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Notes from Council

Dear Residents & Ratepayers,

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Fall Convention was from November 2nd to 5th in Edmonton. We heard from the Premier, then a presentation on agritourism, and then participated in the RMA Annual General Meeting. There were informative workshops on municipal governance, internet speed testing, rural data centre projects, Alberta's emerging minerals sector, the RMA intermunicipal collaborative framework resource, as well as recruitment and retention in rural healthcare. We participated in the resolutions session where RMA determines what it will advocating for in the coming year, as well as the ministerial forum where we have a chance to ask government ministers specific questions for the benefit of everyone in attendance. Apart from the extensive networking across the hospitality suites, we also heard from the Official Leader of the Opposition.

Vulcan County put forward a resolution asking the province to restore legislated continuing care standards. This has been a significant issue for some in our region as adequate care for seniors who require full-time assistance can be a challenge. Another resolution that has some implications for our area was put forward by Sturgeon County asking for a provincial review of the regulatory and engagement framework for large scale data centre projects. The province seems to have addressed this item to some degree with provincial regulatory standards announced this month.

On November 13th, Vulcan County Council held a public hearing at the Vulcan Cultural Recreation Centre regarding Bylaw 2026-023. This is a land use bylaw amendment that adds "data processing operation" as a discretionary use in the Vulcan County Industrial Park. The hearing was well attended and a lot of public feedback was received. The bylaw was advanced to second and third reading on the meeting agenda for November 18th, and it passed both readings by a vote of 3 to 2. I voted against it do to the lack of clear planning review detailing the impacts of data processing operations in the industrial park. I don't believe the impacts are fully understood, especially as it concerns a potential divergence of use between business/light industrial and medium industrial uses. That said, the newly announced provincial framework governing data processing centres over 10 Mw will effect this type of development in the industrial park.

While Vulcan County will begin its 2027 budget deliberations on November 30th, the service agreement is up for review between the Town of Vulcan, Vulcan County and the Vulcan Flying Club. While the Vulcan Airport is owned by the municipalities, they rely on the club to operate and maintain the facility in accordance with the standards of Transport Canada. Sitting as the Vulcan County representative on this board has been a very interesting appointment for me and I have enjoyed learning about the club and the different forms of outreach they undertake.

It was an honour to lay two wreaths at the Champion Legion Remembrance Day Ceremony on November 11th. The first wreath was on behalf of the Province of Alberta and the second wreath was on behalf of Vulcan County. The service was very well attended and I am always impressed by the level of youth engagement on Remembrance Day. A big thank you to the Champion Legion for providing this important act of remembrance in the community. I have been told that the Remembrance Day service in Milo on November 10th, hosted by the Milo Community School and the Milo Lions Club, was also very well done.

Sincerely, Christopher Northcott