

Appendix V

County of Grande Prairie 2016 Communications Audit

Business and Community Leader Interview Report

March 2016

Methodology

- ❑ As part of the 2016 communications audit for the County of Grande Prairie, Downey Norris and Associates conducted four telephone interviews with individuals identified by the County as active community and business leaders in the County. A fifth interview was planned, however the consultant as not able to schedule the fifth interview priory to the individual leaving for vacation.

The purpose of the interview was to assess the overall quality and effectiveness of the County in communicating with its business and community leaders. The individuals interviewed were as follows:

- ❑ Irene Nicholson, retired Professor of Nursing
- ❑ Mack Erno, Stampede Past President and current Sponsorship Manager
- ❑ Abe Nuefeld, Business owner, Crosslink Leasehold
- ❑ Teri Ondrik, Saskatoon Lake Ag Society

Overall Key Findings

The overall key findings from the interviews are:

- Overall, the County does a very good job communicating with the community and business leaders
- County Council and staff are viewed as easy to access and are open and transparent in their communications with community and business leaders
- The County is viewed as having a strong, capable management team
- The County is viewed as strong supporters of community and business leaders
- Face to face meetings and discussions are viewed as the most effective and preferred method of communication on specific issues
- Other regular external communication vehicles including the website, social media and newsletter are viewed positively by community and business leaders with some minor suggestions for improvement provided by interviewees

Priority Issues and Challenges

Business and community leaders identified a number of priority issues and challenges based on their personal observations and perspectives including:

- On-time, on-budget completion of major projects and initiatives
- Potential spending cuts or tax increases a result of Alberta's slowed economy
- Public engagement on new and ongoing developments
- Road maintenance
- Community safety

Important information

Business and community leaders identified the types of important information that they need from the County including:

- Timely, proactive information on major projects and new developments
- Information of programs and services including how and where to access them (ie recreation, senior's programs, recycling, waste management)
- Dates, times and details on upcoming activities and events

Methods of Communication

- Face to face meetings or direct letters and emails with County Councillors or staff are viewed as the most preferred method of communication on specific issues or topics
- In terms of general communication, the website is the next most preferred method followed by news media (mentioned by all interviewees)
- Three out the five interviewees mentioned Facebook and Twitter as recommended communication vehicles
- Two interviewees mentioned the printed newsletter as being a helpful resource
- One interviewee mentioned the Council Highlights
- One interviewee mentioned the electronic billboard at the Airport

Value for Tax Dollars

- All interviewees agreed that overall they get good value for the tax dollars paid when considering the level of services the County provides to its residents

Opportunity for Input

- All interviewees felt that they have sufficient opportunity to provide input to the County in terms of planning and decision making
- Some interviewees specifically acknowledged and appreciated the access to individual County Councilors
- Interviewees also mentioned accessibility of public or concerned residents to attend or request to present to Council at public Council meeting

Comments or suggestions

Interviewees were offered the opportunity to provide additional comments or suggestions to the County. Suggestions/comments offered were:

- County does a good job / Happy with the County
- Provide residents with a seasonal event calendar in the newsletter that can cut out and saved for future reference
- Put more emphasis and focus on preserving the wild life on the County (i.e. less use of fences)
- Use email to distribute important information directly to residents
- Provide direct email addresses for County staff on the website rather than using a generic form

