

## **March Mountain View County Councillor Newsletter**

March has been blustering about for a few days as I write this column. For those of you who have cows calving, good luck and get some sleep in this changeable weather.

Change is also on its way for Division 2. In the southwest corner, we are developing a new Area Structure Plan, largely because the old one does not fit with the new Municipal Development Plan. By the time you have read this, the first consultation with the public will be over (March 7). The purpose of this consultation is for the community to put together a vision for the area: what parts will be guided by the basic rules of the Municipal Development Plan, what parts will be designated as possible medium density growth areas, what special areas need to be conserved or reclaimed, and where will commercial and recreational development be directed?

If you missed the March 7 consultation, you can still respond in writing to the county to get in on the first steps. As well, there will be further public consultation once the first draft is put together, and when the final draft is presented to council for acceptance.

I will be holding my Councillor Open House at the Bethel Missionary Church on Highway 580 on March 16 at 7:00 p.m. Councillor Gwen Day and I will be talking about the county's strategic plan and steps we are taking to meet the vision. Councillor Open Houses are good opportunities to meet your councillors and the administrative staff who work with us. Information is available from all county departments. This is the time to talk to the human beings who do all the jobs that make your county run, and to ask them questions. We have a series of open houses every spring and fall.

Currently there has been a great emphasis on "shovel ready projects". In our county we have many projects which are engineered and ready to go. Some of the major road projects have been postponed to other years because we have had to address our crumbling chipsealed roads first. We have included some of these projects on the shovel ready list to go to the federal government in the hope that we can get them done while the labour force is available. Provincial infrastructure money is available to match the grants from the federal government, should we get them.

We have accepted the Environmentally Significant Areas report as a county document which will be used as a reference in making our planning decisions. Policy 6009 has been developed to provide a strategy for protecting these areas when development is happening. It is important to remember that unless a landowner is choosing to develop or subdivide his property in some way, the county cannot impose restrictions on that property beyond the ones that are imposed on everyone else in the province. However, as a condition of development, we can ask for protection for sensitive areas, including all the areas in the quarter section (and the new parcel) being developed or subdivided. Generally the conditions asked for will most likely be an environmental covenant placed on the protected areas. This means the owner will be able to use this portion of his or her property so long as he or she maintains it in its natural state.

Further, conditions and restrictions may be imposed on any potential resource extraction in designated environmentally significant areas. In all cases, any supportive information from residents and neighbours of the affected area should be sent to the planning department so that it can be attached to any applications which will appear before Council or the Municipal Planning Commission. We encourage potential developers to consult their neighbours prior to submitting an application.

With the support of the province of Alberta, Mountain View County Council is working on a full permitting system for development in the county. Under this system, people building or renovating their properties will be able to apply for most of the appropriate building, plumbing, and electrical permits in one stop at the County office. The contracting inspection company will also be available at the county once a week to answer questions and guide you. We hope that this new system will not only help us to maintain high standards in the county, but it will speed up the process for potential builders.

On a happy note, Cremona Library has officially launched its new history book, *The Chinook Wind Still Blows*. It is a hugely informative 400 page tome put together by the entire Cremona and area community under the coordination of the library board, with a gorgeously illustrated cover by Michelle Reid. Donna Kelly, chairman of the board, and her history book committee are to be congratulated on an excellent job. The book is available at the library during library hours and at Cremona Village Office during office hours.

Take care of yourselves in this changing season. Please write me at [LYakimchuk@shaw.ca](mailto:LYakimchuk@shaw.ca) or Box 190 Cremona AB T0M 0R0, or phone me at 403-660-7959 or at my home: (403)337-2368.

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