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NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Dear Residents & Ratepayers,

This has been a very busy month for County Council between two regular meetings, the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Fall convention, as well as two days of budget committee meetings. A 2024 Interim Budget has been referred to County Council for approval, however, the actual tax implications will not be known until after the December 31st, 2023, taxable assessment has been received prior to budget finalization next Spring.

Council enjoyed a very good dialogue with local MLA Joseph Schow when he attended our November 1st meeting, virtually. Some of the conversations we had with him carried over to the meetings that were had with government ministers during the RMA Convention. There remains significant concern regarding the impact of drought conditions on coverage rates for crop insurance in future years. There remains significant concern over the impact of provincial quasi-judicial boards in providing large-scale development approvals (i.e. renewable energy installations, confined feeding operations, etc.). There also remains significant concern over the need, timing, and scope of upgrades to Highway 547 at the North end of Vulcan County.

Also at this meeting, Council reviewed a schedule for the development of a new Municipal Development Plan (MDP), a project that will take us until the end of our elected term. The last MDP is over ten years old and, in my opinion, not very robust. We need to more clearly define how we see renewable energy installations developing in Vulcan County, how high-impact agricultural activity should unfold, as well as identify our transportation and economic development objectives as we go forward.

Caleb Scott has been appointed by Council as a Pest Inspector, Soil Conservation Officer, and

Weed Inspector for Vulcan County. We believe Caleb will be a significant help to Deanna Heather in supporting our agricultural industry.

A stakeholder update was provided by Dr. Craig Coburn of the University of Lethbridge for the MITACs Locating Missing Graves Project. This update provides a preview of some of the findings, including the data that will be delivered to stakeholders for each cemetery in the project. These cemeteries include: Carmangay, Bowville, Travers, Lomond, Marquis Municipal (East Milo), Hope Lutheran (West Milo), Anastasia, and Arrowwood. After the university issued a press release earlier this month, we received coverage from news media that was distributed across the country. A link to a Lethbridge Global News broadcast can be found on my website, as well as an article that was written by Stephen Tipper and published by Post Media (Calgary Herald, etc.).

As of November 28th, the National Citizens Inquiry Final Report has now been released. This has been an independent, cross-country, and citizen-funded inquiry into Canada's Covid-19 response. For those interested, the report can be found at:

<https://nationalcitizensinquiry.ca/commissioners-report/>.

The following are remarks I gave at the Champion Remembrance Day Service on behalf of local government. Dick Ellis laid a wreath for the Village of Champion and I was honoured to do so for Vulcan County. I would like to thank Mr. Ellis for his assistance in sourcing local history for the Champion Community. Dick has kindly lent me his extra copies of the of the 1970 Cleverville Champion history book, as well as the 1999 Champion and District history book. Thank you, as well, to the Champion Legion volunteers for their efforts in conducting a very nice service.

Sincerely, Christopher Northcott

NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Remarks from Remembrance Day Service at the Champion Cenotaph, November 11th, 2023:

Every November the 11th, we remember the tremendous hardship that emerges from war and the huge sacrifices that were made on our behalf to return us to peace time. The current crisis in the Ukraine and the Middle East has made the destruction of war seem nearer than many of us have experienced. The prospect of nuclear war is a horrifying one for all of us. War is a reminder that while we must defend our way of life, we cannot take peace for granted.

The experience of war has been felt close to home by the Champion Community since the days of the First World War. The Cleverville Champion history book reminds us that the second man to enlist in the First World War from Champion was a man by the name of Stephen Cowgill. Stephen had arrived in Champion in April of 1913 all the way from Nottingham, England, working on the farm of Fred Alcock. No doubt, in 1913, Stephen had big plans for his new life in Canada. However, by the end of 1914, Stephen resolved to put those plans on hold and join the war effort. Fortunately, Stephen returned to the Champion area in 1915 with honourable discharge. However, his history write-up also mentions who the first man to enlist in the First World War was; a local doctor, Dr. Brown. As remains true today, having a local doctor is a huge asset to a community and Dr. Brown's absence would have been felt by this one in an immediate way.

Another veteran from this community that experienced tremendous hardship during the Second World War was Ted Fedaj. Ted was born in Poland in 1921 and experienced the outbreak of war directly when the country of his birth was invaded by two world powers. In October of 1939, Ted was taken by the Russians as a prisoner of war to a camp in Siberia. When he was freed in 1941,

he joined the army in Tashkent, Asia, to fight against Germany. In March of 1942, he crossed the border to Persia (what is now Iran) to become allies of the British 8th Army. By August of that year he was fighting in North Africa against the German Army at Tobruk. And from there, Ted fought through North Africa, Italy and France, eventually arriving in England in 1946. The following year, Ted resolved that he was not going back to communism in Poland but would seek a new life in Canada. After living in a few other places and having been an active member of the Champion Community, Ted's write-up finishes with a powerful concluding remark: "After living in many places, the Fedaj family has decided that Champion is the best place of all."

This Remembrance Day, may we remember the many stories of lives lived and sacrificed in times of war. May we not take for granted the hardship and chaos that war generates across the globe. And, with purposeful silence, may we think of what peace means to this community and to the flourishing of our way of life.



(2023 Remembrance Day Service, Champion Cenotaph)