

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) met in Beaverlodge, AB, January 16 & 17, 2008, for its regular administration meeting and Regional Stakeholders Forum.

Dinner Meeting and Tour

Council was given a warm welcome by Mayor Leona Hanson and the Town of Beaverlodge. The town council hosted a dinner, including attendees Mayor Rhonda Tofteland, Village of Hythe and Mayor Owen Smith, Town of Wembley and their respective town council members.

A tour of the new Beaverlodge Public Library and the Beaverlodge Hospital were among the highlights of Council's tour of the area.

Regional stakeholders presented on topics including: health, post-secondary education, rural development, tourism, transportation, water and forestry.

Health: Information was shared on the status of the new Regional Hospital for Peace Country Health (PCH) to be located in the City of Grande Prairie. The feasibility of Public Private Partnership (P3) models for health facilities was discussed. Concerns were expressed on the replacement of the Beaverlodge Hospital, which is the oldest in the province. The building is an infrastructure priority for PCH. Affordable housing for patients with chronic mental health illnesses was a concern, as was the need for more psychiatric nurses.

Post-Secondary: The need for a "trained at home, stay at home," model was the key message from the post-secondary presenter. Addressing the concerns surrounding student access to training in the north was highlighted as a priority, with particular focus on medical training options for the north.

Rural Development and Tourism: The Rural Alberta's Development Fund is looking to fund champions in rural Alberta. Capital projects are not eligible for funding, but collaborative projects and those requiring funding for human infrastructure may be eligible. Council was asked to continue promoting northern tourism, particularly the River of Death and Discovery Dinosaur Project in Grande Prairie.

Transportation: The need to continue twinning highway 43 from Wembley to the B.C. border was the main issue, along with effective access to rail service in the region and continued pressure for 19 seater aircrafts to have landing access at the Municipal Airport in Edmonton.

Water: Presenters emphasized the need for a water supply system to meet the region's emerging needs.

Forestry: The forestry industry is facing tough times with mill closures recently announced in High Level, High Prairie and Slave Lake. Experts predict the down turn to last into 2009. Requests were made for action on Mountain Pine Beetle and help to restore the industry's sustainable competitive advantage.

Medical Education Symposium

"In the north, for the north," was the principal theme that emerged at a Medical Education Training Symposium held this past December in Grande Prairie. The Symposium brought northern stakeholders together to set a foundation for ongoing collaboration and provide input into a set of principles to guide the development of a medical education model that serves the needs of northern Alberta.

Upcoming Events

Human Resources Conference

Unleash the Northern Potential Workforce Symposium, initiated by the NADC and regional stakeholders, will be hosted April 9-11, 2008 in Cold Lake, AB. Visit www.nadc.gov.ab.ca for more information.

Bursary Deadline

May 15, 2008 is the deadline to apply for the **\$ 3,500 NADC Bursary** for post-secondary studies. Applications are available from www.nadc.gov.ab.ca or by calling the NADC Peace River office.

Affordable housing in northern communities

Dr. Avi Friedman, renowned affordable housing expert, is coming to northern Alberta in June 2008. He will tour communities, meet local proponents, and speak about designing affordable housing and communities among other related topics. For more information or to sign up, please contact Jennifer at (780) 624-6278 or by e-mail at jennifer.bisley@gov.ab.ca before February 29, 2008.

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