



# OUR COMMUNITY *Dawson Creek*

FEBRUARY  
2012

*We want to hear from you!*

## Setting priorities for 2012

*The City moves toward a long-range plan of action*

Setting priorities is a critical step in planning for a new year and a new Council. "It's an opportunity to get a broad understanding of the issues facing the community and to decide what requires our focused attention," says Mayor Mike Bernier. "The Council, City staff and a facilitator brainstorm the broader picture and then narrow the issues down into a strategic priorities chart to set our goals for the year."

**Water security means water storage.** It has been the City's goal to secure storage capacity for a year's supply of water. This includes the current reservoirs and the weir at Bear Hole Lake. The land for the next reservoir has been purchased, but now the planning and design of the site is a top priority. The design plan will be done by the end of this year. "Our goal is to have a shovel ready project so when funding can be arranged there will be no delays or missed opportunities," says Bernier.

**The Long Term Financial Plan looks at how the City can best use tax dollars and grants.** This doesn't affect the 2012 budget but anticipates future budgeting strategies including the Fair Share agreement that is up for renewal in 2020. "This year we are looking for

terms of reference so that we can proceed appropriately," says Bernier. "This is how we can get to the next level of planning for the long-term."

Every municipality is required to operate with a 5-year plan, but the City is taking this opportunity to look further down the road in light of the rapidly changing community.

**The EnCana Events Centre business plan looks at how the City can better use the facility.** The daily operations remain contracted to Global Spectrum and are outlined in their business plan submitted to Council in January, but the City wants to look at possible future uses for undeveloped space or business opportunities.

**The Airport Sustainability Plan will move forward.** This year the City will address the practical short-term recommendations from the 2011 consultant's report. "We will look at costs for items that will give positive outcomes so we can proceed in this year's budget," says Bernier. "We didn't want to have the report come in and then sit on the shelf."

**The Service Policy Review will assess the services the City currently provides and will gauge their value.** Services are then categorized from essential to



### Strategic Priorities 2012

- Raw Water Reservoir Design
- Long Term Financial Plan
- EnCana Events Centre Business Plan
- Airport Sustainability Plan
- Service Policy Review

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discretionary. "Some things are nice to have," says Bernier, "but some are essential and this is our opportunity to make those decisions prior to allocating money in the budget process."

**"We make the Strategic Priority Chart a living document.** At the end of every meeting we ask; how are we doing, are we on track? This keeps everyone accountable as we move through the year."



**"We invite everyone to get involved as we develop our budget for 2012."**

*Mayor Mike Bernier*

## 2012 BUDGET SCHEDULE & PUBLIC CONSULTATION

February 20 1:00 pm, Second Budget Meeting in Council Chambers

**March 6 7:00 pm, First Budget Public Consultation at KPAC**

April 2 1:00 pm, Third Budget Meeting in Council Chambers

April 23 1:00 pm, Fourth Budget Meeting in Council Chambers

**April 23 7:00 pm, Second Budget Public Consultation at KPAC**

The first three readings of the Financial Plan and Tax Rate Bylaw will be considered during the regular meeting beginning at 8:30 am on May 7th, and the adoption will be considered at the special Council meeting scheduled for May 9th at 8:30 am.

## YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT

That time of the year is arriving where residents want to clean up their yards and burn debris. Although we discourage residents from burning, we still allow some types of material to be burned within the fire protection area once a permit has been issued by the Dawson Creek Fire Department.

### Subject to the following conditions:

- All burning must comply with the “*Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation*”. The permit holder must contact Environment Canada at **1-888-281-2992** to ensure the venting index is proper for burning. The venting index must be “Good” on the day of the burn and “Good” or “Fair” on the following day before burning can take place.
- Any burn pile that is 6' x 10' (2 x 3 Meters) or more than 2 piles of any size must be reported to BC Forest Service before ignition. The BCFS will require a legal land description (Lot/Block/Plan) before issuing a Registration Number. To get this registration number call **1-888-797-1717**.
- The Dawson Creek Fire Department must be advised before igniting at **250-782-9898**.
- The fire must not be left unattended and an adequate supply of water and hand tools/machinery must be available to control the fire.
- The applicant is liable for all damages or charges resulting from a fire lit under this permit.
- This permit is subject to cancellation at any time.
- Except for free burn periods, a payment of \$12.00 daily shall be paid.

For further clarification please contact the Dawson Creek Fire Department at **250-782-9898**.

# Highlights from our watershed

*The Watershed Steward works to protect our water resource*

It has been a busy year for the City's Watershed Stewardship Program. In partnership with a UNBC research team, we are developing a baseline understanding of water flows, water chemistry and shallow-groundwater flows in the Kiskatinaw watershed.

“This work is helping us see how the watershed is changing due to increasing industrial development and natural processes like Mountain Pine Beetle infestation” says the City's Watershed Steward Reg Whiten.

A case-study shows that we are now likely experiencing real effects from climate, land-use and landscape change, with more variability in the Kiskatinaw River flow compared to previous decades.

“Lower and earlier water level peaks in the spring, along with lower flows in late summer means that we must pay attention to our water-use demands,” says Whiten. “This means education about water conservation remains important. We welcome opportunities to educate citizens and groups how to adopt these practices.”

Water conservation is particularly important during periods of drought like in 2010, and even during the flood events in 2011 when high levels of turbidity restricted the City's ability to pump for several consecutive days.

Research also focused on gaining a better understanding of winter precipitation. This involved upgrading a weather station operated by the Fire Weather Management Branch and includes a site maintenance agreement with Conoco-Phillips Canada.

Related research is being undertaken with Forestry Lands and Natural Resource Operations to study snow accumulation under different landscapes (clearcuts versus younger and older forest stands).

Still another priority has to do with understanding the groundwater aquifers

## Watershed Stewardship 2009 - Present

- Research partnership with UNBC on water flows and quality
- Montney Water Project to identify surface, ground and deep water sources
- Public education and awareness activities
- Winter precipitation studies
- Lower Kiskatinaw stewardship project development
- Groundwater research program initiated



The UNBC Watershed Research Team: from left Lyssa Meurer, Faye Hirschfield, Watershed Steward Reg Whiten, Shekhar Pauls and Gopal Saha.

in the upper Kiskatinaw, and what kind of monitoring and protection is required.

“Our goal is to serve in a facilitating role for watershed stakeholders so that we can improve decision-making for effective stewardship of our precious drinking water supply over the long-term,” says Whiten.

Residents can also look forward soon to searching an online Community Watershed Atlas where they can see and contribute pictures and video clips from their watershed. *For information about our watershed, please call 250-782-1783.*

**TALK BACK**



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