

NEWS letter



M.D. of Bighorn

Issue 21, March 2009

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Olympic Torch Coming to the MD of Bighorn

As all Albertans likely know by now, the 20th Olympic Winter Games will be held in Vancouver/Whistler, B.C., in February 2010, one year from now. One of the traditions of the Olympics is the torch relay, a 45,000 kilometre journey bringing the sacred flame from Greece to the host site of the events.

The M.D. is pleased to note that the Olympic Torch will be coming through our municipality, and will stop briefly in the hamlet of Exshaw, before making its way to the nearby centres of Canmore and Banff. As the hamlet has been designated a “route community”, the torch will be in Exshaw, on January 20th, 2010.

The M.D. will be one of 1,000 communities in Canada fortunate enough to experience the torch’ presence, during its 106 day journey to Vancouver/Whistler. Residents are invited to come and see the torch, as it heads towards its destination, and the lighting of the cauldron, at the start of the Games. The torch will also be in Cochrane and Morley, earlier that same day, if your residence is closer to those centres. More information can be found on the Vancouver Olympics’ web-site, www.vancouver2010.com.

Heritage Open Houses

The MD of Bighorn will be hosting two heritage resources open houses in which the MD’s consultant, Heritage Collaborative Inc. (HCI), will present their preliminary results from the heritage resources survey. To date, HCI has completed surveys for 45 sites, mostly houses and other sites in and around Exshaw. HCI expects to complete an additional 25 surveys by the end of March, and have identified a further 28 properties that they will survey later this spring when the snow is gone and access conditions improve.

The first open house is Wednesday March 18th at the Exshaw Community Hall from 7:00 pm until 9:00 pm. Most of the sites that will have been surveyed by that date are in the Bow Corridor, so that will be the focus of the open house. HCI will give a short presentation and they will have posters set up showing the surveyed sites and the associated survey forms. They are hoping the public will come out to see what sites have been surveyed and to let them know of any sites they may have missed. They would also like to collect any additional information about the sites the public may have.

The second open house has not yet been scheduled but will be held at Beaupre Hall at a later date. This second open house will include all of the surveyed sites but the focus will be on those sites in the Ranchlands part of the MD of Bighorn. These more rural buildings have proven more difficult to access and many have not yet been visited by HCI. In any event, the date of the second open house will be announced separately. Please stay tuned.



**Black Rock
Fire Lookout**

Council Briefs

What follows are some of the highlights of Council actions since the last newsletter published in December 2008

Council received a number of delegations over the past three months: Stan Orlesky of Fortis Alberta gave Council an explanation of the Automated Metering Infrastructure program (AMI), Fortis' new "remote-read" electric meters, which will be installed in the M.D. sometime in late 2009; Staff Sergeants Shannon Johnson and Blaine Snuk of the Canmore RCMP came to discuss community policing plans, Neighbourhood Watch programs, security measures, and speed limits on Highway 1A, between Exshaw and Kananaskis Village; Dick Way and Doug Towns from Alberta Electrical System Operators came to discuss the future routing of electrical transmission lines through southern Alberta, which may include routes through MD land; Kim Bater, Chairman of the Canadian Rockies School Division (CRSD) board, presented the CRPS's Futures Planning initiative to cope with shrinking enrolment and future changes; and a small group of students from Exshaw School came and spoke about the School's Leadership Program and the donation to the local Spirit of Christmas organization.

Being year-end, and the subsequent start of a new budget year (Ed. Note: see the article regarding the 2009 municipal budget elsewhere in this newsletter), Council made a number of fiscal decisions that impact M.D. residents and organizations: utility rate adjustments were made to Dead Man's Flats, Exshaw and Harvie Heights sewer charges, and to the Harvie Heights water rates, all effective March 1 of 2009. Council also approved donations towards Action for Agriculture (\$250) and Bow Valley WildSmart (\$3,000), a one-time capital contribution of \$10,000 to the Spray Lakes Sawmills Family Sports Centre (Cochrane) second phase project, and finally approved the Community Services Board grant recommendations for 2009 as part of the budget process.

The M.D. will not likely see their auditors as much in the future, either. Council reduced the requirements for Auditor's reports, from quarterly (four per year) to biannual (twice per year, at six months and year-end financial statements) reporting. The auditors had come out four times a year, to provide oversight of the M.D. books; however, it was felt that the need for this level of attention was no longer as necessary as in the past, given the improved financial practices and policies now in place.

The recent announcements regarding federal/provincial grant programs did not go unnoticed by the M.D.: Council directed Administration to prepare applications

to the Building Canada Fund – Communities Component, for grant funds towards the Dead Man's Flats water and sewer project and the proposed Exshaw water system. The Building Canada Fund provides, for approved projects/applications, two thirds of funding up to two million dollars, provided the municipality provides the remaining one-third. With preliminary funding for the three noted M.D. projects either secured or identified, the Building Canada funding, if received, will both alleviate some need for ratepayer contributions (through local improvement charges), and free up other grant dollars for other purposes.

Council somewhat reluctantly agreed to extend the current Exshaw Riding Association lease agreement, on the Riding Association's site in the Exshaw Industrial Park, for two years (to April 2012). The 1.2 hectare site, owned by the M.D., likely has high market value for light industrial purposes, and will be serviced by water and sewer, in the near future. The M.D. has agreed to work with the Riding Association, in locating another suitable site, so that it (the site) can be developed for the Riding Association's purposes.

Alberta municipalities, having been required to comply with Public Sector Accounting Board guidelines, are now working towards full recording and reporting of all capital assets, and the M.D. of Bighorn moved towards that compliance with the adoption of Capital Asset policy F-13 by Council. Previously, due primarily to municipal governments not having to record depreciation costs, municipalities did not record such things as roads/road improvements as being capital assets. All Alberta municipalities are now inventorying their infrastructure, determining historical values, etc., in order to properly report these assets.

The Town of Canmore circulated a notice of intent to close some unused road allowances within the Town limits, in close proximity to the hamlet of Dead Man's Flats. M.D. Council indicated that the MD of Bighorn has no objection to the Town's proposed road closure, and also indicated a desire to be consulted regarding the future development proposals for the area, given unresolved wildlife corridor issues to the east and the land's proximity to the Hamlet of Dead Man's Flats

On the home front, Council declined to sell the Coyote Creek Municipal Reserve to the adjacent land-owners, and further directed Administration to ensure Council's original direction (to restore the trail on the Coyote Creek Municipal Reserve) be followed. After being

Council Briefs Cont'd...

requested to remove private fences and other structures that obstructed the trail usage, the land-owners submitted a joint request to discuss purchase of the Municipal Reserve. Council gave clear indication this was not open for discussion, at this time, due to Council's recent commitment to rehabilitation of the existing trail system.

Council approved a review and updating of the existing Dead Man's Flats Area Redevelopment Plan, and with that review, to include portions of the "design guidelines" document prepared by IBI Group within the ARP. The Dead Man's Flats' Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP), approved back in 1994, needs updating to recognize the changing face of the hamlet: with the BHB and Copperstone developments moving forward, other redevelopments are anticipated in the future.

The M.D.'s Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) was adopted as circulated, after public notification failed to produce any comments or suggested changes. The ICSP is a long range planning document, and is a requirement for obtaining certain grant dollars from the Federal/Provincial governments.

Council finalized the Kananaskis Guest Ranch land use bylaw amendment, and the Conceptual Plan for the same site, approving both items. The Guest Ranch personnel can now move ahead with their plans, to develop up to 20 dwelling units, the owners' residence, staff accommodation, and a variety of amenity buildings on a part of the Guest Ranch lands. The dwellings would be owned through a corporate ownership arrangement with occupancy to be no longer than 75 days at a time.

Two separate requests for a second driveway to each property were denied by Council. The two requests, one in Harvie Heights and one in Lac Des Arcs, would have impacted operational and traffic safety aspects of the streets involved: there was concern with sight-lines, snow clearing, etc.

Council has agreed to send Councillor Paul Ryan to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' 2009 annual conference in Whistler B.C. – but only if he sees merit in the topics on the agenda. Councillor Ryan, one of two M.D. representatives on the Bow Valley Waste Management Commission, is specifically looking for Whistler-area waste management-related issues at the FCM conference. If none are shown on the agenda, he will likely not attend.

A small number of lots in Lac Des Arcs have been impacted by Bow River erosion of the adjacent river-banks, and appealed to the M.D. for assistance. Council subsequently forwarded an application to the Alberta Water Management and Erosion Control program (AWMEC), for funding of engineering and remedial work on the Bow River bank at Lac Des Arcs, with the intent that, if funding is approved, the work (engineering and remedial) would be undertaken as a local improvement project, with the affected property owners required to pay any costs not covered by the program funding. The AWMEC program, however, may not be active, at the current time, as it appears the Provincial government is reviewing the Program, in light of flooding problems that occurred a few years ago.

Clearwater County has initiated discussions around a regional aggregate management strategy, and the M.D. of Bighorn agree to participate in discussions, with the intent that a report be presented to the Central AAMD&C Board of Directors by no later than year-end, 2009. A number of rural municipalities in the immediate vicinity are concerned about the ability to find and manage new gravel sources, in future years, and feel a regional approach may be of benefit. The M.D. has participated in a few meetings, and is assessing the value of continuing participation.

Deputy Reeve Pepper, bringing forward concerns regarding the safety of Highway 40 near the bridge in Waiparous, asked Administration to start communications with Alberta Transportation and Utilities to find a solution to blind corners near the entrance to the bridge.

Council appointed long-serving member Bryne Weerstra as Chairperson of the Agricultural Services and Environmental Advisory Board.

Council authorized M.D. Administration to enter into a new five year Agreement with the Summer Village of Waiparous, for the provision of "first response" fire suppression and emergency rescue services, effective 1 Jan 09. The M.D. has, for many years, provided first response coverage to the Summer Village, from the nearby Ghost River Fire Hall.

(Please note that unadopted Council minutes, in their entirety, are usually posted on the M.D. web-site within a week of the Council meeting being held. Go to www.mdbighorn.ca/ , and click on "Minutes" under Virtual Bighorn on the right hand side of the page.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

2009 Budgets approved

At the December Council meeting, approval was given to the 2009 M.D. operating and capital budgets.

Given the recent state of the world's economy, M.D. Council was extremely cognizant of the need to show restraint, while noting there is a number of activities that need additional funding, to ensure M.D. residents continue to receive quality services. While a budget increase of 8.6% was approved (\$247,751 over the 2008 budget), Council also authorized withdrawal of approximately \$150,000 from the M.D.'s Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve Account, which will reduce the municipal taxation increase to only 3.5%. Some highlights include:

- The major capital project for 2009 is the Exshaw water system. Initial engineering estimates target the cost at \$10.77 million for a full municipal water system for the hamlet of Exshaw; the M.D. has secured a number of grants (and is pursuing other funding sources), and a local improvement levy will also be needed. The project is anticipated to take up to two years to construct.
- Although the Province appears to be poised to (finally) take-over ground ambulance services in Alberta, Council continued to budget to meet its commitments on payments to the three service providers (Canmore and Cochrane Emergency Services, and Mount View Regional Emergency Services). However, anticipating provincial take-over coming into effect on April 1st, the M.D. budgeted only \$18,000 this year, for the initial three months of the year: in past years, the ambulance budget has been around \$47,000. It is further anticipated this budget will disappear from the books in subsequent years.
- A new phone system is planned for the M.D.'s offices: authorization was given to access up to \$30,000 from the Equipment Reserve account, for a new switchboard and phones.
- \$35,000 was set aside for a new pedestrian bridge over Pigeon Creek in Dead Man's Flats.
- Council's regular Volunteer Gala will take place in 2009: every three years, Council honors the community's volunteers at a banquet and awards ceremony.
- A new fire truck will be purchased in 2009, for the Ghost River Fire operations.

Full details on the Year 2009 budgets can be provided by calling the M.D. office.

2009 Property Taxes

Combined assessments and tax notices will be sent out in May. Watch your mail.

For Sale By The M.D.: Fig Trees

As a result of some office redecorating, The M.D. has available, for sale on a "first come, first serve" basis, two living fig trees.

Approximate size:

57" -66" Tall, in pots 38"X13"

One is quite wide 97" and the other is about 57" wide.

They are available for viewing at the M.D.

Operations shop, during regular business hours. \$50 per tree takes one.

If you're interested, call the M.D. office at (403) 673-3611 or Calgary Direct (403) 233-7678 during regular business offers.



Gravel Sales

Due to depleted quantities, there will be no gravel sales this year from the Griffin Valley Gravel Pit. For alternative gravel suppliers, please contact the MD of Bighorn Roads Foreman.

Dark Skies

“There are two kinds of light - the glow that illuminates, and the glare that obscures.”

Looking eastward towards the city at night, James Thurber’s words take on new meaning. The glare from light pollution generated both corporately and privately in Alberta may be doing more than obscuring the stars from view – it’s damaging the environment and could be making us sick.

In recent years, light pollution has come under fire for a number of reasons, including interference with bird migration patterns, nocturnal behavioral changes in wildlife, difficulties in astronomical studies, as a waste of resources and finally, a suspected cause of increased rates in some types of cancer. As a result, some towns and districts in both Canada and the US are embracing the Dark Skies Initiative.

The Dark Skies Initiative’s mandate is to reduce what has been called the most solvable form of pollution. Caused by outdoor undirected light sources, lights that are left on when not needed or are just too bright, light pollution could be ended with the simple flick of a switch.

Humans have created artificial lighting for as long as we’ve been building cities and our reasons haven’t changed much over the years: light makes us feel safer. We’ve always been encouraged to walk in well-lit areas at night and keep the house bright to thwart break-ins and other crimes. Businesses believe that lighting can prevent theft and vandalism. But the Light Pollution Abatement Calgary Centre website reports that the City of Calgary Police Service concluded crime is not related to the how brightly lit a location is. Crime statistics indicate assaults usually occur

between individuals who know each other and usually involve drugs, alcohol, or past grievances. Most home break-ins occur when a property is unoccupied during the day. At night, businesses are targeted despite security lighting. In short, criminals don’t like the dark either.

The Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP), a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the protection of wild birds, estimates that bright, artificial city lighting leads over 100 million birds to their deaths annually. Birds become disoriented by city glare and collide with each other, tall buildings, radio towers and so on.

An over-abundance of light may not only be damaging wildlife. A 2008 study at the University of Haifa in Israel seems to indicate that exposure to trespass light during sleep impedes the body’s ability to produce certain hormones needed to prevent breast cancer.

"By no means are we saying that light at night is the only or the major risk factor for breast cancer," said Itai Kloog, of the University of Haifa, who led the study. "But we found a clear and strong correlation that should be taken into consideration." Kloog told the Washington Post in a 2008 interview.

But awareness is spreading and Bighorn Community Planner, Tracy Woitenko says the MD is formalizing and expanding regulations regarding dark skies principles in the Land Use Bylaw. The bylaw will use the International Dark Sky

Association’s philosophy as a basis for future development.

“We’re already encouraging ratepayers and developers to be mindful of how they are using light,” she explained. Planning Department staff also asks some developers to create a lighting plan for certain development permit applications. “We want to protect the night skies and adjacent properties from excess and trespass lights.

The Light Pollution Abatement Calgary Centre website makes the following suggestions for changes we can make at home in our nighttime lighting habits:

- Use fully shielded fixtures and aim lights downward to keep to light on your own property. This will solve most light trespass and glare problems and it will reduce sky glow.
- Turn lights off when not needed (like your parents taught you!). Most exterior building lights, area lights, and illuminated signs can be turned off overnight when very few people are out. This will not affect security and it will save energy.
- Use the right amount of light. Too much light actually reduces your ability to see by making adjacent areas appear dimmer. This can be hazardous. Good lighting uses carefully-aimed, shielded, low intensity lighting to create more uniform illumination. This provides for better illumination that enhances visibility and reduces energy consumption.

There are more tips on outdoor lighting at:

<http://calgary.rasc.ca/lp/frame.html>

2009 Spring and Fall Clean-Up

RULES:

1. Only brush will be picked up.
2. **MATERIAL IN BAGS WILL NOT BE PICKED UP. PLEASE USE COMPOST FACILITIES FOR LEAVES AND GRASS.**
3. Other Materials will not be picked up and remain the responsibility of the resident to take to the appropriate recycling, or landfill site. Household garbage goes in the normal waste stream to Calgary.
4. No materials may be placed on roadsides after midnight on Sunday.
5. There is a limit of one load per household. A truckload is considered to be 8'x7'x4'.
6. Material for pick-up should be no longer than 8 feet in length and neatly stacked alongside the roadway in a manner, which does not impair traffic or become a safety concern. Branches and bushes stacked with all the trunks parallel will be easier to pick-up with our Skid Steer.
7. **ANY BRUSH LONGER THAN 8 FEET WILL NOT BE PICKED UP.**
8. There is no charge for this service.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CLEANUP WEEKEND</u>	<u>PICK-UP DATES</u>
Benchlands	May 23 & 24, 2009 October 3 & 4, 2009	May 25, 2009 October 5, 2009
Harvie Heights	May 30 & May 31, 2009 September 26 & 27, 2009	June 1, 2009 September 28, 2009
Lac Des Arcs	June 6 & 7, 2009 September 12 & 13, 2009	June 8, 2009 September 14, 2009
Exshaw	June 13 & 14, 2009 September 5 & 6, 2009	June 15, 2009 September 7, 2009
Deadmans Flats/ Kananaskis Settlement	June 20 & 21, 2009 September 19 & 20, 2009	June 22, 2009 September 21, 2009

Francis Cooke Regional Landfill

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through
Saturday

8:00am to 4:00pm

**For more
information call
673-2708**

www.bvwaste.ca

The Burning Question

Springtime is almost here and so begins annual yard and land cleanups throughout the MD. It also marks the start of inquiries to our office regarding what residents can and can't burn.

MD residents are only permitted to burn clean wood, no yard waste, garbage or scrap. From November 1st to March 31st residents within the hamlets (and Kananaskis settlement) require a burning permit that they can get at the MD office at #2 Heart Mountain Drive. Burning permits are not required in the rural area, during the November-March period.

April 1st to October 31st, all burning within the M.D. of Bighorn requires a permit.

Please contact the Bow Ranger Station in Calgary at 403-297-8800 to make arrangements. Due to an increased danger of fires growing out of control, a Forestry Officer will come out and inspect the pile to be burned.

Fines and costs have been levied in the past, for those caught burning without a permit or burning in contravention of conditions outlined on the permit.

What can hamlet residents do with their accumulated yard waste after a spring cleanup? Leave it out for the MD to pick up. Check out the pick-up dates for your location listed in this newsletter and on our website.

For more detailed information on burning go to our Notice Board at

www.mdbighorn.ca

The MD of Bighorn Withdraws From the Calgary Regional Partnership

In September of 2003, M.D. Council sent notice to the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) of its intent to seek membership in the organization; the M.D. was accepted as a full member, and began active participation in the various CRP functions/committees/interests. A little over five years later, after considerable discussion and mulling over the municipality's continued role within the CRP, the M.D. voted to withdraw from the Calgary Regional Partnership, citing the reason being primarily "...due to the M.D. not being a part of the Calgary metropolitan area (the municipalities in proximity to, and the lands immediately adjacent to the City of Calgary, being the area which is the focus of the proposed CRP's Regional Land Use Plan, regional servicing, and other factors)".

M.D. residents may be asking "What happened?" The reality is that both organizations – the CRP and the M.D. – changed significantly enough, that the relationship was no longer a good fit.

The Calgary Regional Partnership, now comprised of eighteen urban and rural municipalities in and around the City of Calgary, originally came together to solve regional issues through inter-municipal cooperation. The CRP focused on such things as regional geographic information systems' mapping, economic development, specialized transportation, waste management, water/waste-water regional servicing possibilities, and watershed mapping/protection: the Provincial government provided substantial funding towards these (and other) initiatives, and actively participated in the processes. Over the past few years, however, as economic times, and faces at the table, have changed, so has the CRP's focus: the organization's main focus is development of a regional land use plan, which would affect the statutory planning documents and direction of all eighteen members. The language and policies in this draft land use plan strongly suggest that it is the area immediately around the City of Calgary (the Calgary metropolitan area) that is of primary concern, and that the M.D. of Bighorn is too far removed from that core area, to realistically participate in, and be restricted by, the policies being prepared.

The M.D. has changed, too: while the municipality remains a rural, sparsely populated entity, we are seeing the signs of progress. With such growth modules as Horseshoe Lands, the BHB development at Dead Man's Flats, and pending municipal water systems in both Dead Man's Flats and Exshaw (with a water-line already in place for the Harvie Heights commercial strip), the M.D. is moving towards some expansion, and related servicing needs. The draft policies of the CRP, while strongly advocating regionalism, do not suggest nor recognize sufficient regional activities/servicing that would impact or involve the M.D.

After making the decision to withdraw from the CRP, at the December Council meeting, M.D. officials met with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, to explain the rationale for doing so. It was clearly explained to the Minister that the M.D. was not departing in anger/frustration, but in simple recognition that the M.D. and CRP were no longer moving in the same direction, and it was time for a parting. Reeve Dene Cooper also sent a letter to the Chair of the CRP, Mayor Linda Bruce of the City of Airdrie, indicating "...I want to assure the CRP members that the M.D. of Bighorn will continue to collaborate on regional initiatives, when feasible and mutually agreeable, despite no longer holding membership in the CRP (provided, of course, that the M.D. is invited to participate). We will always be willing to discuss issues, proposals, etc. that are of benefit to your members and the M.D., and it is important to our municipality to retain its good relations with our neighbours. The Municipal District of Bighorn wishes the Calgary Regional Partnership the best of luck in its on-going determination of the region's future, but regrets that our municipality will no longer be able to take part in determining that destiny. "

2009 Dog Licenses

Licenses for dogs **6 months of age and older** are required in the following areas of the MD: Dead Man's Flats, Exshaw, Harvie Heights, and Lac des Arcs. Dogs that are used as guide dogs are exempt for this licensing requirement. Licenses can be purchased at the administration office; fees are the same as last year. Please note, if you have 4 or more dogs, a kennel license is required; contact our planning department for more information.

Mail-in Dog License Request Form

Male or Female _____

Neutered or Spayed \$20.00 Not Fixed \$100

Proof that a dog is neutered or spayed must be provided the first time a dog is licensed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

NAME OF DOG _____ BREED OF DOG _____

PROOF OF SPAY OR NEUTER ENCLOSED? (Only required if first time registering for a license in Bighorn)

Bighorn Olympian

Though belated, the MD of Bighorn wanted to send out congratulations to one of our own. This past summer, Sandra Donnelly took part in her first Olympic Games in Hong Kong competing on the Canadian Eventing Team. On her homebred Canadian Warmblood gelding Buenos Aires, Donnelly was the top Canadian, finishing in 31st place.



Eventing, formerly known as the three-day event, sees riders compete in three tests: dressage, cross-country and show jumping.

The scores from each event are added together for the final result, and the rider and horse combination with the fewest penalty points over the three days is the winner.

How to Contact Us

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Councillors

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