

FINAL (Sept. 14)

MY 9 YEARS AS “MAYOR”

I am proud and honoured to continue serving as Mayor for the Town of Creston. As I reflect on the last nine years in this role, I can't help but recognize that there have been a lot of wins achieved for this community. However, it was recently brought to my attention that sometimes these wins aren't always communicated to our citizenry. It is easy to get so busy “doing” that you sometimes forget to publicly acknowledge the successes that are achieved along the way. Many of these successes have been for our larger Valley, not just for the municipality. Working together with each other, and with the Town of Creston Council, Regional District Electoral Area Directors Jackman, Wall and Binks, we continue to strive to advance our Valley as a whole.

Many local wins have been tied to successful grant applications. While some grant applications are solely for the benefit of the Town of Creston, many are joint efforts between the Town of Creston and the surrounding RDCK Electoral Areas. Since 2008, our area has received numerous financial contributions (grants) from the Provincial and Federal Governments, as well as other sources, which has greatly reduced the financial burden on our taxpayers and allowed projects to proceed that would not otherwise have been financially possible.

2009 – Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrades grant of \$5,000,000

2010 – RDCK Community Complex grant of \$2,000,000

2011 – Airport Emergency Building grant from Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) for \$100,000

2014 – Arrow Creek Water System grant for \$2,900,000

2016 – Arrow Creek Water System completion grant for \$4,000,000

2016 – Railway Blvd Sidewalk improvement grant from ICBC for \$14,000

2017 – Shikurski Pump Station upgrade grant for \$743,000

2017 – Town sidewalks improvement grants from ICBC totaling \$21,000

That's a whopping \$14,778,000 in grants received over the past nine years. Congratulations to all of the elected officials who lobbied for the award of these grants and to the staff (both RDCK and Town of Creston) who continue to submit winning applications.

Beyond grants, there have also been some outstanding projects that have seen the landscape of our community improved. In the last three years alone, we've seen the following:

- ✓ Phase 1 of the Highway 3 Realignment (Railway/Pine Intersection) completed by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure in 2015. This project cost was roughly \$5,400,000, with the municipality paying approximately \$400,000;
- ✓ The completion of the Railway Blvd. sidewalk designed with an increased width for ease of passage, and landscaping, lighting and benches for an improved aesthetic and sense of comfort;
- ✓ Our downtown public washrooms opened at 1130 Canyon Street in 2017 and a new downtown “micropark” is currently being developed at 1411 Canyon Street. In addition, extensive sidewalk improvements are being made throughout the downtown and the larger community; and,
- ✓ The recent submission of an application for the construction of “Creston Market Park” through the Strategic Gas Tax Initiative Fund. This green community space is proposed for the area between the Armitage Building (Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Information Centre) and Extra Foods. Keep your fingers crossed for this one!

Beyond projects, Council has also committed to service enhancement for the public. In this theme, Creston Fire Rescue established our **“WEP” (Work Experience Program)** three years ago. This Program provides hands on experience to young individuals striving to start a career in the Fire Service, while providing key benefits to our community during participants’ tenure. This Program has enabled our community to: provide a First Responder Service, improve response numbers and achieve an improved community insurance rating by Fire Underwriters. To learn more about this exciting Program, I encourage you to check out our website (www.creston.ca), open the tab “Creston Fire Hall,” then click on “Firefighter Work Experience Program”.

Another service enhancement that continues to be supported and funded jointly by both the Town of Creston and RDCK Electoral Areas “B” and “C” is our **Physician Recruitment Program**. It is recognized that small towns throughout the province struggle with attracting and retaining adequate numbers of physicians. To address this challenge, our Physician Recruitment Program has seen seven doctors open their practices in our community during my time as Mayor, as well as many “locums” providing service on a shorter term basis to support our practicing physicians. Our professional recruiter (Marilyn States), who works under contract, is a key reason for our success with this Program – thank you Marilyn for all that you do!

Lastly, in the theme of service provision, I wanted to thank the Town of Creston’s Corporate Officer/Executive Assistant Bev Caldwell. Bev has served our community for over 18 years and is currently in the process of planning for her retirement later this year. She has been an amazing resource for this community, our staff and our Council. In one way or another, Bev has had a hand in all of the community successes mentioned above. Bev, a sincere thank you for

your dedication over these past many years. You too have made our community a better place to live, work and recreate.

Don't hesitate to contact me by:

Visiting me at my office in Town Hall

Email me at ron.toyota@creston.ca , or

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

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