

**Online Survey Question**

This week's survey asks... Will you be spending most of your money locally this holiday season? Have your say at [www.westernwheel.com](http://www.westernwheel.com)

# Opinion

« OKOTOKS WESTERN WHEEL »

## Mandela touched the entire world

By Tessa Nettleton

Contributor

Many in the world have been touched in some way by this man who gave so much of his life to ensure others in South Africa would benefit both now and into the future.

From the time of his death last week to his upcoming burial in his hometown, Qunu, thousands will have paid tribute in their homes, on the streets, and at venues around the world to the legend and majesty that was Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

His life story has been publicized in all forms of media, and needs little introduction. An inspiration to many, on his release in 1990 after 27 years of imprisonment, Mandela's message to all South Africans was one of the need for reconciliation, forgiveness and understanding. He believed further bloodshed would serve no purpose, and for South Africa to avoid civil war, the only way forward would be through the lack of vengeance. The courage of thought and action and wisdom he showed at this juncture when the country was fraught with racial tension, hatred of the government, fear and violence was legendary. He never swayed from his vision of non-racialism, justice, human dignity and equality for everyone living together in peace and harmony in a multiracial, democratic South Africa. The first truly democratic election in South Africa in 1994 brought the ANC and Mandela into power, and the new Constitution was promulgated by him in 1996.

It shames me that not until I attended university in a town closer to Qunu than to Cape Town, did I really comprehend the enormity of injustice that apartheid brought to people of colour in South Africa. Though born in Cape Town, my family left South Africa when I was a toddler, and returned 10 years later to what was for me a strange African land. The fact whites and non-whites travelled on public transport in separate areas, many places were for "whites only", schools were racially divided, shops had different entrances for whites and non-whites, people of colour lived elsewhere, and seemed not to work in jobs that were more than labour - was all something I simply accepted. Nelson Mandela and the ANC, to me and my school classmates, were merely a story dreamed up by someone to frighten us. We thought little about the insurrections in Soweto and elsewhere as these incidents - though shocking visually - had no impact on our daily lives. In university, I learned from people of all races of the need for change, and saw the apartheid government for what it was - a shockingly oppressive regime where you were deemed inferior, with no voice or rights, if you were not a white.

After university, I worked alongside people of all colours. I heard stories of hardship from coloured folk, of poverty, of leaving their young children alone for hours every day, travelling miles on public transport to work minimum wage jobs with no career path, and no equal opportunity or rights. This strengthened my resolve to show respect to everyone regardless of colour, and educated me in the struggle for freedom that swept South Africa time and again. Discriminated against, used and abused, beaten and bloodied - the anger, sorrow, despair and violence people of colour have experienced over the past era of South Africa's history cannot be minimized by anyone. Mandela lived his life maximizing the reality of this past to drive change for the present and the future.

In visits back home over the past few years, I have seen a marked increase in interracial tolerance and acceptance, and I am grateful to Madiba for this.



Pic of the Past

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OKOTOKS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

DAYS OF OLD - Looking east down North Railway Street in Okotoks in the early 1900s shows Paterson & Son General Store, the Okotoks Post Office, Star Restaurant and Beattie General Store.

## Letters to the Editor

Albertans should participate in regional land use plan

Dear Editor,

Fears be gone! Please read the Draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) for yourself. Have your say by participating in the public engagement and submitting your comments by Jan. 15.

Look at all the good and thoughtful things in it. To the point, the plan is a non-event in terms of losing property rights. The SSRP proposes no changes for existing approvals on public land and only suggests voluntary conservation measures on private lands. No lease approvals on public land are planned to be extinguished. In the future, if it is determined there is a need to protect some areas, the people who may lose an approval would be compensated.

Participation by municipalities in sub-regional plans is voluntary. ATV/OHV and recreation use will continue - let's just consider not destroying the water courses while we have fun. If anything, during recent conversations and

meetings to review the draft, I've heard people want more of what the Regional Advisory Council recommended included in the plan.

Many of us have volunteered or worked on the Land-Use Framework planning since 2008 or earlier to be a part of the process and represent our communities. The SSRP is the second of seven watershed-based plans for Alberta.

There are a whole lot of people who care whether we have clean water, clean air and land to grow our food and provide processes for our ecology. If we don't plan in a province which is developing our natural resources and is attracting so many people to move here, we could end up paving over our best agriculture land and not caring about the land which serves us, in favour of development only. Considering both the environment and development is important.

Our Future: The SSRP & land-use planning will help towards

many different land users collaborating and considering consequences when making decisions about the uses on the land, especially in this area which has lots of demands in a water-short area. We can't keep doing everything everywhere all the time. Let's work together to identify the issues and maintain or improve the health of our systems.

We live in one of the best places in the world - let's keep it that way! Let's use some common sense... and care about the value that planning creates for our communities to have hope for the future.

<https://landuse.alberta.ca/Pages/default.aspx>  
<https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/Pages/default.aspx>  
<http://beta.albertatomorrow.ca/>

Suzanne Oel  
 Div. 4 Councillor,  
 Municipal District of  
 Foothills

## Letters to the Editor Policy:

Send letters to: [westernwheel@okotoks.greatwest.ca](mailto:westernwheel@okotoks.greatwest.ca) Letters must be signed with an address and telephone number, are restricted to a 400 word maximum and may be edited for content. The views voiced in the Letters to the Editor are not necessarily shared by the Western Wheel or its publisher.

**Online Survey Results**

Last week's survey asked...

Are you satisfied with the initially proposed 3.8 per cent tax increased?

- Yes 31%
- No, it should be lower 44%
- No, it should be higher 6%
- As long as we maintain services 19%

Have your say at [www.westernwheel.com](http://www.westernwheel.com)

**Western Wheel Cares**

TOTAL TO DATE:  
**\$10,845.50**

**A Big Thank You for this week's donations!**

NAME	AMOUNT	NAME	AMOUNT
ANONYMOUS	\$453.50	Hirsch, Vivian	Amt Withheld
Boehm, Gary	300	Nobert, Devin	100
Buck, Judith & James	75	Rezanoff, Audrey & Ernie	200
Campbell, Clayton & Stingley, Sandra	30	Merry Christmas to Doris Blais, Michelle Marin & Terry Williamson Love from Karen Bresciani	150
Cummings, Joyce	200		
Edwards, Judith	100		
Endersby, Susan	100		
Green, Beverley & Garth	250		
Harding, Erica	1000		
Kelly, Anthony	300		

**THE WINNER OF THE LIGHT-UP 50/50 DRAW**  
 #487615 has until Dec. 11, 2013 to claim their prize at the Western Wheel. After that date all proceeds will be split between the Five Charities.

And a Big Thank You the Okotoks Bisons Jr. Hockey Club for the 50/50 Hockey Game.