

MD name stays the same

Foothills: Vote goes against county

By Don Patterson

Interim Editor

The Municipal District of Foothills won't be dropping the MD from its name after all.

Councillors unanimously voted not to change the MD's name to County last week after the results of a survey showed a near even split among foothills residents over the change.

In an online survey conducted by the MD 2,011 people supported a change of name to Foothills County and 2,014 wanted to keep the name MD of Foothills.

Reeve Larry Spilak said he likes the name Foothills County, but would only support the change if a clear majority of residents supported the move.

"Their survey came back at 50 per cent even on both sides and there were many negative responses and many positive responses," he said.

"Of the negative responses, the majority were all about the cost of the name."

He said there was confusion among residents over how much it would cost the MD to change its

name.

He said the cost would've been minimal and the MD should've done a better job of giving residents all the most pertinent information when making their decision.

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Larry Spilak
MD of Foothills Reeve

"The deciding factor was that we did recognize that what we put out there wasn't sufficient in information to do this," he said. "To react in any other way other than just retain the name would've been improper. I think residents need to know all the facts before you make such a big decision."

The change over to the new name would've been completed over several years.

The signs alongside highways at the MD's borders need to be replaced in the next two to three years. As well, all existing letterhead and other

printed materials with the name MD would've been used up before replacements would be ordered. Insignias and logos on all MD vehicles and equipment wouldn't be changed until they wear out and need to be replaced.

Spilak said he would be open to reconsidering the idea in a few years if the MD can do a better job communicating the potential cost of changing its name.

Coun. Susanne Oel also liked the idea of changing the MD's name to county, but she voted against the move over residents' concerns about the cost.

"I think we really considered what the residents had come forward with for suggestions and that's what ended up resulting in the motion," she said.

She said there is a value to the MD to create a brand and image for itself to attract and promote economic development.

"I thought that [changing to] county was an interesting idea and looked at that as an opportunity and many municipalities in Alberta are changing their name to make them simpler," he said.



JORDAN VERLAGE/IOWW

The MD of Foothills sign sits on Highway 2 north of Okotoks. The MD's councillors voted not to change the MD's name to County last week.