

Background Notes from the Mayor's Desk – January 2017

Happy New Year to everyone and welcome to 2017. One of the things we don't do very often is take the time to remember what we have accomplished. Regularly, on Council, we hear the question "Where do my taxes go and what do I support with those taxes?"

In 2016, some of the accomplishments in our community were:

- The opening of the new Mountain View Seniors Housing facility that will mean more options for seniors to stay in our community when there are personal health changes;
- "Crisis averted", when AHS announced the closure of 15 long term care beds at the Sundre Hospital. In the true Sundre and District fashion, the community came together and proposed a solution to this announcement that kept some long-term care beds at our hospital, upgraded the lab, created some "restorative care beds", protected emergency care, and created better hospital services in the community for the future;
- Residential blue box curbside recycling started in July - at no extra cost to the taxpayer because of the savings in reduced landfill dumping volumes;
- The arena received new energy saving LED lights, new heaters, a compressor and painting throughout;
- The Community Services Office was relocated to the heart of the community in the Community Centre to better serve users and watch over building assets, and was completed under budget by about \$5,000;
- Two playgrounds were upgraded, on time and under budget by about \$12,000, thanks to the volunteer efforts of ACL Manufacturing, Black Gold Rush Industries, Robert and Heather Dales, and Town of Sundre staff;
- Our Gas Department completed a Rodeo Grounds gas loop for better service to the area at \$32,000 under budget,
- Town staff worked throughout the year with Alberta Transportation to address the pedestrian safety and traffic concerns on Highway 27 through Sundre. The pilot project is scheduled to start in 2017;
- A 35 unit housing development was approved, 10 new businesses were approved, 7 home occupations were approved, and planning for the Centre Street redevelopment project was done (scheduled to start in 2017);
- Way-finding signage was installed throughout the town and, due to the hard work of staff, came in about 50% under budget;
- The "Explore Sundre" tourism advertising campaign was a finalist for a prestigious provincial award, thanks in part to a Travel Alberta grant worth tens of thousands of dollars - which led, in part, to the highest number of visitors ever to the Visitor Information Centre in 2016;
- There are many more examples of accomplishments. Your tax dollars have grown our community.

What can you expect in 2017?

Some of what we expect to accomplish in 2017 include the following:

- Centre Street north redevelopment from 6A Ave NE to 12 Ave NE, complete with new pedestrian pathways, the replacement of leaking water and wastewater underground pipes, and a new landscaped boulevard, at a projected cost of \$2.2 million;
- Highway 27 Pilot Project with mini roundabouts, to see if safety issues can be addressed. Alberta Transportation will study the changes for a year, and check with the community again to see if it makes sense to make the changes permanent - or not;
- There will be considerable planning to prepare for an upgraded regional wastewater (sewer) treatment plant, as we are currently nearing capacity;
- We are hoping to see Fortis convert all our street lights to LEDs in order to reduce power costs;
- There will be some trail modifications around the new Mountain View Seniors Housing building to provide better community access for residents. Some paving and drainage improvements are in the planning stages;
- There is no cost of living wage increase for staff and Council in 2017;
- There will be a new Municipal Government Act in Alberta that will help lead to many more collaborative regional discussions with Mountain View County and other municipalities;
- There will be an election in October.

As always, please call me at 403-559-7352 if you want to talk about any of the above, or anything else relating to our community.

Terry Leslie, Mayor
Town of Sundre