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NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Dear Residents & Ratepayers,

Community development in rural areas, especially areas with a relatively small population, can be severely handicapped by conflict between entrenched factions. All associations or corporate bodies can be vulnerable, from time to time, to over-indulging in too much drama. When this occurs, common objectives get lost, agreement is seemingly impossible, and hard feelings prevent reconciliation. It is in such times when it helps to remember what first motivated us to get involved with our community, or what inspired us to take on an initiative that we try to advance collectively. Different people get involved for their own reasons, and in community development we learn to associate and work collectively with people whom we might not otherwise have much in common.

At the end of the day, communities that learn to see beyond conflict and drama, to let it rest and to work co-operatively, are the communities that will grow, prosper, and move forward from strength to strength. Those that don't let it rest become their own worst enemy when it comes to "having nice things." Every community needs leaders who are willing to listen, capable of having an open mind, and who can set aside self-interest for the sake of having a thriving community to call home; may we all strive to be such leaders! That is truly the heart and soul of a free and self-governing society where limited local government can succeed.

The month of September saw two meetings of County Council and one meeting of the Municipal Planning Commission that I attended. I chaired the quarterly board meeting of the Oldman River Regional Services Commission (ORRSC) on September 3rd. I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Vulcan Flying Club on the

15th (The club manages the Vulcan Airport on behalf of the Town and the County.). Then, on the 18th, I attended the bi-annual meeting of the Foothills Little Bow Municipal Association in Lethbridge. Foothills Little Bow provides district level resolutions to the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA), the association that advocates on behalf of rural Alberta with provincial and federal orders of government.

We had three delegations appear at Council in September. At the first meeting, Peter Casurella from the SouthGrow Regional Initiative gave us an update on the economic development projects they are advancing in Southern Alberta. At the second meeting, Louise Schmidt spoke on the need to consider the long-term future of the Cultural Recreation Centre and County Central High School should Palliser School division move forward with plans to either modernize or replace their school. Also at the second meeting, Ryan Fleetwood presented to Council in his capacity as the President of the District 20 Fire Protection Association. Mr. Fleetwood provided a very welcome overview of how the association supports community engagement, fundraising, and emergency services programming in Champion and District. He hi-lighted the need for additional space in the District 20 Fire Hall. Discussion was had about the County developing a capital plan with the association to see the eventual construction of an addition to the hall.

Best wishes to the farmers who are eagerly trying to conclude harvest this October. From what was looking like a drought year, some areas saw a record amount of rainfall; there are beautiful crops being harvested across the County. Every October many enjoy turkey dinner, see family and friends, and to give thanks for the blessings that come despite the battles. Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely, Christopher Northcott