



Strathcona County

Living

Keeping you informed

April 2011

Message from your Mayor and County Council

Heartland Transmission Project, progress on stated priorities the focus of your Council's first quarter

Since sharing our priorities with you in our last issue of Strathcona County Living, I am pleased to report that your Council is making excellent progress towards our stated goals. Here is a brief summary of where we're at:

Advocacy

Heartland Transmission Project

Recently, Council passed a motion to strengthen the one passed on March 3, 2009 to oppose construction of any 240 kV or higher voltage transmission line within the County unless the lines were constructed underground. Under the new motion, we will fight to have the Alternate West Route recognized as better representing the public interest, as well as the expressed concerns of Strathcona County residents and Albertans.

We will still argue for burying the lines, when located adjacent to densely populated areas anywhere in Alberta. However, based on the evidence we've gathered, we now know that the applicants' Preferred East Transportation Utilities Corridor (TUC) Route is adjacent to a greater number of residents, and has more schools, daycares and hospitals within 800 metres of the edge of the TUC.

As the April 11 date of the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) hearings draws near, I continue to encourage residents to get involved, and to stand united in advocating for our community's future. Signed petitions have been sent to Mr. Dave Quest, MLA for Strathcona, for presentation to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. You can also make your opinions known by contacting your MLA directly.

Hospital project

We will continue to identify and action those issues requiring our active intervention on your behalf. Construction has already begun on Phase I of the hospital project, and we were pleased to have the province commit an additional \$69 million to commence Phase 2 in 2012. Together we will get an active treatment hospital that complements the needs of our Capital Region.

Governance policies

A committee of Council is working to draft new governance policies for County Council. We saw the draft policies on Codes of Conduct, Roles and Responsibilities and the Meetings Procedures Bylaw at the end of March, and we will work to ratify these policies in April.

Review of sign regulations

We reviewed our sign regulations under the Land Use Bylaw this fall, based on feedback from local businesses. On February 8, we passed a revised bylaw, which allows inflatable signs year round, increases the length of time special event signs can be posted, and reduces restrictions placed on third-party advertising among other changes. We worked with our business community to refine the bylaw as necessary.

Economic Development & Tourism Committee

This committee is now established, including public representation, to help County administration and Council implement the Economic Development and Tourism strategy. This strategy was approved by Council in 2010 to position the County for success in the emerging economic environment.

Additional priorities

With these important initiatives complete or well underway, we can begin to address other priorities identified, such as affordable housing. We have already had some progress on this issue, recently approving the allocation of \$5 million in grant funding to the Pioneer Housing Foundation to build a 70-unit community housing rental apartment. The new building will provide affordable rental accommodation to low-income families and individuals, specifically targeting single-parent families and older non-seniors on AISH.

As always, we want to hear from you. I invite you to share your vision for 2011 and beyond with me. My door is always open. Together, we can mould into a County that will be a leader among municipalities, one we can continue to be proud to live in.

Linda Dainchuk

Emergency preparedness: Are you ready?

A disaster can happen at any time. Strathcona County Emergency Services (SCES) wants to know: Are you prepared to look after yourself in your home for up to 72 hours?

During a disaster, emergency responders like fire, ambulance and police personnel are there to help those in need; unfortunately, it can take longer than usual to respond to your 9-1-1 call. For that reason, residents are being encouraged to take steps to become better prepared for a disaster. The more people, who are able to look after themselves and their families for a minimum of 72 hours, the better able emergency responders will be able to help those who require immediate assistance.

The task of preparing for a disaster can seem overwhelming, so SCES has broken the process down into 12 easy steps. Each month in 2011, the department will post an ad in the local paper, highlighting one small step a family can complete to be better prepared. SCES staff will also be out in the community, attending trade shows, making various presentations and participating in community events.

Three steps are listed below:

- Step 1**—assess your risk by performing a household assessment. Who relies on you? What would happen if something interfered with your responsibilities?
- Step 2**—store 72 hours worth of water for each member of your household, bearing in mind that each person requires four litres of water per day.
- Step 3**—be ready to evacuate. Assemble and store an easily-transportable emergency preparedness kit, with enough supplies to sustain your family for 72 hours.

By the end of the year, SCES' goal is to ensure more households are prepared in the event of a disaster. All 12 steps are available online at www.strathcona.ca/sces.



Strathcona County on Twitter

Get short, timely messages from Strathcona County. News, events and more; follow us at www.twitter.com/strathcocounty

Heart of the Community

Community Centre — a place for culture, learning, services and celebration

Centre in the Park Community Centre

The December 5, 2010 opening of the new Community Centre marked a significant milestone in Strathcona County's longstanding vision for Centre in the Park in creating a heart for our community.

As the anchor building in Centre in the Park, the Community Centre completes a core gathering place for culture, learning, services and celebration. Within this year-round hub, the community can enjoy the new library and the art gallery, access municipal services; and host meetings and events in the new spaces available.

Here's just a glimpse of the Community Centre Grand Opening festivities.

A special holiday light-up and spectacular Celebration of Lights fireworks sponsored by Sobeyes topped off the celebrations outside the north main entrance of the Community Centre.



In the Agora, the Community Centre's large event space, the public enjoyed the glow of Festival of Trees and great entertainment.



The doors open to the new Community Centre.



A visit with Santa in Council Chambers was a popular stop among the festivities.



(Left to right) Representing the Government of Alberta, Mr. Naresh Bhardwaj, MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie; Strathcona County Mayor Linda Osinchuk; and Mr. Tim Uppal, MP for Edmonton-Sherwood Park representing the Government of Canada unveil the commemorative plaque.



In the Galleria, the interior street of the Community Centre, everyone is welcomed to an array of fun, family activities.



Family and Community Services staff toured visitors through their new space on the second floor in the northeast wing.



Strathcona County Council members and other dignitaries cut the big red ribbon marking the Community Centre officially open!



A part of the Community Centre, Strathcona County Library opened the doors to its brand new, 2-storey, 64,000-square-foot facility on November 1, 2010. Just recently, its grand opening was celebrated on March 14, 2011.



A bit of a departure from the usual, the new meeting room spaces were transformed into an active gaming centre.

Since the grand opening of the new building, the Community Centre has been a host facility for many other events such as the New Year's Eve Festival, New Year's Levee, Arts Expo and the Together in Sherwood Park Community Festival.

To inquire about Community Centre room bookings call 780-410-8505.

Email: ccbookings@strathcona.ab.ca

To learn more about the Community Centre and Centre in the Park visit www.strathcona.ca

Department profile

Economic Development and Tourism

Economic Development and Tourism (EDT) could be rightly thought of as the business development arm of Strathcona County. Active participants in the business community, both locally and farther afield, department staff attract new business and investment to the community, support new business start-ups, retain existing businesses, and facilitate business expansion.

To accomplish these goals, EDT:

- Supplies marketing research and economic data for business
- Consults on starting a business
- Maintains an inventory of businesses, lease space and available land
- Helps businesses expand or diversify by providing business opportunities and information on other resources
- Markets the community to outside companies as the natural location for business
- Encourages the development of tourism businesses, and promotes the activities of Strathcona County and surrounding areas

All of this is accomplished with the County's sustainable frameworks in mind; EDT promotes development initiatives that foster and enhance the economic, social and environmental well being of the community.

Each year, EDT conducts a number of surveys and studies to measure the community's progress against a number of key economic indicators. Just one example is the department's annual update, which measures changes in population growth, average disposable income, housing starts, etc., and is reported each January at a meeting of the Sherwood Park Chamber of Commerce.

Studies are also conducted to identify future opportunities, and to assess any gaps between services provided by the County, and those desired/required by residents.

Retail Market Analysis

Most recently, EDT contracted the services of Thomas Consultants Inc. to conduct a retail market analysis. The study increases understanding of the existing retail market and helps EDT identify opportunities to strengthen and diversify the local economy. Information gathered in the study will guide what kind of retail and service sector businesses to attract to the County, and help determine how much land to allocate to retail development in future.

The study analyzed the amount of commercial space available by merchandise category against residents' expected future demand for those same categories. It also assessed the dollars by retail sector that are currently being spent outside of the community, and identified gaps in the County's retail offerings.

Strathcona County residents are spending 29 per cent of their retail dollars in Edmonton. The wide array of shopping in Sherwood Park is also attracting consumers from outside of the County. These shoppers make up about 10 per cent of the retail dollars spent in the community. The report suggests, based on these two considerations, that another 345,000 square feet of retail space can be easily supported right now. While the retail services available have improved dramatically over the past 10 years, there is still room to attract more retail services to Strathcona County, which is a growing community.

The report also surveyed 500 households about their shopping habits and preferred locations to shop outside of Strathcona County. South Edmonton Common and Southgate are the most frequented external shopping locations chosen by Strathcona County residents, who expressed a desire for a full array of retail services. The report suggests that some residents shop outside the County to find a larger selection of household furnishings and accessories, adult clothing, home electronics, large appliances, shoes and footwear, computer equipment to name the most common items, as well as for particular restaurants and entertainment venues.

Randy Richards is coordinator of Commercial Development. He says the department will use the study to support local businesses in expanding their services.

"In addition to promoting the Retail Market Analysis as a retail marketing tool for commercial property owners, land developers and commercial real estate brokers, we will use the data to guide local businesses about sub sector opportunities. The County will also use the findings to ensure an adequate land supply to facilitate projected retail growth, and to target retail sectors identified.

"Continued maturing of the retail and service sector in Strathcona County will keep more of our shopping dollars circulating in the community."

A full copy of the report can be found at www.strathcona.ca/edt.



Art Gallery @501 opens

The new Strathcona County Art Gallery @501 opened on March 10, 2011, with its first exhibition to the public: A Well Spun Prairie Yarn. The exhibit, running until April 23, features contemporary fibre artwork created by artists from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Hope to see you visit the gallery @501! It's not difficult to find... 501 Festival Avenue in Sherwood Park, just off of Sherwood Drive and part of the Community Centre.



Transportation and Agricultural Services

begins to think spring!

After record snowfall and cold temperatures this winter it's nice to start thinking about longer days and green grass. As we go into the big thaw there are some challenges to face with roads and drainage. We want to ensure your concerns are addressed in the best possible way.

Potholes— Let us know about any potholes you find so we can provide a temporary repair.

County crews are always on the lookout for potholes, and appreciate your help locating them. Permanent repairs will begin with the construction season.

Street Sweeping—Street sweepers will be in your neighbourhood when all of the snow and ice has melted. Please help us by moving your car if it is parked on the road. We also ask that you remove other obstacles such as curb ramps and hockey nets.

Drainage—Ice and snow can sometimes block catch basins and culverts. This prevents water from draining and leads to ponding. We would appreciate your help to clear the blockage safely.

If the blockage is stubborn, contact Transportation and Agriculture Services to have someone fix the problem. A foreman will come out and assess the area you reported. Crews and equipment will be dispatched as soon as possible.

Contact Transportation and Agriculture Services (TAS) 24-hour line 780-417-7100 about any road or flooding concerns that need attention immediately. After hours please leave a message, or press 0 to speak to a person. Be sure to visit our website for more information www.strathcona.ca/tas.

Weeds—As we move into the growing season take note that several ornamental invasive plants – including the Yellow Clematis pictured – were added to the noxious and prohibited noxious weed lists in 2010 (under the Alberta Weed Control Act). These “flowers” are identified as invasive plants because they spread rapidly and can escape garden boundaries.



The Alberta Invasive Plant Council has produced a brochure called “Weed Wise: Gardening in Alberta” which outlines ornamental plants classified as weeds and suggests alternative plants that have the same effect in gardens or flower beds. The brochure is available at www.invasiveplants.ab.ca or the TAS office - 370 Streambank Avenue.

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Strathcona
County

Community Partner

Green Hectares looks to the future of farming



A provincial initiative encouraging young farmers to stay in the family business is getting closer to reality. “Green Hectares” was founded in 2007 by young people with a passion for agriculture who want to see hope return to rural life and business.

Studies have shown a drastic decline in farmers 35 years-old and younger. For the young adult in agriculture learning and training that is relevant and current is critical to their survival.

Green Hectares partnered with the County and the Josephburg Agricultural Society in 2008 to produce a business case. The business case identified the steps necessary to make the program a success and ultimately change the face of farming.

“Strathcona County was the first county to say yes to supporting us. They provided dollars and were with us every step of the way as we

built the business case,” says Wendy Schneider, executive director, Green Hectares. “The County, our board and I all believe the program will change people’s lives.”

One of the first initiatives is a travelling road show that brings mobile computer labs into rural community meeting spaces (e.g. community halls, curling rinks). A facilitator will teach basic computer usage: online banking, how to use Skype, and digital camera usage. “Individuals could send a photo of their field to a crop specialist for advice or do banking online instead of driving to the nearest town,” says Schneider. “Some of these simple day-to-day activities can save busy individuals a tremendous amount of time.” Strathcona and Parkland counties will be the first to pilot the project before it rolls out to other Alberta counties.

Another exciting deliverable of the project is a demonstration site that individuals can tour to see new technologies that are not yet available commercially. Other visitors will be able to experience the day-to-day activities on a farm that most people in agriculture take for granted, such as the birth of a calf. Twenty-four hour cameras will capture activity on the ‘farm’ for all to see.

This along with a variety of online materials will make knowledge and training available to all Albertans regardless of where they live.



Digest

& Dates

New! Digest & Dates

A new feature, Digest & Dates will run on page 9 of the Sherwood Park - Strathcona County News the last Friday of each month. Digest & Dates will highlight news and updates from Strathcona County and is meant to serve as a “quick read” to help you stay informed of what’s happening in our community – all at a glance.

The Digest carries short announcements, news bits, and current events and programs. If you

want to know more about the subject, simply follow the link to the website or call the phone number included.

In addition to the newspaper, you can find the Digest & Dates as a PDF on the County website at www.strathcona.ca under Notices.

Let us know what you think of Digest & Dates. Send your comments to info@strathcona.ab.ca.

April in the Agora

Lunchtime Thursdays

Paris in the spring time is nice... but how about April in the Agora? Every Thursday in April from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m., a free drop-in event will be hosted. Over the course of the month, the public is invited to take in a fun activity such as Zumba or Square Dancing, and more. Check the County website for details, or just pop by the Community Centre with your lunch Thursdays in April. A donation to the Food Bank is welcome, too.

