

Roads, RCMP, Ambulance Dispatch, 9-1-1 Fees, CETA

Message from M.D. of Foothills Councillor Suzanne Oel, September 22, 2011

Division 4 Update – Just a few things of the many:

1. Highway 762: I spoke with Alberta Transportation representatives on September 22 and the news is that work will begin on the six slumped areas on Highway 762 next Tuesday. Yeah! Except for the reduction in traffic which I heard you all liked very much over the summer. But, SAFETY first! Then let's talk about the speed limit...
2. Coal Mine Road Bridge is OPEN – Yeah for all the long-suffering residents. The washboards on the road will be graded on September 23 and the North Bridge is next in line for repair (meeting next week on pre-construction). Also, an estimate will be in soon for the Coalmine Road guardrail replacement and hope to have this in place by late October early November. Thanks to our Public Works department for such timely responses to our requests!
3. Information from Alberta Transportation on Highway 22, from 22X to Bragg Creek: work should be underway on overlay repairs.
4. Meeting with Superintendent Randy McGuinness – RCMP K Division & Sgt. Jim Ross – Turner Valley RCMP detachment (with representatives of M.D. Foothills, Turner Valley, Black Diamond, Longview): New focus – staffing front line police positions. We have been requesting this for awhile and will continue. We are hoping to increase staff in this area (Turner Valley detachment area) with one officer in 2013 and another in 2014, or sooner if possible. Other factors may weigh in... More later. We will keep pursuing this.
5. Work is continuing on the oversight committee to improve our Ambulance Dispatch (comprised of representatives from AHS, FRESC, Calgary dispatch PSC, MD of Foothills, and Alberta Health & Wellness.) This committee was created as a result of concerns raised by us on the amalgamation of our ambulance dispatch to Calgary. This partnership is bringing all the service providers together and providing an opportunity for teamwork, personalizing the situation and resolving issues. I will continue to work on this and on availability of ambulances.
6. I am supporting work/political intervention towards provincial legislation compelling wireless telephone service providers operating in Alberta to collect a monthly wireless 9-1-1 call answer fee from their subscribers and remit those revenues to municipalities operating 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points. Funding from land lines is dwindling as more people are switching over to cell phone use. The stats for our area are that approximately 60% of 9-1-1 calls are now coming from cell phones. Currently, until this legislation is enacted, there is no contributions from the cell phone fees, which are already being collected, towards our 9-1-1 call service providers. In our area, your call centre is FRESC, Foothills Regional Emergency Services Commission.
7. I recently brought my concerns forward to our MP, Honourable Ted Menzies (Canadian Minister of State in Finance) in relation to the Canada – European Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) negotiations. The implications are enormous. An area of concern, related to the municipal level, is a Chapter on Public Procurement, which could put our water and waste-water utilities on the table for multi-national corporations to be able to bid on. This is the first international trade agreement that would bring the available tendering down to the municipal level. There has also been a recent (August 2011) impact study done by the EU on the effects on Canada, which range from economic to social and environmental concerns. There is also a chapter on Investor-State which could affect municipalities, and provincial and federal governments if a corporation were to suffer a loss in not obtaining a contract (this chapter currently exists in NAFTA and has cost Canada millions)... As I understand it, the negotiated agreement, which is being done in Chapters, will be compiled by 2012 and then brought before our Parliament (Gov. of Canada) to go through the process of going through readings and public involvement. However, one wonders how much we can change or make suggestions at this point because it has to go before all the member countries to be ratified. We have a main negotiator for Canada and each province is participating in the negotiating as well. With a number of provinces involved in leadership races and upcoming elections, it is difficult to say how this will affect the negotiations – with the public procurement on the table for October in Ottawa. The benefits are tapping into a 27 (or so) country market with over 500 million people and diversifying from the markets we are currently trading in. I believe the public needs to be included in this process and these and more issues need to be discussed... I will continue to look into this. Maybe you should too ☺

Enjoy this beautiful Fall!

Regards,
Suzanne Oel
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