



Strathcona County

LIVING

Keeping you informed

November 2015

Message from Mayor Roxanne Carr

It was a complete surprise that totally changed the conversation across the country, when the Alberta New Democratic Party won a majority government last May. Since that day, your Council has been actively working with the three local Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to forge positive relationships that will allow us to continue to offer our citizens high levels of service.

On the federal front, we've also seen a significant change, with the Liberals winning a majority government under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The formation of two brand new governments is a lot of change in less than six months. However, we're looking forward to working collaboratively with our new federal government, which includes our local Member of Parliament – Garnett Genuis. Congratulations Garnett!

Alberta's political landscape and economic outlook are very different today, compared to a year ago. It's estimated that more than 35,000 jobs have been lost in the oil and gas sector this year. Alberta now has the highest number of unemployed workers collecting Employment Insurance. This slowing industrial growth directly affects Strathcona County's tax base.

Change and uncertainty challenge County budget

In the midst of all this change and uncertainty, we've been actively working on our 2016 Budget. Council gave administration a very proactive and strategic direction when we endorsed priority-based business planning and budgeting, back in 2014. We also directed them to get more innovative when engaging our citizens in the process. We believe it's important for our citizens and businesses to get actively involved and engaged in these discussions.

Determining an effective and efficient budget for a municipality of our size – over the long-term, especially in these difficult times, is no easy task. Similar to a household where long-term priorities like retirement, children's education and home ownership are impacted by shorter-term uncertainties like job security and inflation, our municipality must be resilient enough to persevere during the turbulent times.

Our population has grown to almost 96,000 people. However, population growth is only one factor that increases costs. Inflation, service level changes, and operating grant elimination from the province all affect our municipality's operating costs. Costs also go up when new infrastructure is built, such as the Emerald Hills pool. So, if our population doesn't grow, which I know it will, our operating costs would still increase, due to these factors.



Strathcona County Councillors who were available hosted recently elected MLAs on a tour of the County this summer. Left to right are: Dave Anderson, Ward 2; Mayor Roxanne Carr; Estefania Cortes-Vargas, MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park; Jessica Littlewood, MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville; Carla Howatt, Ward 4; Bonnie Riddell, Ward 7; Annie McKittrick, MLA for Sherwood Park; Paul Smith, Ward 5, and Linton Delaine, Ward 6.

Access to funding through other levels of government helps keep our municipality viable. We applaud the provincial government for recognizing the need to invest in infrastructure and transit; and increasing dollars to help vulnerable Albertans, who need access to social supports.

As elected officials, your Council needs to continue to be engaged in the budget process to ensure the changing political market, and economic conditions are taken into consideration. Our process is not stagnant. To be successful, we need a plan that is flexible and adaptable to changing conditions. At the end of the day, our main goal is to manage, invest and have an effective plan in place that will ensure our specialized municipality is sustainable.

Right now, Strathcona County is investing almost \$1 million a day to maintain the high-quality programs and services that are available to our citizens and businesses. Our residential tax base only pays 36 per cent of the total municipal tax revenues, compared to between 50 and 95 per cent in other neighbouring communities that don't benefit from a strong industrial tax base.

It would be easy for someone to say, "I for one cannot support any plan or priority that will mean that our citizens – in 2016 – will be asked to pay more of their hard earned money".

As mayor, I'm not saying I arbitrarily support an increase in taxes; however, if the cost of providing the programs and services is higher than the revenue we receive, exactly what programs and services would the majority of residents be willing to give up? Would it be less snow removal, garbage collection, road maintenance, recreation or transit? All of these services and much more contribute to our County's reputation of continually maintaining high standards.

Effective planning for the long term

The economists are predicting that we won't see a significant turnaround in Canada's economy until the year 2020. Therefore, we need to have these candid and sometimes difficult discussions. We need to ensure Council continues to make the right decisions so you receive the most value for each tax dollar.

Ongoing engagement across the community continues to inform our planning. Your input gives Council the rationale and justification it needs to better identify the priority areas and the programs and services that are important to you. It will also help us measure our performance, to tell us how we're doing serving the community.

Given these challenging times, Council and administration face an enormous challenge: to continue to align service delivery with this community's priorities, while managing the increasing costs. This will require us to look for efficiencies in the way we deliver programs and services. This has been a strong theme throughout our budget process this fall.

Strathcona County, through the business plan and budget process, has always focused on good value for the taxpayer and prudent decision making. There has always been a focus on the future, which is proven by the County's strong financial position.

With the added economic challenges, Council directed administration to create a process that focused on priorities. That direction has helped us to meet the current challenge, while ensuring what is important to the community is preserved.

Administration is now following Council's direction to enhance its forward-thinking ability through long-term plans and policies to ensure the long-term financial stability of the County. The County has met difficult challenges in the past, and is well positioned for the economic challenges ahead.

Administration's recommended 2016 Budget was presented to Council on November 20. Council will deliberate on their recommendations through to December 8, when Council is scheduled to approve its 2016 Budget.

By basing Council's decision-making on established and known community priorities that create meaningful and funded multi-year plans, I'm confident we'll continue to build a strong responsive and sustainable specialized municipality going forward.

Mayor Roxanne Carr

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Festive events

November 21

Celebration of Lights

2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Community Centre

(401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park)

Remember your donation for the Strathcona County Food Bank. At 5 p.m. join Santa and the Mayor as they light up the Community Centre.

November 28

Santa's breakfast

9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Millennium Place

Tickets \$12 per person

Come enjoy a delicious hot breakfast with Santa.

November 28 to 29

Christmas in the Heartland

Join us for markets, sleigh rides and family fun across eight Community halls and churches in north Strathcona.

Fireworks at Heartland Hall. Bus tour available; call 780-464-8095.

December 5

Christmas in the Country

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Festive activities and shopping throughout the south, closing with Light-up South Strathcona. Bus tour available; call 780-464-8095.

December 13

Santa Skate

2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Glen Allan Recreation Complex

Enjoy free hot chocolate and Christmas treats too! Admission is FREE, courtesy of Clark Builders.

December 31

New Year's Eve Festival

4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Broadmoor Lake Park, Community Centre and Festival Place

January 1

New Year's Day

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Festival Place and Sherwood Park Sports Centre (2025 Oak Street)

www.strathcona.ca/winterevents

IMAGINE COLCHESTER



Strathcona County is preparing a Growth Management Strategy for the Colchester area, located between Highway 628 (north), Highway 14 (south) and Highway 21 (east).

Join us November 26 and provide your feedback on the draft recommended community design concept, and draft policy directions.

Open House:

November 26, 2015

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

(presentation starts at 6:30 p.m.)

Council Chambers, Community Centre
401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park

For more information, contact Danika Dudzik, Planning and Development Services at 780-464-8073, or go to

www.strathcona.ca/imaginelcolchester.

 COUNTY CONNECT

ASK
IT

REPORT
IT

TRACK
IT

COUNTY INITIATIVES

County Connect — Your online window to service

The next time you come across an issue that needs our attention - say a pothole, or a traffic signal not working - consider reporting it through County Connect, Strathcona County's new online service request and tracking system.

It's an easy, convenient way for citizens to contact Strathcona County. Through web self-service, or the mobile app, users can go online anytime to report a problem, request a service or ask for information.

County Connect is about much more than potholes and traffic lights. Use it to apply for permits, report a culvert drainage issue, request a tax refund or even invite a Council member to your next event. These are just a few examples of the more than 60 services related to transit, transportation, agriculture, animals and pests, drainage, permits, and tax and assessment. More services will continue to be added.

If you're on the go, the County Connect mobile app, on your smartphone or tablet, is a handy way to report road issues, sanding requests, crowding on a bus, or a bus not on time. You can even take a photo of the issue and send it with your request.

When submitting a County Connect service request online, by phone or email, a case number allows users to track the status of their request, along with an expected timeline for completion. It's also possible to view other

requests and priorities in the queue through the County's open data portal.

As a municipality, service to our residents is an important part of what we do. County Connect helps us become more efficient and responsive in our customer service as we strive to be Canada's most livable community.

In addition to providing greater visibility into our service commitment, and being more convenient for residents, County Connect is also creating efficiencies behind the scenes. The integrated system for service requests helps the County streamline and avoid duplication, making sure requests get to the right place, the first time, to be addressed as quickly as possible. Data gathered through County Connect's robust reporting capabilities helps departments better assess their customer service performance, and supports planning and allocation of resources.

Try it and win!

Don't just take our word for it. Visit www.strathcona.ca/countyconnect to see how easy it is to submit a service request online. While you're there, fill out a prize draw entry form by November 30 for a chance to win one of these great prizes: \$100 gift certificate to Festival Place, \$100 gift certificate for Broadmoor Golf Course, or a \$25 Strathcona County recreation gift card.

We look forward to connecting with you!

Rural Internet Access Program

Country living and high-speed Internet? We know you want both!

With its innovative Rural Internet Access Program, Strathcona County will improve Internet service in hard-to-reach rural areas where treed and hilly terrain can sometimes keep the online world out of reach.

Working closely with local Internet service providers (ISPs), and with feedback from residents, the County is identifying areas where Internet access is unsatisfactory. Through its three-year program, the County is offering incentives to ISPs who build smaller Internet towers in these areas. The new towers, owned and maintained by service providers, will act as a bridge between households and larger infrastructure towers, bringing high-speed Internet access to areas that are without.

Local ISPs will work directly with landowners to install towers in areas designated by the County. The first towers are expected go up by the end of the year, with approximately 100 more installed by 2017.

The County has also partnered with Strathcona County Library to install Internet towers at

rural community halls. This is being made possible through the Library's Bookmobile sponsor, Shell Canada Ltd. Thanks to this initiative, visitors will be able to enjoy unlimited free Internet access at these facilities.

An improved Internet signal reach will also benefit library patrons in rural Strathcona. They will gain access to the Library's entire suite of digital content and programming (such as eBooks, music and movies for download), and be able to log into their accounts in real-time when they visit the Bookmobile.

Watch for upcoming open house sessions about the County's Rural Internet Access Program, and what it could mean for you.

Interested in hosting an Internet tower on your property? Want to report a rural area where Internet service is not available? Let us know. Call 780-464-8024 or email ruralinternet@strathcona.ca. Further information and updates are also available at www.strathcona.ca/ruralinternet.

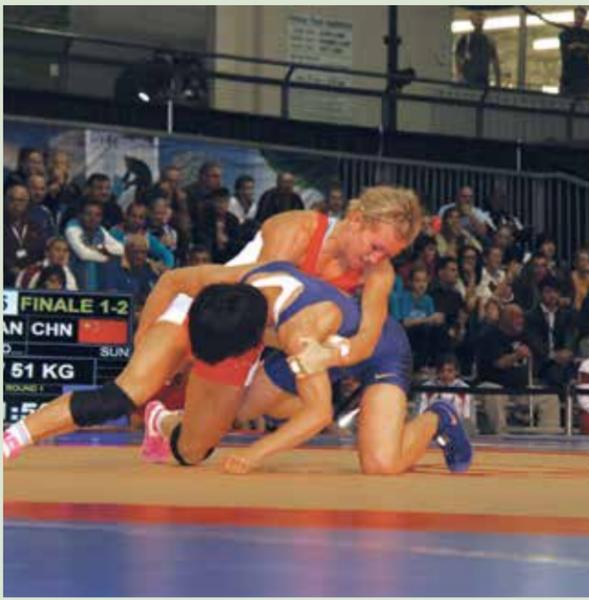
Millennium Place to host Canadian wrestling team trials

The best wrestlers in Canada will be competing at Millennium Place to claim their spot on Team Canada from December 4 to 6.

Over 200 wrestlers, male and female, from across the nation will be competing. The trial winners will be nominated to represent Canada through the qualification process for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

Canada wrestling has already qualified in the women's 48kg and 63kg weight class at the World Championships held in Las Vegas in September.

More information can be found at www.strathcona.ca/wrestling including ticket sales and volunteering.



Green Christmas – let your eco-spirit shine!

The amount of waste generated in Strathcona County during the holiday season increases over 20 per cent! This means that there is an average of 367 tonnes more materials set out at the curb for pickup—and over 70% of that is put out as waste. Not only are we generating more waste, we are also not taking the time to separate it correctly. Give Mother Nature a gift this season and let your eco-spirit shine!

Be intentional about making your holiday season a green one! It's as easy as making choices to minimize the amount of waste coming from your celebrations.

Reduce - create memories, not garbage.

Have a budding artist in your life? Why not buy them art classes? What about a sports fan? Get tickets to a local sporting event. Memories last a lifetime – no wrapping required!

Reuse - wrap it up right

Choose wrapping paper that can be recycled (avoid foil and ribbons). Even better, use reusable wrapping such as fabric bags, towels or mason jars.

Recycle - gift giving

Look for locally-made gifts using recycled content or upcycle an old item into something new.

Check out www.strathcona.ca/greenchristmas for DIY projects, tips and ideas on how reduce your footprint and maximize your eco-holiday spirit!

Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy update



Leisure Centre and at Glen Allan Recreation Complex. Both projects are scheduled to open in the fall of 2016.

The new Emerald Hills Leisure Centre will feature a 6 lane 25 meter lap swim pool, 4 lane 25 meter adjustable depth pool, children's teaching pool, whirlpool, steam room, and family change facilities.

This summer, the RE/MAX Playground and Spray Park at Broadmoor Lake Park opened on July 1, 2015. With perfect summer weather, this new park was utilized by thousands of Strathcona County families to have some fun and beat the heat.

As you may have noticed, construction is moving along quickly at the Emerald Hills

The modernized Glen Allan Recreation Complex will feature improved accessibility, new group fitness studio, multi-purpose program room, expanded wellness centre (by 3,000 ft²), wellness testing and consultation room, updated racquet courts and updated curling facilities.

Visit www.strathcona.ca/emeraldhills and www.strathcona.ca/garc for more information.

Working to stop family violence

Family violence affects people of all ages, nationalities, genders and income levels. In Strathcona County, there were 714 individuals who reported domestic violence in 2014.

"Family violence is not a private matter. It affects us all," says Mayor Roxanne Carr. "We, as a community, feel the pain and grief that surrounds this violence. However, more than ever, we stand together as a community to support each other while working in our neighbourhoods, municipality and across the province to stop family violence."

"No one needs to stand alone in dealing with family violence," says Superintendent Gary Peck, Officer in Charge of the Strathcona County RCMP. "The RCMP is committed to stand side by side with our community partners in working together to bring attention and awareness to family violence within our community. Our Domestic Violence Unit and Victim Services Teams are dedicated to assisting victims and their families as we work towards eliminating family violence in our community."

This November, residents are invited to wear white ribbons to signify their commitment to help end family violence, as part of National Family Violence Prevention month. White ribbons are available to anyone who wants to make a pledge to take a stand to end violence

against women. Ribbons are available at County facilities, free of charge, throughout November.

The White Ribbon campaign, established in 1991 by a small group of men in Canada, urges men to speak out against violence against women. In almost 60 countries, the White Ribbon Campaign is the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women and girls, promote gender equality, healthy relationships, and a new vision of masculinity.

In addition to participating in the White Ribbon Campaign, Strathcona County developed a local network of men in the community, known as Men as Allies, who recognize that everyone has a role to play in ending family violence. Through their spheres of influence, Men as Allies raise awareness and educate men and women about their role in preventing domestic violence. Also, the County's Make it Our Business training program teaches local businesses, organizations and community groups how to recognize and respond to signs of family violence in the workplace.

This September, Strathcona County was awarded a provincial grant to focus on primary prevention with boys by promoting healthy relationship awareness and skill building within a school setting, intervention for men with

abusive behaviour, and community engagement to end domestic violence.

Efforts to address root causes of family violence will be supplemented by responses from the recently completed Alberta Men's Survey, which canvassed men 18 years of age and older about strategies used to experience healthy and positive relationships. Responses will help staff develop programs and services that best address the unique needs, perspectives and strengths of men from diverse backgrounds in Strathcona County.

Strathcona County continues to provide counselling and trauma support services to support those in need, including grants to partners such as A Safe Place and the Saffron Centre.

Anyone who is in, or aware of an abusive situation, is encouraged to call the Safe Place 24-hour crisis line at 780-464-7233. Supports for anyone who is concerned, or supporting someone experiencing family violence, are available through Family and Community Services at 780-464-4044.

Visit www.strathcona.ca/familyviolence or call 780-464-4044 for a complete list of County initiatives and supports available to address family violence.

COMMUNITY HERITAGE

Adventure leads to opportunity aplenty for early pioneer R.P. Ottewell, part two

In the January 2015 issue of Strathcona County Living, we shared the story of Richard Phillip (R.P.) Ottewell's imprisonment at Upper Fort Garry, when he was a prisoner of Louis Riel during the uprising of 1869. After this near miss, Ottewell returned to his family home in Bruce County on the north shore of Lake Superior in Ontario, and for the next 10 years, he worked in sawmills and mines there, work experience that would serve him well later in his life.

In 1877, he met and married Frances (Fannie) Trevillion. By the time two children, William and Ella, had been born in quick succession, R.P. was once again lured by the call of the West, now supposedly free of its former political tensions. R.P. left his family in the care of Fannie's parents to move west in search of suitable farmland. A keg of Red Fife wheat seed was packed among his few belongings as he and friends Thomas Jackson, William Carscaden and Ed Langrell joined freighters heading to Edmonton.

They arrived in the Edmonton area in the summer of 1881. Almost immediately, R.P. staked a homestead southeast of the Edmonton settlement. Today, that homestead claim is the Edmonton subdivision of Ottewell. Almost as quickly, though, R.P. abandoned this claim in favour of another. He and his friends had scouted out the empty lands east of Edmonton and found them to be superior. On August 7, he squatted on what would later be surveyed as NW 16-53-23-W4.

Years later, one of R.P.'s sons, Frank, recalled his father telling him that the land "was like a peavine, a jungle of forest. He cut his homestead out of the bush by hand." R.P. hastily built a 10-foot by 12-foot "soddie" where he spent the first winter. Next spring, he was busy breaking land and sowing his small field with the wheat seed that he had brought with him from Ontario.

In 1883, after the land had been surveyed, Ottewell purchased for \$3 an acre a pre-emption, NE 16-53-23-W4. While the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 had introduced a policy of free land grants, or homesteads, of 160 acres, an ensuing depression had resulted in stagnant immigration numbers. To prod what he believed was an untapped desire on the part of Europeans and Britons to immigrate to Canada, Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie introduced in 1874 an amendment to the 1872 Act. Homesteaders like R.P. were then allowed to purchase a pre-emption of 160 acres once the patent had been received for their homesteads.

R.P. had not forgotten his family, and in the autumn of 1883 after the harvest was in, he returned to Ontario to bring his family to their Clover Bar home. Fannie was pleased to find her husband had built a substantial two-storey house of squared logs, measuring 19' x 21'.

The joy of the family being reunited was threatened less than two years later. Louis Riel had returned to Canada from the United States, where he had been living in exile since 1870, to lead the Métis in their second attempt to secure recognition for their land claims. The problems of 1869-1870 were not far from Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's memory, and when Riel formed a provisional government in 1884, Macdonald reacted by creating a military force to quell the insurgency. The late winter and spring of 1885 was a period of much unrest

among the native bands, and fear among the small number of settlers.

Like others, the Ottewells abandoned their home and farm to seek shelter inside the walls of Fort Edmonton where R.P. took up sentry duty. In the end, the pitched battles between the Métis (and their aboriginal allies) and government troops did not extend as far west as the Edmonton area, and within three months, with the arrest of Louis Riel and Cree Chief Big Bear, the 1885 resistance was over.

By now, it was early summer, and R.P. busied himself with breaking more land with his two oxen, Buck and Bright. For the first number of years, the Ottewell farm was a typical mixed farming operation. In 1886, Ottewell and a neighbour, St. George Jellet, harvested 60 bushels to the acre of barley, 114 bushels to the acre of White Sandwich oats, and 41 bushels to the acre of White Russia wheat. Frank Oliver, editor of the Edmonton Bulletin, could barely contain his enthusiasm: "this big crop had a marked effect in putting heart and confidence into the pioneers who at the time were in much need of encouragement" after a number of years of drought and killing early frosts.

Oats proved to be a hardy crop and the next year R.P. sold oats on contract to the North West Mounted Police at Fort Saskatchewan. The family also raised swine, Plymouth Rock chickens, turkeys and all-purpose cattle. R.P. and St. George Jellet partnered in the purchase of a sausage-making machine that provided some variety in the family's diet. Much later, R.P. shifted his farming operation to dairy.

By the 1890s, R.P. had a well-established farm, and he was ready to branch into other interests. The Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Company, a colonization company that had been awarded four townships in the area in the early 1880s, had defaulted in 1885. The company directors had chosen to dispose of all the capital assets including a threshing machine it had just purchased. R.P., with an eye to doing custom threshing, purchased the Giant steam engine and the Minnesota Chief grain separator. His outfit, most often manned by local natives, was a common sight during harvest as it moved from farm to farm.

By 1891, R.P. reasoned that the steam engine could serve a dual purpose. Going into partnership with Alex Rea, Ottewell set up two sawmills, one at Cooking Lake and the other at Old Man Creek, where his trusty Giant steam engine ran the mill that turned out rough cut lumber. During the winter, R.P. lived in a shack by the sawmill, walking home once a week to visit his family.

A few years later, he experimented with placer mining on the North Saskatchewan River, which was well known to have "colour," that is, gold. "On a good day, he could make \$5.00." His foray into gold mining must not have been profitable because he gave it up by 1895. However, he purchased an abandoned gold dredge and converted it into a blacksmith shop for his farm, as farmers always had horses to shoe and machinery to fix.

One of the many reasons R.P. had chosen land east of Edmonton was the accessibility and thickness of an abundant number of coal seams. Coal mining was something he knew

from his younger days back at Bruce County in Ontario. In 1904, he opened the Ottewell Coal Company underground mine on SW 17-53-23 W4 near the current railway bridge over the North Saskatchewan River; it was across the river from the community of Beverly.

R.P.'s eldest son, Will, managed the mine, hiring as many as 30 men during the winter season, while also farming at Clover Bar. When the mine closed in 1951, more than 455,000 tons of coal had been mined. Later in 1932, during the dark days of the Depression, R.P. opened another coal mine west of Fulton Creek in 36-52-24-W4. It was, at first, an underground mine giving local farmers and out-of-work labourers employment during the winter months. Beginning in 1946, until the mine's closure in 1950, the mine operated as a strip pit. Approximately 244,000 tons of coal were extracted from this mine.

Farming in the summer, and running sawmills and coal mines in the winter apparently weren't enough to keep R.P. busy. He founded the Campbell and Ottewell Flour Mills and had an interest in the Alberta Milling Company, known also as the Ritchie Mill (located at the end of steel in Strathcona, Alberta). A son, Arthur, who had been born in 1885, worked at both mills in 1911, while establishing his own farm.

R.P. was also community-minded, serving as a school trustee and being instrumental in having Clover Bar School No. 212 built in 1900. A farmer first and foremost, R.P. involved himself in organizations like the Equity League and the United Farmers of Alberta, two organizations that worked to improve the marketing of grain and the bargaining power of farmers.

Hard work and perseverance paid off. By 1911, R.P. and Fannie were able to build a large, modern brick house. The old log house that had served them for so many years was then used as a bunkhouse for hired farm hands. In June 1927, R.P. and Fannie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a sit-down noon meal in their brick home, surrounded by 100 children, grandchildren, siblings, nieces and nephews.

Decades later, in 1951 after R.P.'s death, Celanese Corporation purchased from sons Fred and Frank two quarter-sections of the family farm, including the home quarter where the log house was located. Sometime after this date, the old log house was moved to Danard's Great North West Pioneer Village. When the City of Edmonton purchased the Village's buildings and artifacts in 1967, it moved the log house, now rather dilapidated, to the city's Fort Edmonton Park, where it was restored as an integral part of 1885 Street. The grand brick house, empty after the deaths of Fred and Frank was destroyed by fire on April 17, 1972.



Four generations of Ottewells: Richard Phillip (R.P.) stands behind his father (seated), Richard, R.P.'s son, Arthur holds his son, Wilbur, circa 1915. Photo courtesy of Smale family collection.

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