



WHEEL FILE PHOTO

Former MD of Foothills councillor Barb Castell, stopped a break-in in progress at her neighbour's home in 2010.

# Rural crime watch prevents break-ins

By Carmen Solana-Martin

Contributor

When thieves targeted her neighbour's Millarville-area home in 2010 a former MD of Foothills councillor didn't think twice.

Barb Castell stopped a break-in in progress while she was taking care of her vacationing neighbour's house in January 2010.

Castell said there was a rash of break-ins in Priddis, Millarville and the surrounding areas at the time, and she noticed a strange vehicle parked outside the home. When the burglars realized Castell had caught them in the act, they tried to leave without speaking to her, but she confronted them in the front yard.

"I said, 'Can I help you?' and they responded, 'no, we're OK,'" said Castell, who added that the men, estimated to be in their late teens or early 20s, did not frighten her.

The thieves were not apprehended immediately, but Castell said the RCMP did arrest them a month later.

"I felt angry, and I didn't feel intimidated," said Castell. "How dare they go into someone's house and take their valuables?"

Turner Valley RCMP Sgt. Paulina Larrey-King said it's natural for people to feel violated when someone breaks into their home. However, she said the public can play a proactive role in rural crime prevention by reporting crimes and keeping an eye out for their neighbours.

"We promote crime pre-

vention programs like the High Country Rural Crime Watch Association because they encourage citizens to become our eyes and ears."

In 2014, the detachment attended 327 property crimes in their catchment region, which includes Turner Valley, Black Diamond, Millarville, Priddis and surrounding areas.

**"How dare they go into someone's house and take their valuables."**

Barb Castell  
MD councillor

In 2013 and 2014, property crimes for the Turner Valley RCMP detachment were around 40 per cent of total crimes in the area, with a decrease of 20.4 per cent from 2013 to 2014.

To help protect themselves and prevent property crime, Larrey-King advises people make their homes secure by putting up a gate, locking their doors and ensuring their valuables are in a safety deposit box.

People should also take photos of special items and engrave expensive possessions, such as bikes, with their driver's licence for identification.

M.D. of Foothills councillor and High Country Rural Crime Watch Association (HRCWA) president Suzanne Oel said her organization became reactivated in 2010 after

the significant number of break-ins in the region.

According to Oel, the HRCWA helps connect residents to important crime prevention resources, tips and updates.

"I believe being involved in our community through our local crime watch will help make it a safer place," said Oel. "It is very important that you get to know your neighbours to help identify suspicious activity and report it."

"Join the HRCWA, membership is free due to a generous donation from Legacy Oil & Gas."

Even though people employ crime prevention techniques to protect their properties, they could still become victims of a crime.

For 22 years, the Foothills Regional Victim Services has provided support, information and referrals for victims of crimes or tragedy in Southern Alberta.

The non-profit organization is partnered with RCMP detachments in Turner Valley, Okotoks, High River and Nanton, according to program manager Kerri Wilkinson.

"The RCMP offers to connect victims of crimes with our services, and if they consent, we contact them," said Wilkinson. "As a follow-up, we touch base to see how they are coping and what supports they have in place."

For more information or to volunteer visit foothillsvictimservices.com or call 403-652-2359. To sign up for the High Country Rural Crime Watch visit hrcwa.ca.

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## Okotoks PLANNING NOTICES

Notice is given pursuant to the Municipal Government Act, R.S.A. 2000, Chapter M-26.1.

### DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

Take notice that the following Development Permit(s) have been approved and are intended to be issued on the Validation Date. Any person, who deems to be affected by the following, may appeal the decision to the Okotoks Subdivision and Development Appeal Board [S&DAB] by filing an appeal with reasons by 4:00 p.m. the day PRIOR to the Validation Date. Appeals must be forwarded to the address provided at the end of this advert.

Validation Date: March 5, 2015

- **SOUTHBANK BUSINESS PARK: DPA 100-15 – 202-104 SOUTHBANK BOULEVARD**  
A Gas Bar (propane cylinder fill facility) at 202 – 104 Southbank Boulevard in the Gateway Commercial (C-GATE) District.

### PUBLIC HEARINGS

Take notice that Council of the Town of Okotoks intends to consider the following matters. The date, time and place at which Council will hear representation is indicated below.

Oral and written comments and suggestions are invited and shall be addressed to the point of the proposed Bylaw(s). Any person or group of persons, or person acting on behalf of anyone who claims to be affected by the proposed Bylaw(s) may make representation. Submissions mailed to the Town should be typewritten and must be received at the address provided at the end of this ad by 12:00 noon on the WEDNESDAY before the Hearing. Eighteen (18) duplicate copies should accompany any written submissions received at the Hearing. Oral presentations may be made at the Hearing whether or not the presenter has submitted a written presentation. Oral presentations are subject to a five (5) minute time limit.

Date: February 23, 2015

Time: 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter as Council may decide

Place: Council Chamber – 5 Elizabeth Street

- **Bylaw 11-15:** The Purpose of Bylaw 11-15 is to amend the Land Use Bylaw to adjust the provisions of the Direct Control District at Lot 63, Block 21, Plan 121 3633 (11 Drake Landing Heights) to adjust the minimum porch size requirements, setbacks, and landscaping provisions.
- **DPA 105-15 – 11 DRAKE LANDING HEIGHTS:** The purpose of Development Permit Application 105-15 is for the construction of a 31 unit residential pocket neighbourhood development at Lot 63, Block 21, Plan 121 3633 (11 Drake Landing Heights).

Copies of any of the above are available for inspection by the public at the Town of Okotoks Planning Services Office during regular office hours. Please feel free to call 403-995-2760 for further information. Appeals and correspondence related to the above must cite the relevant file and be forwarded to:

Planning Services, PO Box 20 (5 Elizabeth Street), Okotoks, AB, T1S 1K1  
Publication date: February 18, 2015.