

Reeve's Message

As 2019 is coming to an end and we all look forward to a new year, let me reflect on what your M.D. Council and Administration has been and will be doing.

At the end of August with the retirement of CAO Cindy Vizzutti, Council hired Derrick Krizan (an experienced CAO with deep rural roots from the MD. of Taber). Welcome Derrick.

IDPs (Intermunicipal Development Plans) and ICFs (Intermunicipal Collaborative Frameworks) mandated by the Provincial Government to be completed by April 1, 2020 between neighboring municipalities have kept us all busy. These plans are intended to encourage municipalities across the Province to communicate better and work together to plan land use and reduce the duplication of services and infrastructures. We have completed IDPs with all 7 neighboring rural municipalities and are still diligently working on ones with our urban municipalities within the M.D. ICFs are completed with 3 of 7 rural neighbors and we are working on trying to complete the other 4 rurals & the ones with each of the 4 towns within the M.D. Thank you to those who participated in the Public Open Houses and gave us your feedback. Negotiations have and will always keep our rural agricultural interests and livelihoods at the forefront.

The Town of Granum has voted to dissolve as a Town and join the M.D. We await the final word from Minister Madu of Municipal Affairs and the Cabinet with the issuance of an Order in Council. In anticipation that it is not likely they will go against the vote results, we intend to welcome the good people of Granum into the M.D. and will enter into consultations/discussions with local volunteer groups and societies regarding the future of community institutions which include recreation, library and cultural programs and facilities which currently operate within the Town. The M.D. Council values all community volunteers and groups working to make and keep Granum a viable community and look forward to working with you all.

Rural Crime and Policing Costs – With the Province passing on Policing costs, we are certain of at least a 15% increase in our expense budget with no increase in revenue. This is in addition to the cost of our current CPO (Community Police Officers) program, with no guarantee in increased service from the RCMP as they are already understaffed in many detachments. Council had the opportunity to meet with the RCMP & the Justice Minister at the RMA Conference in Edmonton to discuss this and rural crime, trespassing, and other issues. We were told rural crime is decreasing however, people are still concerned especially when it is still occurring, response times are still too long and with the delay in procedures – like the time it took to charge those trespassers at Jumbo Valley Turkey farm north of Fort Macleod. We are grateful that the Province recognized they needed to beef up legislation to protect farm/ranch property and livelihoods regarding trespassing on private property. We will continue to communicate with the RCMP detachments in the MD and keep them aware of our/your concerns and we will try to get the best policing that we can.

These are but a few of the issues we are facing in 2020. This Council is always working for you and are planning a Strategic Planning Retreat in the new year (at the MD Office not anywhere exotic!!). Please let us know of any ideas you can give us for the future of this MD.

A very Blessed Merry Christmas to each and everyone in the M.D. of Willow Creek and our neighbors.

On behalf of the entire Council – Glen Alm, Evan Berger, John Kroetsch, Darry Markle, Ian Sundquist, John Van Driesten

Reeve Maryanne V. Sandberg