

## **Our Creston Valley VISITOR CENTRE – a new direction!**

The location of our Visitor Centre (VC) is not changing, but we're upping our game when it comes to telling our story to visitors from the region, the province and beyond! The RDCK Electoral Areas "B" and "C" and the Town of Creston have partnered to make our VC an even more welcoming destination for those visitors seeking info on the immense selection of tourism and recreational activities that our Valley has to offer.

We're proud to be launching the new and improved VC, located in the Armitage Center, just in time for the 2017 tourism season. Facility renovations are underway and things are looking great – we look forward to the unveiling this coming April. While some things are changing, some things are also staying the same. We're thrilled to announce that Amy Maddess will be staying on with the VC in her new position as General Manager. Building on her 9 years of experience with the VC, we know that we'll be hitting it out of the park when it comes to providing quality customer service that makes people want to visit again.

We also want to spread our wings a little and get the community more involved in promoting our great Valley. Are you interested in becoming a **"Community Valley Ambassador"**? In this exciting volunteer role you'll be able to promote the Valley's best kept secrets and assets to our travelling neighbours, from near and afar! I'm excited to say that I will be personally signing up to volunteer approximately 5 hours a week during the tourist months; greeting, and visiting with, visitors at our VIC. Think about joining me!

During the months of May through to September, my 5 hours a week will equate to approximately 100 hours of volunteer effort. A little time can make a great impact. It should be noted that the VC will still be hiring "summer students" and the Ambassadors' role will be to assist them in promoting the many destinations, amenities and experiences that our Valley has to offer. **CALL ME IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SIGNING-UP and volunteering to promote our community!**

Another significant step forward is our undertaking to coordinate and enhance our online presence. Our Community Initiative Contractor (Jesse Willicome) is working to align the different websites currently promoting our Valley. The goal is to create a common and unified message for the many visitors that rely on web based searches for their travel plans.

One last thought I'd like to leave you with is the idea of dealing with the exchange of U.S dollars in a way that says our community is open for business. With our proximity to the

U.S., our neighbours to the south represent an important market. Businesses could take US dollars at the posted exchange rate or even better. While there is a small loss (a few cents on the dollar) for selling these funds to the bank, the potential for increased tourism sales has the potential to outweigh this exchange. Think about ways you could contribute to our Valley being the place that tourists want to come, visit and shop!

If you have other topics that you would like me to comment on, please contact me:

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

Email me at [ron.toyota@creston.ca](mailto:ron.toyota@creston.ca) , or

Calling me at (250) 428-2214 (extension 227).