

Mayor's Message

In 2011, Town residents elected a new 'Council' with the only change being the retirement of former Councillor Len Folkman, and the induction of a new member – Councillor Scott Veitch. We thank those who took the interest and time to cast their votes. For the 2011 Election, 'mail ballot voting' was introduced. There were many voters who took advantage of this new opportunity, where in previous elections if they were out of the area during voting opportunities, they lost the privilege to vote in the municipal elections. Council is now looking at the possibility of implementing electronic voting for the 2014 municipal election. The cost and efficiencies will be considered before any decision is made.

2012 will be a challenging year for Town Council, with the responsibility of municipal policing costs being imposed on taxpayers. The 2011 Canada Census put our population over 5,000, and when that occurs, municipalities must pay for a share of municipal policing. We see this as a positive that our community is growing. More details on this matter are available in this issue of the Town Citizen, under 'Policing Impact'. Council adopted the Five Year Financial Plan (2012 – 2016) Bylaw, which held department budgets to a '0%' increase to reduce the impact of tax implications due to the new municipal policing costs.

If you have an issue you wish to discuss, you are invited to drop in to speak with me or call me at 250-428-2214, Ext. 227. My office hours are posted on the Town's website. Thank you again for the opportunity to work on your behalf.

Ron Toyota, Mayor

Cultivating Creston's Future Together

Our Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)

This process is about envisioning a successful and sustainable future for your community and creating it together. There are many reasons to integrate sustainability into your town planning, but at the most basic level, it seems pointless to plan for the community's economic success if it can't continue forever. It makes more sense to plan for success that is also sustainable in the long-term – success that is compatible with the constraints of a finite planet with limited resources.



Sustainability planning helps to prepare for a changing economic future, attract new residents and businesses, as well as retain and motivate municipal talent. Local economies plan for greater resilience and are better prepared for shifting global priorities for goods and services and rising energy prices. Municipalities save significant money over time through reduced energy and waste management costs. Finally, it helps communities to become a local part of global solutions for a host of environmental, social and economic issues.

What is an ICSP?

An ICSP articulates the community's shared vision for a successful and sustainable future. It includes actions and practical tools for implementation, and a monitoring system to track progress. An ICSP becomes the community's highest level policy – with a practical decision-making framework that can be applied to all levels of decisions and all types of plans, policies and programs. And to ensure the ICSP doesn't collect dust on a shelf, an annual monitoring and action planning process engages community partners and citizens to ensure on-the-ground progress toward the vision is achieved.

For more information, visit our Cultivating Creston link on the Town's website at www.creston.ca or visit the Town's facebook page, Cultivating Creston.

2012 Property Taxes - Policing Impact

A big challenge was presented to Council when the notification was received that the Town of Creston is to pay for its share of the RCMP detachment costs effective April 1, 2012. In order to minimize the impact to property taxpayers, the budget direction was that no general tax increase be done in

2012. Only tax increase for police services was adopted by Council on April 24, 2012.

On 2012 Property Tax Notices, the provincial "Police – Residential" line will be replaced with a "Municipal - RCMP" line. The total residential mill rate will be \$9.67 per thousand dollars of assessed value for 2012 (\$9.78 for 2011). The actual increase on average is about 3%. Taking property assessment changes into account and the increase in the home owner grant in 2011, on average homeowners will be paying less than they did in 2010.

At the end of five years, residential property owners will see a 12.5% increase on their total tax bill over 2011 rates, if everything else that determines taxation does not change. To smooth in this increase, the Town's \$1.17 million Policing Reserve, created by previous Town Councils about 15 years ago in anticipation of going over a population of 5,000, will be used over the next 5 years.

The tax notices will be mailed out in early May. Please do not forget to apply for your Home Owner Grant as this has to be done annually by the homeowner.

News About Town

\$400,000 Recreation Trails Grant Received

The Town of Creston will receive a \$400,000 grant from the Ministry of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development's Community Recreation Program for a Recreation Trails and Equipment Project to expand the recreation trail network in Creston. This Program will invest in local government capital projects that make communities healthier and more active places in which to live.

The Project will focus on expanding the recreation trail network in the Crestbrook Area. This will include construction of new trails, hard surfacing existing trails and installing trail lighting along new and existing trails. Trail amenities like park benches, garbage containers, landscaping and outdoor gym equipment will enhance the project.

The Town will be partnering with the Trails Committee and two local Rotary Clubs to develop trails and install outdoor gym equipment. Over the years Rotary Clubs have been instrumental in providing volunteer hours and donations toward park and playground development. This initiative will allow the Town to work with both local Clubs in implementing recommendations from the Town's Greenways and Trails Master Plan on a scale never before realized. This ability to partner with community groups and work together to achieve a specific outcome is an approach that has become increasingly important over the past years. By working together we can achieve a highly concentrated and efficient effort that will only serve to benefit the community in the long term.

Splash Playground Upgrade

Safety and aesthetics will be improved at the Splash Playground with the addition of a non-slip rubber coating.

The Town applied for and was successful in receiving a grant for 50% of the product and installation costs from Tire Stewardship BC.

The \$35,000 project is scheduled to be completed early in the season to allow for maximum use of the Splash Playground.



Failed sprinkler system.

New Fire Service Bylaw No. 1774

Council passed the new Fire Service Bylaw on April 10, 2012. The Bylaw will assist in achieving:

- a) fire inspection compliance and increase life and fire safety in the community;
- b) requirements for fire protection equipment service providers to be certified which protects the business owners;
- c) managing false alarms by security/residential type alarm systems for police and fire departments;
- d) better management of open fires for land development through burn time management, pile sizing, fire equipment required on site; and,
- e) more effective means for achieving compliance with fire hazards in the community.

In the coming weeks, the Fire Service Bylaw No. 1774 will be posted on the Town of Creston website for reference.

Media articles and information will be forthcoming. Questions can be answered at the fire hall during business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, or by calling 250-428-4321.



Cranbrook Splash Playground after completion of resurfacing project.

Road Rescue Equipment Grant

Creston Fire Rescue received news of their approval for \$23,500 for extrication tools for the rescue truck. The tools enable firefighters to effectively remove trapped victims in vehicles and safely move them to medical assistance with BCAS.

The tools will assist in replacing worn out units and maintain the effectiveness to be able to cut the newer design vehicles which require higher cutting strengths. Due to the technical use, the life expectancy of the tools is far less than normal use.

The grant funding is 50% from the Government of Canada – Joint Emergency Preparedness Program, and the balance from the Town of Creston and Creston Firefighters Fundraising in the community.

The current value of the specialized tools carried on the rescue truck are estimated at \$175,000 with a good portion of that donated locally.

We are very pleased to be able to maintain a high level of response capabilities to minimize the impact of motor vehicle accidents in the Creston Valley and appreciate the assistance in funding the capital costs.

Creston's Road Rescue truck responds 50 to 90 calls per year, to the top of the Kootenay Summit, east to Irishman's Creek, north to Akokli Creek and south to the US border.

Pine Street Intersection

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) and the Town of Creston are currently in the planning and design stages for a proposed realignment for the Railway and Pine Street intersection.

The intent of this collaborative effort is to look at improving the safety and mobility of the Pine/Railway intersection by realigning the intersection legs to 90 degree angles.

Tentative dates for this project are as follows:
 March 2012 – Design 75% complete;
 December 2014 – Construction complete.



Radar Speed Boards

Two radar speed boards are being used by the Town to collect speed and traffic volume information. Speed boards are a traffic calming tool that can be used in conjunction with physical traffic calming measures like; speed humps, chicanes, raised islands, curb extensions, etc. The data collected by these signs is invaluable in evaluating the need for physical and sometimes costly traffic calming improvements to roadways.

A priority location list has been compiled for 2012, and the signs will be rotated through these locations.

To 'request' that a sign be installed in a specific area in the future, you may fill out a Public Works Request/ Concern Form found in the quick links section of the Town Website (www.creston.ca), stop in at Town Hall (238 – 10th Avenue North), contact the Town directly (250-428-2214), or send an email (info@creston.ca).

Bear Aware

The Town of Creston stands to benefit from the recent announcement that the B.C. government is spending \$225,000 over the next year on its Bear Aware program, aimed at reducing human-bear encounters in residential areas. Run by the BC Conservation Foundation, this program helps communities reduce bear attractants like garbage, bird feed or fruit in urban areas.

The Town of Creston will enact a bylaw which will help to preserve public safety, and also to reduce the number of bears that have to be destroyed. These changes will assist the Town toward becoming a "Bear Smart" community of which there are only 4 currently designated communities in B.C.

The Valley is well known for its Grizzly Bear population and was the subject of a topic by Dr. Michael Proctor, "Co-existing with

Green Zone

Water Ambassador Program

Do you know what the Town's watering restrictions dictate about water use? If you answered "no," you're not alone. In 2011, the Town, RDCK and Columbia Basin Trust partnered in a Water Smart Ambassador program. More residents now have a better idea of how much water they should be using on their lawns and gardens.

A final report for 2011 indicated more than 50 sprinklers in the Town's parks were found to be broken, leaking, misaligned or with poor pressure. Of these, 13 were replaced, two were removed and a further 20 or more were marked to be fixed. The pressure and alignment were fixed on another 15 sprinklers.

Moreover, it was noted that most residential turf, including that in Town parks, could reduce water requirements if the soil was improved. This could be accomplished through adding topsoil and compost in the spring and fall and drought resistant seeds in the spring. People with the best soils water the least and have the greenest lawns.

Solid Waste Removal

Reduce! Reuse! Recycle! Ka-ching! Every kilogram of waste we are able to divert from the landfill not only makes the world a better place but also reduces the cost of solid waste removal. In an effort to keep this cost to a minimum, we are asking residents to limit the amount of waste they put out for pickup.

To assist in this initiative, the local waste disposal contractor will be tagging bags as "refused for pickup" for the following reasons:

Over the limit of two bags per residence

Over weight (50 lbs/23 kg max.)

Found to contain compostable or recyclable materials or other non-waste material.

grizzly bears in the urban/rural Creston Valley" at the recent Urban Wildlife: Challenges and Management conference in Cranbrook.

Other notable progress in the area of Bear Aware initiatives in the Valley is the fencing of the Yakan Nukiy and Lister schools. The RDCK landfill was also

Garbage tags are available for purchase at Town Hall at a cost of two dollars each. We will be investigating the feasibility of curbside pickup for recyclables later in the year.

Organic Waste Management

April 14th, 21st, 28th and May 5th & 12th

In an effort to reduce back yard burning, the Town of Creston is offering, to residents of Creston, the opportunity to dispose of their organic yard waste in town.

During the months of April and May, Creston residents are able to dispose of back yard organic waste at a town controlled drop off location. This yard waste disposal site is located at the south end of the Waste Water Treatment Plant and is accessible via Davis Road.

The site will be available to residents on Saturdays between April 14th and May 12th during the hours of 10 am – 2 pm. Accepted yard waste will be tree pruning, grass clippings, leaves and other plant matter. Load volumes will be limited to residential quantities only. Tree pruning must be separated from grass and leaves with plastic bags, twine or other bundling material removed. It is recommended that grass clippings and leaves be brought in garbage cans and not plastic bags.



recently awarded the Crystal Moose Award as the "most improved landfill in British Columbia," one of the items which the landfill improved upon was the reduction of bear activity with the installation of bear proof fencing.



Notices and Announcements

Online Tax and Utility Information

Homeowners: Did you know you can access your tax assessment and account information at www.creston.ca? If applicable you can also complete the homeowner grant application for the current year online. Your access code and account number will be found on your Tax Bill and Utility Bill.

Bylaw Reminders

Properties

Lawns and trees are not the only plants coming to life again: weeds are too. They grow fast and are not only unsightly, but create a fire hazard when they dry out. Your assistance in maintaining weed growth on your property and boulevard is appreciated.

Yard Sales

Yard sales are commonly seen around Creston during the warm weather. When putting out signs to advertise your sale, remember that these signs are not allowed on public property, power poles or street sign posts. Yard sales signs are allowed on private property with the permission of the property owner. Once the sale is over, the signs should be promptly removed.

Trailer Parking

Many residents have trailers for boats, ATVs and work haulers, representing important aspects of our lives. To assist with street sweeping activities and visibility issues for motorists, Creston residents are encouraged to store detached trailers in private drives or properties rather than on roadways.

Unregistered Vehicles

Unregistered vehicles cannot be parked on town streets.

For further information, or if you have any concerns, please call Bylaw Services at 250-428-2214, ext. 239.

For Pets Only

All Creston dogs and cats are asked to remind their owners to stop by Town Hall to renew your pet licence for 2012. Cats, we are counting on you to remind your owners that you need a licence too. Your owners can also renew by mail, if that is easier for them, and they can also find more details on our website, www.creston.ca.

For Dogs Only



All Creston dogs are asked to remind their owners to scoop up! Also, please remind your owners to keep you on a leash and under their care and control whenever they take you away from home. Please do your part to keep Creston's sidewalks, streets, lawns and parks clean and safe for everyone to enjoy.



Test Your Smoke Alarms With Smoke - It Could Save Your Life

Test with smoke monthly using a blown out candle. Replace batteries once a year using a memorable date. Put a piece of masking tape on the battery and write the date on it.

Smoke alarms wear out - manufacturers recommend 10 years but experiences show us that after 6-8 years they begin to fail. Replace if unsure, it's not worth the risk.

Write the date on a piece of tape and place on smoke alarm to show when you last replaced the unit.

Building Permit Required?

The Building Inspector would like to remind you that a building permit is required for any new building over 10 square metres (107 s.f.) in size. Please refer to our web page under the Building Division for further details and requirements.

Free Parking



Free parking has been extended until January 31, 2013 on all meters in the downtown core. Please do your part to ensure there is parking for shoppers and visitors by respecting the 2-hour time limit. Business owners and employees are encouraged not to park in the Cook Street parking lot. Parking is available in the Town parking lot located east of the Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Wildfire Mitigation Update

The Town of Creston has applied to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities to continue the fuels reduction on Town properties. This will continue the 2010 project to further reduce the dead trees and brush that can allow fire to move into the upper forest. Even though we experienced few fires in 2011, we must remain aware of the danger that fire can pose to our community. Climate change is bringing unpredictable weather from year to year. What we do now can help reduce the fire impact in future years.

Stop by the Creston Fire Hall, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., to pick up a FIRE SMART brochure to learn more and, for Town of Creston residents, to arrange for an assessment of your house and property.

Burning Permits

Open burning is allowed during the months of April and October - with a permit. Please stop by Town Hall or the Fire Department to purchase a permit, or give us a call at 250-428-2214, ext. 0 for more information.

