

High Country News Article: 2017.09 Edition, by M.D. of Foothills Councillor Suzanne Oel

Foothills Regional 911 Call Centre is moving to Okotoks

Our Foothills Regional 911 Call Centre will soon be moving to a new location. We have been planning this for over a year and are currently purchasing and setting up equipment to be ready for the move in October 2017. We have outgrown the space we have been using for the past 23 years and are planning the new site to include room for expansion, due to the growth we expect to see in services we provide. In our new location, we will have access to fiber optic cable, new phone lines, be AFFRCS ready (new provincial radio system) and be able to provide Nex Gen 911 with our IP-based system, which will include texting and the ability to send photos or videos to first responders. Foothills 911 serves a population of about 130,000 people in 26 municipalities in Southern AB. In addition to providing 911 Call-Answer (police, fire, EMS) and Fire Dispatch to 32 Fire Stations, we also have a growing peace officer monitoring component, work alone monitoring, deal with municipal complaints and emergency answers for some communities, and send out messages through SCAN, the Safe Communities Alert Network. The Black Diamond location will still be used as a backup centre. We appreciate the provincial 911 Grant funding that has contributed to this effort.

Foothills 911 will have access to state-of-the-art technology, but this move won't change how 911 operates. To update you on matters recently in the news, we are still dealing with the delays associated with EMS dispatch being forwarded to another centre in Calgary. We are hoping that the Province and AHS can provide a technical solution, as has been done in other 911 Centres, that will help to reduce the on-going delay problems. By setting up a CAD to CAD interface (computer-aided dispatch), so their computer talks to our computer, there would be a more immediate transfer of information on medical calls requiring a fire first response – so we could dispatch fire more quickly when an ambulance can't get there quickly. They have not yet moved forward on this solution, but we hope there will soon be something positive to report on this topic.

Road Construction

- With the warm weather this summer, the MD has been able to make progress on many road repairs, maintenance and dust control surfaces in Div. 4.
- Our Ag Services is currently working on brushing the roadside ditches in the NW.
- As you know, construction on the SW Calgary Ring Road and Service Road are moving ahead on Highway 22X. The current eastbound lanes will become the service road and a new section being built in the middle will become the new eastbound lanes. If you want to see what it will look like, you can download a PDF map of the road shift from my website (2MB): <http://suzanneoel.com/docs/misc/HWY22x-ServiceRoadShift.pdf>
If you want to find out more about the construction details, you can check out: <http://www.swcrrproject.com/>

“Share the Road” Campaign

As always during the summer months, Road Safety is a hot topic. In an effort to respond to concerns and bring awareness to residents, both motorists and cyclists, the MD of Foothills Protective Services has created a brochure to get discussions going and provide some educational information. In addition to this campaign, MD Peace Officers and RCMP continue to respond to complaints about this issue. You can see the “Share the Road” brochure printed in this issue of the HCN and find a PDF version on the MD's website:

https://www.mdfoothills.com/residents/protective_services/foothills_patrol.html

All the Best! Suzanne Oel