

2017 Year End In Review

With the beginning of the New Year 2018, let me offer my best wishes to all the residents and ratepayers of the Municipal District of Spirit River and to all of our neighbours in the Central Peace and beyond. Now that 2017 has concluded I would like to share some of my thoughts on our successes and challenges. We went through a municipal election in October so I would like to thank Yves Mercier for his service to the MD as Councillor from 2009-2017, I would like to thank Stan Bzowy for his time as Reeve and for his nomination this past October. I will try to serve the area as well. I would like to welcome Elaine Garrow back to Council for her sixth term and Nick van Rootselaar back to Council after serving four terms from 1995 to 2004.

Looking back on 2017 I see what was a challenging spring for the agricultural community turn into a bountiful harvest. As I look at the recent accomplishments and successes I think of the people of the MD and how they are all contributing in their own way to the success of our communities.

The FCSS program just completed a very successful Christmas Hamper program with many generous donations from the local communities and businesses. They were able to help many families and individuals that are struggling across the Central Peace. Many seniors were recipients of hampers and gifts as well. I reflect on how the MD started the FCSS program back in 2005 and combined with the Town and Village to form the Central Peace FCSS in 2006 which is now broadening again with services to Birch Hills County and partnering with Saddle Hills County on specific programs.

The MD has continued to search out ways of being cost efficient and provide the necessary services for our residents and ratepayers. We have been lucky enough to have attracted a number of major businesses over the years to help cover costs and to provide employment opportunities. Beginning with the first of three major grain elevators for the Peace Country we have not looked back. We are continuing to search for economic development opportunities for our area which involves courting businesses for multiple years in advance. We are thankful to those businesses that have chosen to settle in the MD and the Central Peace and welcome them to be listed on our Website directory.

The MD has partnered to share the expense and increase the services where we can. We are very proud to be a member of the G5', consisting of a group of the five Central Peace Municipalities including the County of Birch Hills, County of Saddle Hills, Town of Spirit River and the Village of Rycroft. We are partnering with the G5 in the construction of the new Central Peace Health Centre. We welcome Dr. Arsalan and his staff to the new building and look forward to the Physicians moving in to their space early in the New Year. We have also attracted a Physiotherapist that is going to occupy the balance of the building beginning in February. There are many other exciting projects that this group is working on for the future and we will share the news and plans as they develop. Some of the projects our G5 group is working on provincially is an assisted living facility and access to the Peace River for water for the region. The Central Peace Fire and Rescue Commission has had a busy year and we are encouraged to see the enthusiasm of the current members of the fire commission.

We are also very appreciative of all of the volunteers that work to support our local community groups and facilities. Your facilities and services are required to sustain our communities into the future. We have also helped many residents of the MD to attend post-secondary education through our bursary program. The MD is a proud contributor to your successes.

Although we are preparing for potentially difficult fiscal times with increased cost and diminishing revenues the MD Council is strong in our resolve to manage our current service

levels within our current level of taxation which has not increased since 2007. We want to continue to provide a competitive and stable tax rate for our ratepayers as you also have fiscal challenges to meet moving forward.

On behalf of the Municipal District of Spirit River Council and staff I wish each and every one a Happy New Year.

Reeve Tony Van Rootselaar

The Council and staff of the Municipal District of Spirit River wish you all a safe & Happy Holiday Season