

Ward 6

UPDATE

January 2007

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Strathcona
County

www.strathcona.ab.ca

Ward 6



Distribution of this newsletter

This newsletter is intended for residents of Ward 6, as shown on the map above. To economize, it is being distributed according to delivery zones established by Canada Post, which do not coincide with ward boundaries.

A limited number of households in Wards 5 and 7 may receive a copy as a result. If so, please enjoy the information and make note of the councillor for your area.

Ward 5, Councillor Jacquie Fenske, 464-8147

Ward 7, Councillor Glen Lawrence, 464-8003

from your councillor



Councillor Alan Dunn

The unusual dump of snow brought my informal survey to a sudden halt. Regrets if I did not make it to your place before the weather turned sour, but you are always welcome to give me a call or drop by County Hall. As promised, here are some of the other comments, continued from my November newsletter:

Economic development was scored relatively high by most people, though there were few specific comments. This suggests an overall satisfaction with opportunities within the County.

Agricultural land is a subject that does not affect most people. This is reflected by a general level of satisfaction. Nevertheless, this is an issue which must be addressed sooner or later and one which impacts us all one way or another. Once these lands are taken up for other uses, they are never returned to agriculture. Farming is a capital intensive activity with long planning horizons. Uncertainty with respect to land use planning adds another stressor.

The proposal for a new **County Hall** was

a low score item. While many did not rate this at all, the few who did tended to support it. (More on this below - see The Community Centre.)

Environmental lands scored high without attracting specific comments. I suppose this is not surprising as the question was not very clear. The design of surveys is something of an art and I clearly need a bit more practice.

Centre in the Park for the most part has your approval. This innovative project will provide Sherwood Park, and therefore all of Strathcona County, the downtown core that it has lacked until now.

Co-operation with other municipalities is a source of concern. You appear to be unanimous in your interest in keeping a separate identity from Edmonton.

Our relationship with our neighbours will be the biggest single issue over the next months and years. The withdrawal of Edmonton from the Alberta Capital

...continued on page 3

Inside

Connecting with teens	2
Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy	2
Water management on Big Island Lake	2
Energy Exploration update	2
Submissions for the Permanent Art Collection	3
Transportation matters	4
Solid waste review	4
Regional park site	4
Rural water supply main	4

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UPDATE

Connecting with teens—the Youth Council

Young people play an important part in the life of our community. One example is the success of the Strathcona County Youth Council, which was formed in 1990 and is supported by Strathcona County Family and Community Services. This group consists of 20 to 30 teens aged 13-17, representing the junior and senior high schools in both rural and urban Strathcona County.

Youth Council volunteers and advocates

Youth Council members have developed presentations for junior high students and offer them as Youth Teaching Youth seminars. They participate in special events which address community social

needs; for example, this past December they volunteered at the Christmas Bureau.

The Youth Council collaborates with youth groups in Strathcona County and surrounding areas. They helped to develop the Boys and Girls Club of Strathcona County, and support their programs and services.

The members have the opportunity to be involved with their community, develop leadership skills, help other youth, make friends, and have fun!

New Youth Council members are always welcome. If you are interested, or know a teen who might want to join, please contact Corey Stevenson with Family and Community Services at 464-4044.

Did you know?

- Of the total residential property tax paid in Strathcona County, about 60 per cent supports municipal services. Most of the remainder goes to the Province to fund education, with a small portion supporting library services and seniors' management services.
- In 2007, 68 cents of every municipal property tax dollar will support roads, transit, fire, ambulance and police services.

Energy exploration

A Multi-well Gas Battery and Gas Producing re-commencement operation is proposed by JayCor Resources Inc. in LSD 6-34-51-23-W4. The proposal indicates it will be "no larger than the previous plant" that closed in 1994.

Information indicates this is a sweet gas well and no flaring is planned. This is not approved as yet by the Alberta Energy and Utility Board at the time of writing.

If you have questions, call Strathcona County's Energy Exploration Liaison, Lori Mills, at 416-6739, or the Alberta Energy and Utility Board at 460-3800.

Information can be found at www.strathcona.ab.ca.

Concert at Wye Hall

From the Wye String Ensemble, an invitation to the community: come and enjoy some classical music on Sunday, February 11 at 2 p.m. at Wye Hall.

The program includes selections by Bach, Vivaldi and Handel.



Posting your address: a matter of safety

Strathcona County's Addressing Bylaw requires addresses be posted clearly in front of each residence. This ensures that in an emergency, responders can find your house without delay.

Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy

The County is currently undertaking a long-term strategy for open space and recreation facility development. This plan will provide the direction for open space and leisure opportunities for the next 10 years and beyond.

The public input phase of the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy began in November and is now nearing completion.

A proposed draft plan is expected to be available for review by the community in May, followed by Council deliberations in June. More detail on the plan is available at www.strathcona.ab.ca, or by calling 464-8279.



Water management project continues on Big Island Lake

Strathcona County continues to work with residents and Alberta Environment on a plan to restore water levels in Big Island Lake.

In late November, Transportation and Agriculture Services met with residents whose properties shared a common boundary with Big Island Lake. At this meeting, a survey plan was presented showing the area covered by water prior to disturbance of the lake outlet, and the elevation proposed to restore the lake level.

At the request of residents, an additional survey will be undertaken to determine the potential impact on surrounding lands if a higher elevation is chosen. Staff are collecting this information and will meet with residents prior to April 2007. Once unanimous support is obtained from the surrounding residents, we will work with Alberta Environment to obtain a licence to construct a lake level structure.

For more information on Big Island Lake water levels, contact Transportation and Agriculture Services at 417-7100.

Region Alliance has brought this issue to a head. On this issue Council is in complete agreement that we need to defend our independence and lifestyle.

Recreation was unambiguously approved by the majority of respondents. This is reflection of the excellence of County facilities and programs.

The Community Centre

Last year, Council approved the construction of a new Community Centre to be part of Centre in the Park. While this was somewhat overshadowed by the final selection of the new hospital site, the Community Centre may have a more significant long-term impact. It may also generate more controversy.

Fifty years ago, Strathcona was a rural municipality containing a dormitory hamlet intended to serve Edmonton's housing needs. Ever since, Strathcona has been redefining itself as a true community with a sense of cohesion and belonging. To a great extent we have succeeded and long-term residents can see, or rather feel, the difference. The Community Centre is perhaps the ultimate piece of the puzzle needed to define a true heart of the community.

At nearly \$100 million, this is a very expensive project. While we hope to access grant funding from other orders of government, much of the money will come from municipal taxes. There needs to be more to it than the desire to display community spirit, and there is.

The proposed Community Centre is a cost-effective way of providing space.

There are sound business reasons for undertaking this project at this time. The library's lease will expire in a few years. County buildings are full to capacity and rarely a month goes by without conversion of areas into office spaces. In addition, the community expects facilities for art, cultural and recreational activities.

To meet these mushrooming needs, space must be leased, rented, purchased or built. The Community Centre is a

cost-effective way of providing space. No alternatives are cheaper, and none offer the social benefits of the Community Centre.

As for timing, we have put off this project as long as we dare. Inflation will drive the price up if we wait much longer.

It could be argued that if we did not hire additional staff or provide additional services, we would not need the new facility. With a burgeoning population, maintaining a fixed level of staffing would result in a deterioration of service quality. Even though some of the financial burden will be transferred to future residents and their children, current residents will still be responsible for most of the cost. Population growth is expensive, as this project shows. The alternative is to limit growth, a step we seem unwilling to contemplate.

Municipal Development Plan Review



Municipal Development Plan

By now, many of you must be wondering why we are still working on this. What began with great enthusiasm three years ago appears to have bogged down. The need to bring the Municipal Development Plan or MDP up to date is made even more urgent by relentless growth pressures caused by the current boom.

Many of you are anxious to make significant life decisions and feel unable to until planning decisions associated with the MDP have been finalized. What then is the hold-up?

The answer is one of the less urgent aspects covered by the MDP, viz., the location of a new growth node. Whether we need another growth node depends upon one's vision for the County and whether one believes that the added cost to the taxpayer is going to be worth it. Yet, the decision to establish a new growth node has been made.

There are two finalists: the Colchester area north of Highway 14 and the east of Highway 21 region north of Highway 16. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

The issue now turns on whether we must make a decision between the two

choices before the MDP is finalized or after. Some are prepared to delay the MDP until this decision is made. My own view is that an up-to-date MDP is crucial to the future of this municipality and that further delay is intolerable.

My own view is that an up-to-date MDP is crucial to the future of this municipality

Our new MDP is not only a significant improvement over what we have now, it is also a pioneering document that raises the bar for municipal planning not just in Alberta but throughout the country.

I am prepared to accept some of the aspects that I do not prefer in order to move the process forward. I am not prepared to see the MDP put at risk by further delay. At the public hearing to be heard in early February, I shall encourage my colleagues to make whatever accommodations they need in order to bring this forward.

A public hearing on the proposed MDP is scheduled for February 6 and 7. For details, call 464-8080.



Submissions invited for the Permanent Art Collection

March 9, 2007 is the deadline for submissions for consideration as part of Strathcona County's Permanent Art Collection. Submissions are welcome in a variety of mediums including sculpture, glass, photography, painting, carvings and stained glass. The Collection includes more than 130 works from both adults youths aged 15 to 17.

For information, call 464-8472.

Art online: To view the Permanent Art Collection, go to www.strathcona.ab.ca, and do a search for "art." The website is a one-stop location for anyone interested in art, or artists interested in getting into the collection.

Transportation matters

Twining of Highway 21

An open house was held at the Wye Hall on November 30, 2006 to update the community on the status of this project. The 10-km project (Highway 16 to south of Highway 628) is being undertaken by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, intended to be completed in 2009 or 2010.

The current timetable calls for bridge and grading work to continue this year and next, with surfacing to follow. The schedule could be affected by many factors including land acquisition, contractor availability, budgets and weather.

To the disappointment of many, no additional sound attenuation is being planned by the province. If you find this unacceptable, the consultant, AMEC, has invited your feedback by e-mail to keith.helberg@amec.com or contact me and I would be happy to forward your comments. The provincial contact can be reached at 968-4232.

The good news is that both Ranchlands and Country Club Estates will be provided with illumination and improved approaches as part of the Highway 21 project.

Solid waste review underway

The review of current solid waste services began last year with information gathering — a survey of residents, as well as a waste audit. Additional information on regional waste management will be available to administration in the next few weeks, with the completion of a report prepared for ACRA, the Alberta Capital Region Alliance.

A summary of what we have learned is scheduled to be presented for Council's consideration within the next few months. Changes to waste management services would likely coincide with new collection contracts which will take effect in the spring of 2008.

We are introducing two new solid waste initiatives this year. One is to pilot test the use of an automated waste collection system. The second is to identify feasible ways of diverting commercial waste from landfill.

Range Road 233

In 2006, a detailed review was carried out to establish the preferred design for Range Road 233 from Wye Road to Highway 628.

The review examined the objectives of traffic capacity, access and safety. It found that in the short to medium term, up to 2013, upgrading of 233 will focus on a two-lane standard south of Wallace Drive North to Highway 628 with roundabouts at intersections.

One of the advantages of roundabouts is that they can improve traffic flow at intersections. They can also improve safety by reducing the speed of vehicles, and providing fewer points where drivers cross paths, reducing the risk of collisions.

Some roundabouts may be constructed as early as this fall in conjunction with developments at Balmoral Heights and Sherwood Golf and Country Club Estates.

Regional park site

County staff will be working with residents in the Waterton, Silver Birch Hills, Scona Glen communities and others including users of the dog off-leash area to identify the long-term needs for the regional park site located adjacent to Highway 21 and Highway 628.

This was a former landfill site, and is currently the County's only dog off-leash park. Environmental site remediation of the landfill is scheduled for 2008. The park planning process will see background research and data collection in the first nine months of 2007, with public consultation occurring in the fall. Any changes to the site could be addressed in future budget processes.

In the Chrenek/Scot Haven country residential subdivisions, the County will be constructing a trail to enhance the "walkability" of the area and provide safe places for exercise and community interaction.

Highway 628/Whitemud Extension

We have contacted the folks at Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation about the steadily worsening access problem from Range Roads 231, 232 and 233. They have agreed to carry out some study work to determine if and when there is a need to add signals at these intersections. Changes to traffic patterns (the closure of the connection of Township Road 520 to Highway 216) and growth in traffic volume has changed the traffic at these points. This work is expected to begin this spring.

Strathcona County continues to liaise with the Province to look after the interests of motorists. We are further ahead than we were last summer, and hope to have more detailed information later this year, though when we actually see any construction work is still unknown.

Rural water supply main

Strathcona County is currently constructing a rural water supply main in the Country Residential policy area from the Ranchlands subdivision east to Range Road 223. This water main will expand the water system to serve more customers including new development in the area.

The supply main is consistent with the County's existing rural water system which connects to private cisterns and is capable of supplying water for typical household purposes.

The construction of this water main began in December 2006 and is expected to be complete in March 2007. The water main will be directionally drilled in the road allowance or in easements secured by the County. Connection to the line is not mandatory, although residents along the alignment will be contacted regarding connection opportunities, details and costs.