

Background Notes from the Mayor's Desk – August 2017

It is the middle of summer and hopefully you are getting a chance to enjoy the hottest summer on record.

We have a lot of people who come visit us each year to take advantage of all the amenities we enjoy every day. Did you know that the Town of Sundre has a Tourism campaign called #ExploreSundre, with a website at ExploreSundre.ca? It has an annual survey embedded into it that is designed to let us know where people who are interested in our community come from, what they are interested in and where they see ads that we use to promote tourism in the area.

By conducting market research like this, it gives us information to help target our advertising to different groups of people, and it also helps us understand where people search for information on local places they would like to visit - and spend their vacation dollars. That survey saw 190 completions last year, and this year, there are over 1900 completions so far (that's a 1000% year over year increase). We are seeing continual growth year after year in tourism, along with general interest in our area. That is just good news for business people in the community. We need that to translate into new business startups, housing and business construction, and people moving into the community.

One of the jobs of Town Council and Administration is to promote the community. We need growth in new businesses starting up and we need more people moving to town so we can keep taxes down. Communities along the QE2 Highway corridor saw as much as double digit growth last year. Carstairs saw over 17% growth and they had a slight tax rollback for many ratepayers. Many communities saw a 0% increase in taxes in 2017 (i.e. Didsbury, Bowden), partly because they saw significant growth in business startups, residential home construction, and people moving to their communities. We had a 2.9% increase in taxes this year, and only a modest 1% population growth. Tax rate increases and community growth are connected.

Towns, like businesses, can flourish with growth. We promote tourism to get interest, and hopefully revenue from tourists. That provides opportunity for our businesses to potentially attract new customers, helping them grow. The secondary benefit we get is "word of mouth" advertising from those tourists that generates interest from developers and business people who want to invest here.

In the upcoming term of Council, there will be decisions made about what we want to grow to be as a community. Have I mentioned there is an election coming this fall :) Please consider letting your name stand for a Council position and be part of the dream helping to build our community into the future.

Thank you to all of you who are so hospitable to visitors in Sundre. You have given us a great reputation as being friendly and welcoming. Thanks also to all business owners, and your employees, for your continuing commitment to hospitality and "country charm." Keep up the good work. We all need to do our part to positively promote Sundre and District. You are definitively doing your job :)

As always, please give me a call (403-559-7352) if you want to talk further about the topics above, or any other.

Terry Leslie, Mayor
Town of Sundre