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NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Dear Residents & Ratepayers,

The District 20 (Champion) Fire Protection Association met on February 19th for the first time this year. The Association is hoping to do three community bingos this year so please watch the Champion Chronicle and social media for notices of these events.

Also discussed at this meeting were the governance policies for the association, as well as the memorandum of understanding that sets the association apart from the District 20 fire department of Vulcan County. While the association is established to raise public awareness and fundraise for local emergency services, the regional fire department is the sole service provider.

Finally, the association is working on a path forward for its building project initiative, one that will see the eventual construction of an annex east of the fire hall for additional secure storage of equipment. Last year, the association was unsuccessful in applying for a Community Facility Enhancement Program grant, proposing a facility that would support not only the fire department but other community groups who require secure storage for equipment. Volunteers are now working with Vulcan County personnel on how to best phase and develop this project while pursuing alternative funding opportunities. I am working to facilitate these conversations. The tremendous support of the Champion Community and region for the activities of the fire association is greatly appreciated. As such, I will do my best to provide regular updates on this building project.

Great turnout was had in Milo on the evening of February 20th for a meeting at the Community Hall hosted by the Village of Milo. Vulcan County Councillor Kelly Nelson was instrumental in helping organize this meeting for

the benefit of County ratepayers. In addition to the Village Council and Administration, Reeve Jason Schneider and myself were there, along with Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Nels Petersen. Discussion was led by Village Mayor Scott Schroeder and facilitated by Councillor Nelson. CAO Petersen provided an update on the McGregor regional water project, a project that will see that Village of Milo get a new water treatment plant, as well as regional water provided to the Village of Arrowwood and the Hamlet of Mossleigh. He also provided an overview of the McGregor Lake Reservoir marina project, noting that Vulcan County is hoping to conclude First Nations consultation before construction season. These two projects offer tremendous economic development potential for our region.

Councillor Nelson spoke at this meeting about the seniors housing project moving forward under the Marquis Foundation. She is the Chair of the Board for the Foundation and very involved in seeing this project through to completion. A grant has been received from the provincial government to build a new facility that will replace the Peter Dawson Lodge, and additional funding is being sought to construct new independent living facilities in Vulcan, Arrowwood and Milo. Such facilities already exist in Carmangay, Champion, Lomond, and Vulcan (higher demand) for seniors.

The Vulcan County Mental Wellness Coalition appeared as a delegation at the February 4th regular meeting of County Council. They spoke about the importance of looking out for the mental well being of every ag family in Vulcan County. Their initiative focuses on promoting early awareness and crisis prevention of the challenges faced by producers. The coalition can be contacted through the Vulcan County Health and Wellness Foundation. Please watch for events or resources.

Sincerely, Christopher Northcott