

**Attending Municipal Conferences brings Community Benefits**

I originally wrote about the importance of elected officials attending municipal conferences in the July 2012 issue of I Love Creston. Today, over four years later, I know firsthand that this topic remains relevant and worthy of discussion. So here we go again!

The 113<sup>th</sup> annual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Conference was recently held in Victoria from September 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. I had the pleasure of attending along with four other Councillors, our Town Manager and our Director of Finance. I can't help mentioning how much we all missed having Councillor Joe Snopek along with us; the many condolences we received from all levels of government for his unexpected passing left us both heartened and saddened.

While there was sadness, there was also celebration of great accomplishments. The highlight for our Council and RDCK Electoral Area Directors Binks and Wall was the announcement made by Minister Fassbender regarding our combined Arrow Creek Water Mainline Replacement application. This project was approved for **\$2,507,417** of federal funding and **\$1,654,895** of provincial funding. Thirty five communities around the Province received a combined \$60 million in funding for clean water and waste water projects, and we took home over \$4 million dollars of that pot!

This funding approval means that the final 2 phases of the Arrow Creek Mainline Replacement Project can be tendered, with Project completion intended for 2017. Councillor Snopek was our Town's representative on the Arrow Creek Water Commission and he would have been very proud to bring this news back to the citizens of the Creston Valley – I share this success on his behalf.

While the securing of the Arrow Creek grant funding was certainly a huge success, there were many other opportunities to advance our community during the 5 days we spent at the UBCM Conference. I personally attended 7 meetings with Ministers and/or their staff on topics including: wildfire fuel mitigation; concerns with "keep of prisoner" costs in our local RCMP detachment; the future Cook Street Highway Re-alignment; continued improvements of Highway #3 from Hope to the Alberta border; agriculture opportunities; our Creston Market Park concept; and, our Arrow Creek Water grant application. I'm proud to say that as a Council we attended numerous key meetings with our local Regional District Electoral Area "B" and "C" Directors. This approach strengthens our message to the Province as we project a united community voice on opportunities related to agriculture, tourism, water and more!

The Conference week is a busy one and to ensure that we make the most of our learning outcomes, each attending Councillor is required to provide a written report of their activities at the Conference; covering a wide variety of events, workshops and meetings. These reports demonstrate how we spend our time, what connections we make, and what thoughts/ideas we don't want to lose sight of when moving forward.

As you can tell, I am impressed with the outcomes of our attendance at the 2016 UBCM Conference held in Victoria. We look forward to attending the 2017 Conference and seeing what other successes we can achieve for the benefit of the Town of Creston AND the Creston Valley as a whole!

Don't hesitate to contact me by: Visiting me at my office in Town Hall (238 - 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue North);  
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