

Mayor's Message

There are a few construction crews in Creston that have been eagerly awaiting this year's spring thaw! New construction soon to get underway includes the Crestbrook Gardens affordable housing project, and the new Creston Ramada Hotel on Highway 3A.



*Mayor Toyota helps with spring clean up
Photo: Lorne Eckersley*

As a Council, we've discussed various ways to attract tourism, and we feel that accommodations are a key starting place. The spin offs related to accommodations are numerous. Creston's central location within the Kootenays makes it an ideal meeting place for conferences, tournaments and other events – all of which benefit not only hotels and motels, but many other existing businesses in the Valley.

In order to encourage and support tourism and business accommodations, we passed a Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw on April 5, 2011. This type of bylaw is one tool available to local governments to stimulate economic development. This particular Bylaw gives tax breaks to hotel and motel owners who are building new, or renovating

existing accommodations in Creston. You can find more information on our website, or by stopping by Town Hall.

April is one of two months in the year when backyard burning is allowed. If there is one issue I hear a lot about as Mayor, it is this one. The smoke from burning bothers a lot of people in the Valley, and has an impact on air quality. So, as a Council, we've teamed up to offer some alternatives. I encourage you to take advantage of the free organic yard waste drop off on Saturdays in April. Look on page 2 of this newsletter for more information. If you've ever wanted the Mayor to personally help unload your yard waste – here's your chance! I'll be one of the volunteers on hand working to make this program a success.



Come see us at the Home and Garden Show! April 15th and 16th at the Community Complex.

Finally, I am very pleased to let you know that the midway will be back in town on April 15, 16 and 17th. This is the same weekend as the Home and Garden show, and we hope everyone will get out and enjoy these two events. The lot next to Millennium Park will be the centre of the action for the midway. We'd like to ask your patience with increased traffic and noise during that time, and ask drivers to be extra careful of pedestrian traffic along 16th Avenue. West Coast Amusements will be donating a portion of proceeds to the 70th Annual Blossom Festival, and will also be

supporting the local food bank by collecting donations on one of the days. Last year the midway was a great success, and we are happy to welcome West Coast Amusements back to the community.

Mayor Ron Toyota

Goodbye Creston!

From Town intern Adam Pawlak



In April of 2010 I moved to Creston to begin an internship with the Town. I have always been interested in how cities function and the field of management. With that in mind, I saw the opportunity with the LGMA internship program and submitted my application for Creston. What attracted me to Creston was being able to work in a rural community and having the opportunity to work on diverse projects.

Working for a progressive local government in the Kootenays has been an incredible professional growth experience. It has been inspiring to work with such a dedicated and fun group of staff and elected officials that are passionate about serving the public. This internship has reinforced and strengthened my interest and I hope it is the beginning of a long career working in local government and positively affecting my community.

Green Zone

Organic yard waste disposal - It's back!

In an effort to reduce backyard burning we are once again offering residents the opportunity to dispose of their organic yard waste in town. The yard waste disposal site is located at the south end of the Waste Water Treatment Plant and is accessible via Davis Road.

The site will be available on four Saturdays in April, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. That's April 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th.

Accepted yard waste:
tree prunings
grass clippings
leaves
other plant matter.

Materials must be sorted with plastic bags, twine or other bundling materials removed. The site will be staffed, and is open to Town residents only. Please bring your Tax Notice or other current utility bill as proof of residency.

Last year this pilot project collected a total of 78 loads for an approximate volume of 55-65 m³. We estimate that this service saved residents about \$390 in tipping fees. Additionally, by providing this service we were able to reduce the operating costs of the curb side pick up program that followed in early May.

Voluntary water restrictions

The Town of Creston and the Regional District of Central Kootenay are teaming up this year to promote conservation through effective watering practices.



Rather than restrict watering, we are asking residents to voluntarily follow some recommended practices towards outdoor watering. This year, residents will be allowed to water on any day of the week, if required. However, we are asking residents to:

- voluntarily keep their sprinklers off from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily
- follow recommended practices for water conservation
- water only when needed.

By doing this we hope to average out the demand on our treatment plant and reservoir capacity. Stop by our website, or Town Hall, for a brochure of information about voluntary water restrictions and recommended watering practices.

How thirsty is your lawn?

This is the age-old question. Everyone is looking for a formula that will tell them how much and how often to water. Variations in soil conditions and sun exposure make an exact formula impossible, but here's a general guideline for watering Creston Valley lawns:

May and June: 1 inch per week
July and August: 1½ inches per week
September and October: ¾ inches per week

Place an empty tuna fish can in your sprinklers' spray path to gauge how long it takes to apply the appropriate amount of water. It is best to split the recommended amount and water twice a week. This encourages deep root growth and healthy lawns that have greater drought

tolerance. Watering small amounts daily promotes shallow roots and results in a lawn with low heat and drought tolerance. Nitrogen rich fertilizers also inhibit root growth and increase the need for water.

Always try to water your lawn in the early morning. By early morning, we mean by 6 a.m.! This is the BEST time for watering, bar none. If you are not an early riser, an irrigation system on a timer will help.

Water Ambassador

Together with the RDCK, the Town will be employing a Water Ambassador this summer. This position will be partially funded through the Columbia Basin Trust and will focus on providing residents with an on-site irrigation system assessment. This will be a free service for customers of the Town of Creston and RDCK. More details are coming soon – keep an eye on our website, and on local media.



Let's be water wise!

The average German uses 130 litres of fresh water daily for drinking, cooking and cleaning.

But the average Canadian uses about 330 litres per day. In B.C. the average person uses about 490 litres. We can all make wiser water choices.

Brought to you by The Town of Creston
in partnership with
Columbia Basin Trust's Water Smart Initiative
For more info: www.cbt.org/watersmart

FINANCE CORNER

Tax notices coming soon

Property tax notices will be sent out mid-May. You will notice a slight increase on the municipal portion of your property tax bill. On average, the municipal portion of property taxes for Class 1, residential, is a 1.7% increase, or about \$14 for a \$200,000 assessed home. The change in your taxes is determined by how your assessed value changed relative to all the other residential homes in Creston. If your assessment increase was higher than the average, your tax increase will be higher. If it was less than average your taxes increase will be less, or you may even pay less than last year.

New grant for rural homeowners

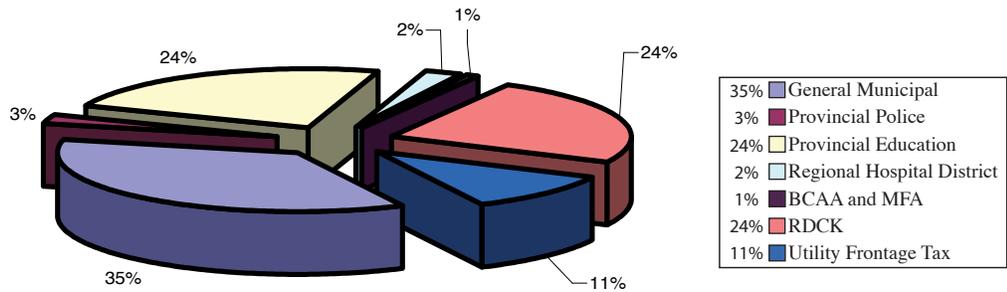
The Province of BC has announced a \$200 increase in the homeowner grant for eligible homeowners within rural areas of the province. This increase will be calculated into your property tax notice, and if you are eligible you will not need to apply separately.

Property tax deferment

The provincial government has recently announced that its Property Tax Deferment Program will be available to families with children under the age of 18, for the 2011 tax year. The deferment program for homeowners 55 years of age or older, and for people with disabilities, continues to be available to residents of British Columbia.

The complete lists of eligibility requirements for all BC Property Tax Deferment Programs is available at www.sbr.gov.bc.ca

2011 Property tax bills. Where are your tax dollars going?



On-line tax payment

Creston residents can now pay their taxes from the comfort of their own homes. In addition to paying their taxes, homeowners can also access their tax assessment and account information, and complete their homeowner grant application form at www.creston.ca.



For pets only

All Creston dogs and cats are asked to remind their owners to stop by Town Hall to renew your pet licence for 2011. Cats, we are counting on you to remind your owners that you need a licence too. Your owners can also renew by mail, if that is easier for them, and they can also find more details on our website, www.creston.ca.

For dogs only

All Creston dogs are asked to remind their owners to scoop up! Also, please remind your owners to keep you on a leash, and under their care and control whenever they take you away from

home. Please do your part to keep Creston's sidewalks, streets, lawns and parks clean and safe for everyone to enjoy.

Spring clean up

It is spring clean up time! Town crews will be collecting tree prunings, garden waste, and other compostable articles from yards that are not picked up during regular collection. Spring collection dates are May 3, 4 & 5, 2011. Please keep your compostable materials separate from household garbage, and place them at the curb for pick up on your regular garbage day.

Trees or brush should be cut into three (3) foot lengths and wrapped in bundles. Grass clippings and leaves must be placed in rigid containers, such as garbage cans. Please note that plastic garbage bags and non-compostable items will not be accepted.

Back yard organic waste can also be dropped off by Town residents each Saturday in April. See page 2 of this newsletter for drop off location and details.



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Burning permits

Spring clean up and organic waste drop off initiatives are an effort by the Town to reduce backyard burning and improve air quality in the Valley. We hope you'll give these alternatives a try.

However, open burning is still allowed during the months of April and October – with a permit. Permits cost \$10.00 each and are issued for one week. Fires must not be larger than 1 square metre and there must be a minimum of 5 metres from buildings, fences, or any other combustible structures or object. Fires must be supervised by an adult at all times, for a maximum of 4 hours during daylight hours. A charged garden hose that can reach the fire must be kept nearby. Some other restrictions apply. Please stop by Town Hall or the Fire Department between April 1 and 30 to purchase a permit, or give us a call at 428-2214 ext. 0 for more information.

Dash for Trash

May 14th is Community Clean Up Day! You can get involved by registering your team (or your family) for this fun, and free, event! Meet up at the Columbia Brewery at 9:30 a.m. and work with your team to clean up around town. Then meet back up for lunch and live entertainment. More information is available at www.creston.ca or by calling Tanya or Lisa at the Columbia Brewery at (250) 428-9344.



This event is free for participants, and is sponsored by the Town of Creston, Columbia Brewery and Fortis BC.

Tell us what you think

We are reviewing how business licence fees are structured. We'd love to hear from all business owners through our online survey, which can be accessed at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/TZG6KN6. The results of this short survey will be used to improve municipal licencing.

Smoke alarms

The Fire Chief would like to remind you that the BC Fire Code requires smoke alarms in all residential occupancies, outside each sleeping room or area. Please test your smoke alarm(s) every month with smoke from a burned out candle to make sure it is working properly. Battery operated smoke alarms should have the batteries changed annually. Smoke alarms older than six years should be replaced. TIP: Place a small piece of masking tape on the edge of the cover making sure not to block openings. Write the date of installation and when the battery was changed.

Keep it beautiful!

Please do your part to keep Creston clean and beautiful! Town bylaws require you to keep your property free of rubbish, wrecked motor vehicles and parts, graffiti and other unsightly items. You can find more information about the Property Clean Up Bylaw No. 1306 in your property tax notice, which will be mailed in mid-May.

Celebrate volunteers!

We hope you will come out and help us recognize and celebrate the many volunteers that give generously of their time and energy to so many great organizations in the Creston Valley! Join us for the annual Volunteer Tea on Saturday, April 30th, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Chamber of Commerce. There will be a guest speaker and door prizes, and sweets and tea will be served.

Crestbrook Gardens application

Construction is getting underway at Crestbrook Gardens, the new affordable housing complex for seniors and persons with disabilities. Applications are now being accepted by BC Housing. Please visit the Town's website at www.creston.ca, or stop by Town Hall for more written information. You can apply online at www.bchousing.org, or call the BC Housing Registry at 1-800-257-7756 and ask to have an application form mailed to you.

A new approach to Bylaw Compliance

Council adopted a Bylaw Compliance Philosophy at the Regular Council Meeting on December 14, 2010. We encourage citizens to be aware of the bylaws governing their animals and property and to foster a relationship of open communication with their neighbours.

The purpose of the Bylaw Compliance Philosophy is not to unnecessarily penalize citizens or visitors to the Town but, rather, to achieve compliance through education and provision of information in order to preserve the quality of life to which each citizen is entitled.

Often complaints can be resolved amicably between neighbours. As a result, and if possible, it is recommended that each resident of the Town of Creston attempt to resolve their issues before contacting the Town Office for assistance.

A guide to the Town's new approach to Bylaw Compliance, and an overview of municipal bylaws is now available on our website at www.creston.ca. The goal of the guide is to advise residents, business owners and service providers of their rights and responsibilities as members of their community. You can also pick up a copy of the guide at the Town Office.