

MountainViews

Issue 5 – Sept/Oct 2011



Mountain View
COUNTY

Message from the Deputy Reeve	2
Minding Your Business	3
Winter Driving in MVC	4 & 5
Agriculture in Action.....	6
Roadside Brushing	7
Winter Road Maintenance	8



Deputy Reeve Bruce Beattie

Message From The Deputy Reeve

By the time you read this issue of Mountain Views, the fall harvest should be in full swing. Council has been in the harvesting business as well, collecting and digesting the responses to the surveys regarding land use in the County.

The mail out generated tremendous interest, and while perhaps not perfect, certainly the over 1,600 questionnaires that were returned have provided an excellent source of ideas as we work toward the revision of the Municipal Development Plan for the County. In addition to those responses, the results from the telephone survey have also been tabulated and discussed, adding more spice to the stew.

Later this fall, our bi-annual round of Councillor open houses will provide another opportunity for ratepayers to express their thoughts on the draft changes that will be developed over the next few months. Our goal is to have a final document completed by March of 2012, a plan that will stand the test of time, and perhaps more than one election.

Legislation concerning land use, at any level, will always be contentious, as it invariably impacts every land owner. Reaction to provincial initiatives toward an overarching land use document has been less than positive.

However, as populations rise the need for a more regulated system becomes necessary, as more intense activities on the landscape affect other residents as well as the environment. Most developments have a permanent impact, and that long-term impact makes it all the more important that the decisions we make today will be in the best interests of future generations.

The term Sustainable Development was coined some years ago, being defined as policies that “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The policies must encompass potential environmental, economic and social impacts.

As we put the final touches on the Municipal Development Plan, we must keep in mind those principles that will ensure that our County retains its rural nature, respects the rights of our citizens, and at the same time providing opportunity for “Sustainable Development.”

Bruce Beattie, Deputy Reeve
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MINDING YOUR BUSINESS

By Doug Erdman, Economic Development Officer

This month commences the detailed examination of the business plan starting with the marketing function.

In this area, the business plan identifies the projected revenues the enterprise is expected to produce as well as the associated marketing costs. The projections should generally be made for the same number of years into the future as the term of the machinery and equipment loan that you expect to negotiate. For example, if your enterprise involves the purchase of a gravel truck and you are projecting the need for a three year term loan, the business plan should feature a three-year revenue and cost projection.

As you may expect, there is a recognized system for projecting revenues and costs in the marketing area. This comprises a number of steps:

1. DETERMINE THE SIZE OF THE GLOBAL MARKET.

This phase examines the size of the global market in terms of sales dollars as well as the quantity of product or services produced. It should be noted that “global” in this context does not necessarily refer to the total world market, but rather the market that you are physically and financially able to serve. Using the gravel truck example, your global market may be those customers operating within a 200 kilometer radius of your home base.

2. DIVIDE THE GLOBAL MARKET INTO LOGICAL MARKET SEGMENTS.

The global market can be segmented into specific areas that should be examined in more detail. For analytical purposes you may wish to segment the market for gravel truck services into: municipalities; road building contractors; trucking contractors that hire additional gravel trucks on a sub-contracting basis

3. PERFORM DETAILED MARKET RESEARCH INTO THE MARKET SEGMENTS.

In this phase, the size of the potential market segments in sales dollars should be carefully researched as well as their potential for growth. A customer needs profile should also be developed. An analysis of the number of competitors as well as their strengths and weaknesses should be performed.

At the end of this stage, you will have a “short list” of the market segments that has potential to become target markets for your enterprise.

4. DEVELOP THE “MARKETING MIX” FOR THE POTENTIAL TARGET MARKETS.

The marketing mix comprises four components:

PRICE: Decide what you are going to charge for your product or service as well as what the payment terms are going to be. Keep in mind that the price may have to be revised once you identify all costs as you move through the business planning process.

PRODUCT: Based on the customer needs analysis, the characteristics of the product or service that the potential enterprise will produce can be identified.

PROMOTION: Research in this area will enable you to identify the combination of advertising and personal selling that will enable you to “move” the product or service.

PLACE: Market research in this area will enable you to decide where to best locate your business.

5. MAKE THE FINAL CHOICE OF MARKET SEGMENTS THAT WILL BECOME TARGET MARKETS AND PROJECT POTENTIAL REVENUE.

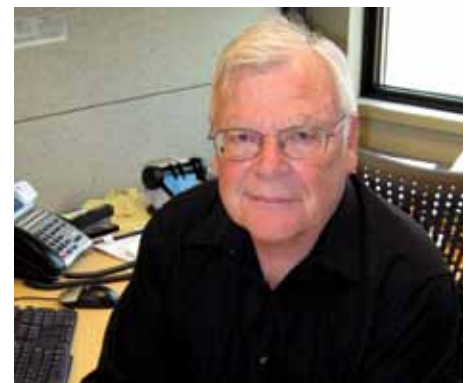
By this stage, the market research you have performed will enable you to make a definite choice as to the markets you wish to target. You will also be able to make a firm estimate of the sales you expect to make in each of the targets. The sales should be broken into monthly sales objectives for the planning horizon that I referred to earlier.

6. ESTIMATE THE MARKETING COSTS

Attaining the monthly sales projections will have a cost in advertising, sales salaries, transportation and the like. These costs should be identified as fixed and variable costs and incorporated into a monthly marketing expense budget.

As you can see from the above, developing the marketing function projections can be an intricate process. If specialized research has to be undertaken, there can be a savings by having a market research professional perform some of the work for you. In some cases, government departments will subsidize this research.

Next issue: *The operations function of the business plan will be examined.*



Doug Erdman,
Mountain View County,
Economic Development Officer

Comments or suggestions?

Contact me at 403-335-3311 ext. 161, by email at doug.erdman@mountainviewcounty.com, or drop by for a visit at the County office.



Winter Safety on County Roads

It's the middle of winter and one of those famous winter storms has rolled in just in time for your commute home. You are trying your best to keep your car on the road when suddenly you hit an unexpected snow drift and your car becomes stuck. Cursing under your breath, you realize you left your winter boots and the shovel at home in the garage. Before this happens to you, take the time to prepare a winter survival kit for you and your vehicle. Having the essential supplies listed below can provide some comfort and safety not only for you but any passengers you have with you too.

WINTER SURVIVAL KIT

- ICE SCRAPER/SNOWBRUSH
- SHOVEL
- SAND, KITTY LITTER OR OTHER TRACTION AID
- TOW ROPE OR CHAIN
- BOOSTER CABLES
- ROAD FLARES OR WARNING LIGHTS/SIGNALS
- GAS LINE ANTIFREEZE
- FLASHLIGHT AND EXTRA BATTERIES
- FIRST AID KIT
- FIRE EXTINGUISHER
- SMALL TOOL KIT
- EXTRA WARM CLOTHING AND WINTER BOOTS
- BLANKET
- NON-PERISHABLE ENERGY FOODS SUCH AS ENERGY BARS, CHOCOLATE OR GRANOLA BARS
- CANDLE AND A SMALL TIN CAN WITH A SET OF MATCHES (THIS CAN PROVIDE HEAT IN THE EVENT YOU RUN OUT OF GAS OR YOUR CAR STALLS)
- IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS SUCH AS TOW TRUCKS IN YOUR AREA, FRIENDS, FAMILY OR NEIGHBOURS THAT COULD HELP YOU OUT. REMEMBER IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, DIALLING 911 WILL CONNECT YOU WITH LOCAL EMERGENCY SERVICES.



Stuck without a plan?

If you do become stuck on a County road this winter, call a tow truck as soon as possible to have your vehicle towed out of the way. Leaving your vehicle on the roadway is unsafe and illegal. Under the General Traffic Bylaw and the Traffic Safety Act, it is illegal to leave your vehicle abandoned on any roadway in Mountain View County without making arrangements to have it towed to your home or a garage. Leaving your vehicle in the middle of the road in a snow bank makes it a hazard to other motorists using the roadway as well as County snowplows. If you leave your vehicle abandoned without making arrangements to have it removed, you could be subject to having it towed to the nearest tow truck facility by Mountain View County or the RCMP. You will then be responsible for the towing and impound fees before you are able to have your vehicle back.

This is also a good time to make sure your vehicle registration is up to date. Ensure that your license and registration have your correct address and phone number on them in the event we come across your vehicle and need to contact you. If you have a wrong phone number on your registration, even though you made arrangements to have your vehicle towed off the roadway, if we cannot contact you to find out that information, we will have the vehicle towed to the nearest tow truck facility.

Here are some other winter driving tips to help you make it through the winter season:

Stay alert, slow down, and stay in control — these are the three key elements for safe winter driving. Remember to drive according to the highway and weather conditions. Highway conditions can change suddenly; remember to adjust your speed to the conditions. The speed limit is a limit, not a suggestion.

Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you to avoid a collision. Remember the 2 second rule which means that you pick a marker on the road ahead. The marker can be something simple like a road sign or telephone pole. When the rear of the vehicle ahead of you passes the marker you picked, count “one thousand and one, one thousand and two”. When the front of your vehicle reaches the marker, stop counting. If you reach the marker before you count “one thousand and two,” you are following too closely.

If you are travelling a long distance, let someone know of your destination, the route you intend to follow and expected time of arrival. If you don't arrive at a location by a certain time, this provides emergency services/rescue personnel a route in which to start searching for you. It also allows you to have a greater chance of being found and receiving help quickly if you do become stuck or your vehicle breaks down along the way.

Check weather and travel conditions before heading out. Don't take chances if the weather is bad. If possible, wait until conditions improve before heading out on the highway.

Make sure your vehicle is mechanically ready for the rigours of winter. Keep your fuel tank at least half full in the event it takes longer than normal to get where you are going or the highway is closed. Make sure you check your battery, belts, hoses, radiator, oil, lights, brakes, tires, exhaust system, heater/defroster, wipers, and ignition system before the winter storm hits to make sure your vehicle will not leave you stranded when you need it the most.

Make sure you have sufficient windshield washer fluid in the reservoir that is rated a minimum of -40°C temperature range and keep an extra jug in the vehicle in case you run out during one of our famous winter Chinooks.

If you take the time to prepare for winter now, you may save yourself a lot of frustration and possible injury this winter season.

Sustainability: Environmental Farm Plans

Mountain View County Agricultural Staff can assist County landowners in the completion of an Environmental Farm Plan.



Benefits of completing an Environmental Farm Plan:

- Improving farm health & safety
- Building acceptance of the operation among neighbours and the public
- Increasing personal satisfaction and knowledge
- Adding value to the farm property
- Agricultural sustainability
- Reduce farm inputs like herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers & fuel
- Demonstrate to the public, governments, regulators, lenders and/or investors that you are managing your environmental risks
- Increase your understanding of your legal requirements related to environmental issues
- Identify what you are doing well and pinpoint where improvements could be made

Assistance is also available for the completion of Growing Forward Stewardship Program Work Plans and Applications and Long Term Water Management Plans for the Water Management Program. If you are interested in any of the above programs contact Amber Hines at 403-335-3311 ext 163 or amber.hines@mountainviewcounty.com

Riparian Funding Available

Mountain View County has funding available for riparian area projects within the County. The types of projects eligible for funding include riparian fencing, off-site watering systems and creek crossings.

The County has riparian funding up to a maximum of \$5,000 on approved voluntary projects and \$1,000 for approved mandatory projects. Mandatory projects and improvements are ones set as a condition of subdivision on both Environmental Reserve Easements and Restricted Covenants. Only the cost of materials is eligible for funding.

According to Amber Hines, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist for Mountain View County, proper stewardship of riparian areas is

important in improving stream health and the quality and variety of nearby vegetation. By extension that can help improve the health of the livestock that graze in these areas.

“Plants in riparian areas improve water quality by trapping sediment, reducing erosion and storing nutrients and contaminants,” Hines explains. “Protecting a riparian area increases biodiversity of plants and animals, and reduces the introduction of disturbance and invasive plant species. Moreover, livestock will increase their weight gain with access to clean water.”

Funding is provided in partnership with the Alberta Conservation Association. The County's Sustainable Agriculture Specialist

will visit each applicant's property to conduct a pre-project environmental health assessment and take pictures of the project area. All projects will be rated based on the significance of environmental impact and all the project applications will be reviewed by the Agricultural Service Board.

Applications are being accepted until Friday, October 7, 2011 on voluntary projects while applications for mandatory projects are accepted year-round.

For more information on Riparian projects see our website, mountainviewcounty.com/riparianfunding or contact our office at 403-335-3311 or toll free at 1-877-264-9754.

LIVESTOCK BEHAVIOR AND HANDLING

Temple Grandin

- January 18, 2012 – 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Olds College

Mountain View County & Foothills Forage & Grazing Association are presenting Dr. Temple Grandin, Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University, she will be coming to Olds College on January 18th, 2012.

Dr. Grandin is known for designing low stress cattle handling systems and studying livestock behaviour. The session with Dr. Grandin at Olds College will be held in the Alumni Center from 10am – 4pm, she will be covering livestock behaviour and the design of livestock handling systems. There will also be an hour long presentation from Brenda Schoepp with BEEFLINK on current livestock markets including an outlook on future markets.

For more information on the workshop contact Amber Hines with Mountain View County at 403-335-3311 ext 163 or amber.hines@mountainviewcounty.com or contact Laura Gibney with Foothills Forage & Grazing association at 403-652-4900 or laura@foothillforage.com

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Merle Good

- November 22
- MVC Council Chambers
- 6 p.m. start, supper provided

Enjoy an evening with Merle Good; Provincial Tax Specialist as he discusses the twists and turns in family farm business succession. Business Succession is not Estate Planning. Figuring out the difference is vital to the success of your family farm.

“Succeeding in Succession...The impossible dream?”

It is my thesis that if we separate the “business of farming” from real-estate ownership, a logical stepping stone is created. It is interesting that as soon as a child is born the most important lesson taught is that land ownership is sacred. Then 30 years later parents are puzzled why not only the farm child but all their children want to own land... and even worse theirs!

This Session will not focus on describing the usual family farm trials and tribulations that many farm families face in a two-generational farm business, you know about these, as you live and experience them on a continual basis.

Rather, to describe the options and strategies that are available to you in consultations with your family and your private sector professional advisors, in solving the very complex puzzle of operating and transferring inter-generational farm businesses.

By focusing on the present, not dwelling in the past, and utilizing strategies that will allow both generations to craft their future. Succeeding in Succession will and can occur.

I look forward to sharing my experiences over the past 30 years in this area with you on November 22.”

Merle Good
Provincial Tax Specialist, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Farm Business Management Branch

The Role of Roadside Brushing

With the arrival of autumn and with winter just around the corner, Mountain View County will once again be continuing with its roadside brushing program.

The objective of this ongoing Agricultural Services program is to help improve road safety and visibility by removing brush from County ditches, intersections and approaches. Removing excess brush from the ditches and intersections also helps reduce or prevent snow drifts and ice buildup on County roadways, plus it also allows wildlife to be more visible to oncoming motorists.

Continuous shade from trees and large brush also causes soft shoulders and potential erosion of roads. As well, dust clouds also settle more quickly when brush and trees are removed from ditches and along side gravel roadways.

“Ultimately, this program is about enhancing safety on our roadways,” explained Jane Fulton, Manager of Agricultural Services. “In addition, it also improves the drainage in our ditches leading to fewer clogged culverts during the spring run-off.”

Landowners who have driveways and intersections with an obstructed view can contact Agricultural Services and submit a brush removal request. The overgrowth will be removed and mulched mechanically for brush featuring a smaller diameter while trees or shrubs with a larger diameter will be removed manually by the County’s Operational Services department in conjunction with Ag Services.

When it comes to planting new shelterbelts and other landscaping, landowners are also being asked to keep setbacks in mind. Much like the storage of hay bales, new landscaping features and planted trees should be kept a minimum distance from the property line.

According to Fulton, trees should never be planted in County ditches, and further, it is recommended that they are planted 15 metres (50 feet) from the property line, well away from any County Road.

Also outlined in Bylaw 10/10 Land-Use Bylaw, is that residents are being asked to take into consideration is the corner parcel restrictions. These restrictions, which prevent the installation of a building, fence, wall, shrub, tree or any other obstruction, are designed to provide a “sight line triangle” for motorists at intersections.

The Bylaw does provide for standard barb-wire fencing or equivalent to be permitted within the identified sight triangle.

More information can be obtained from our website at mountainviewcounty.com, or by contacting the County office at 403-335-3311 or 1-877-264-9754 (toll free).



Snow removal a crucial function

Even though Mountain View County has just nicely settled into the autumn season, planning is already underway when it comes to snow removal for County roadways.

With over 3,000 kilometres of roads to maintain the County's Operational Services Department has to come up with a plan of action when it comes to keeping the road network passable in the winter. For the winter of 2011-12, don't expect major changes when it comes to how the roads are cleared in major snow events.

According to Pete Waycott, the County's Manager of Infrastructure Maintenance, the priority focus will remain on the County's Collector Network during snow events and then down the list as conditions allow to clear secondaries, industrial roads and subdivisions.

"As long as the collectors are in good condition...we'll then move on to the secondaries," Waycott explained.

If snow events continue for an extended period of time, the crews will continue to ensure the collector network remains passable until the storm subsides.

After that the crews then move on to post-storm clean-up which includes fully clearing the roads past the ditch-lines using graders with wings attached.

"That's in a perfect scenario," emphasized Waycott.

The County has 12 trucks and 8 graders dedicated to snow removal and Waycott says they try to be responsive to residents' concerns during major snow events, but ask that people remain patient during storms that are long in duration and bring significant amount of snow accumulations.

Operational Services also want to remind motorists to drive with care on winter roads and to slow down around the snow plows and other snow removal equipment. Waycott says this allows the drivers to turn down the sanding attachment in time to prevent potential vehicle damage from the sanding material. Slowing down also reduces the possibility of a collision between motorists and snow removal equipment.

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