

RDCK Services and the Town of Creston

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The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) provides a number of essential services to the residents of the Town of Creston. Our taxpayers pay for these services through taxation collected by the Town on behalf of the RDCK. Major shared services include not only the Creston & District Community Complex but also Refuse Disposal (landfill), the Creston Public Library, and Economic Development. Other shared services include Road Rescue, 9-1-1, Emergency Management, the Creston Museum, local Transit and our Regional Airport. The costs of these services are shared between the Town and defined parts of RDCK Electoral Area 'A' as well as Electoral Areas 'B' and 'C'. In this month's article, I would like to highlight some of the key services that are shared between the Town and the RDCK.

As aforementioned, the Town of Creston shares in the operation of the Refuse Disposal Service for the Creston Valley (the landfill) on Mallory Road with the RDCK. The service also includes the small recycling bins on Helen Street, as well as other small recycling drop off locations. Recently, it was announced that the RDCK has been approved for a provincial Organics Waste Facility grant of \$961,776 to be used for developing a composting program in the Creston Valley! This exciting news means that this program development over the next couple of years will further the discussions on organics curbside pickup as well as continuing the discussions on an improved recycling program for our residents.

Did you know that the Creston Public Library is celebrating 100 years in 2020? Our library is a truly great facility and well utilized by many citizens throughout the entire Valley. The library is operated by a non-profit society that receives a "grant-in-aid" through RDCK taxation as well as being a recipient of various grant programs each year. In 2019, the library had 71,923 in person visits, was open for 2,033 hours with 101,898 items borrowed. Along with a great selection of materials in various mediums, our library offers a wide array of programming for all ages. Open Tuesday – Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., you are sure to find something to pique your interest!

Another shared service with the RDCK is Service 108 which has three primary functions – the Creston Valley Health Working Group (physician recruitment), the Visitor Information Centre and the Economic Action Partnership (EAP). Over the next two years, through the Rural Dividend grant received from the Provincial Government, the EAP will be implementing many of the strategies developed in recent years to continue strengthening our local economy. Stay tuned to hear about exciting tourism and marketing initiatives that are being developed.

The world-class Creston & District Community Complex is perhaps the shared service that receives the most attention. The 2020 property tax requisition from the Town and RDCK Electoral Areas 'A', 'B' and 'C' for Community Complex operations will be approximately

\$4 million dollars. As a sample comparison, the 2020 property tax requisition for the Town of Creston's municipal operations is \$4.5 million dollars. Both the Town and the Community Complex collect other revenues, such as grants and user fees, to offset the remainder of our operational budgets.

When we look at the composition of the total property tax bill for Town of Creston taxpayers, you will see that only approximately 45% is determined by Town Council through our rigorous budget process for our municipal operations. Provincial Education and Regional Hospital Districts (19%), Municipal policing (10%), and shared Regional District services (26%) make up the remainder. This means that in essence, 55% of the property tax bill is not in the primary control of your Town council and these costs are determined by other forms of government.

Although the sharing of these RDCK services may make up 26% of the overall Town of Creston property tax bill, it's important to note that without shared taxation, these services would not be economically viable for our individual areas. Furthermore, shared services allow for provision of these services at a much lower cost than if our communities were to provide them ourselves, resulting in benefits for the entire Creston Valley!

Do not hesitate to contact me by:

Visiting me at my office in Town Hall

Email me at ron.toyota@creston.ca

Call me at 250 428 2214 (extension 111)

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