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Funding Well Underway for Dinosaur Interpretative Centre

It is going to be a busy and productive summer for the River of Death and Discovery Dinosaur Centre project, as funding efforts have secured millions of dollars to cover the first stage of development for the interpretative centre.

That will eventually lead to opening up the famous River of Death bone bed for general public viewing and education, said Walter Paszkowski, Economic Development Officer for the County of Grande Prairie.

“We’re moving past the initial planning stages into the actual capital work, namely the construction of the access road to the bone bed and preparing and securing the actual site for the public to view without disturbing the on-going excavation work by paleontologists,” he said.

Fundraising

Fundraising for the project this year has been strong from both local and provincial governments. The County of Grande Prairie has \$1 million in its 2009 budget for the River of the Death project and land for the interpretive centre has been purchased. The City of Grande Prairie will commit \$1.5 million in \$500,000 portions over three years, starting in 2011. As well, the Towns of Sexsmith, Wembley, Beaverlodge, the Village of Hythe and the MD of Greenview have collectively committed \$30,000 to the project. At the provincial government level, the Major Community Facility Program has provided \$1 million for capital expenditures and \$1.88 million through its Rural Alberta Development Program for the project’s educational component.

Along with funding from the public, support from the private sector has been strong, said Sheldon Graber, the project’s fundraising director.

“Corporations operating in this area have been stepping up,” he said. “For example, Talisman Energy has provided \$20,000 to cover the costs of excavating and transporting fossils from the bone bed to the University of Alberta, as well summer dinosaur camps through the Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC). And we’re expecting Encana to announce a major funding commitment to the project in the coming weeks.”



Graber added many local and regional organizations have provided donations including: the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce with \$60,000, Community Futures with \$75,000, Grande Prairie Rotary with \$35,000, the Peace River Economic Development Alliance with \$90,000, the Grande Prairie Regional College with \$120,000, and the Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Board with \$295,000.

Along with private donations and gift-in-kind, total revenue currently in place is approximately \$4.2 million. Costs for project work in 2008 are set at approximately \$4.3 million.

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