn her fourteen billion dollars over the next year. She will also be promoting Tupperware, Halliburton, the Republic of Macedonia, and Gala Bingo. Her continued participation in the sport is not assured as she wants to spend more time on her bungee-jumping business, and knitting. Everyone here at the World Championships, however, hopes for her return.