

2016 State of the City Address

FOR: MAYOR STEVE CHRISTIE

WHERE: LACOMBE CHAMBER/SERVICE GROUPS LUNCHEON AT LMC

WHEN: 12:00 PM ON January 18, 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

- Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, President Law. Thank you all for coming...
- As your mayor, I have the privilege of working with a diligent team of leaders who have been elected to make the best decisions, to ensure residents receive the best value for their tax dollars.
- As your City Council, we have a common vision – to help build a safe, vibrant and inclusive city, one that welcomes everyone to live, work, and play.
- I would like to take a moment to recognize my team for their hard work and dedication to public service ...please stand, Councillor Bouwsema, Councillor Rempel, Councillor Armishaw, Councillor McQuesten, Councillor Konnik, and Councillor Harder.
- Thank you. It is a real pleasure working with all of you.

(PAUSE)

- It gives me great pleasure to come before you again to talk about something I'm **VERY** passionate about...the city of Lacombe.
- I am proud of our community's long and rich history and I am excited about the future prospects. Even with the current tough economic times, our community has continued to grow at a steady pace and I look forward to sharing with you just a few of the City's many highlights in 2016, and to discuss our goals for 2017.

(PAUSE)

- Over the past year, the City of Lacombe made significant investments in our community's built infrastructure, as well as in our service delivery capabilities to prepare for the city's growth needs.

- We successfully completed many projects in 2016, including:
 - Planning for the downtown main street replacement and redevelopment in 2017.
 - Completion of the Land Use Bylaw 400.
 - Enhanced training programs for our volunteer firefighters
 - Continued water meter replacements.
 - Implementation of e-billing for utility customers.
 - The launch of the urban hen pilot program.
 - BOLT Transit concluded its second full year of operations, usage continues to grow, with just under 2000 riders per month. BOLT advertising revenues also grew sharply, which helps with our cost recovery efforts.

(PAUSE)

- Of course, our largest undertaking was the renovation and expansion of the community's Sports and Leisure Complex, which began in April, 2016.
- The main doors are expected to open to the public January 23... Yes, Monday! Thank you to all the user groups for your patients and understanding throughout this construction period.
- The City also conducted its first-ever naming rights sponsorship campaign to help reduce project borrowing costs, and in June the Gary Moe Auto Group was announced as the facility naming rights sponsor for the – renamed **Gary Moe Auto Group Sportsplex**.
- Honorable mentions also go out to Can Pak Environmental Inc., Freightliner of Red Deer, Border Paving Ltd., Kles Air Mechanical, Central City Asphalt Ltd., Scott Builders, The Co-operators/Advantage Insurance Group and Stantec for partnering with us in just under \$600,000 in sponsorships.

- The City continues to seek sponsorship opportunities, for more information, please visit our website.

(PAUSE)

- 2016 also saw the completion of the new Lacombe Police Station; the 16,000 sq. ft. facility gives our municipal police force the much needed space and modern technology to deliver quality, effective services to our residents now and into the future.

(PAUSE)

- Every year, the City of Lacombe implements a collection of infrastructure projects - collectively known as the Capital Works Program - to maintain and upgrade the City's major utilities and transportation systems in response to growth, physical condition, and new regulations. Some of the projects completed are;
 - Road re-construction of Royal Crescent and Regent Close
 - Installation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) and curb extensions at the intersection of Woodland Drive and Maple Bay
 - Right-turn lane at HWY 2a service road and Woodland Drive

(PAUSE)

- You will be pleased to hear that the City continues to see growth in all types of development and Council continues working hard in these challenging economic times to ensure our city's prosperity.
- The number of building permits issued was down slightly; however, the total value of permits was up significantly - from \$45.5 million in November 2015 to \$62.2 million in November 2016. The largest increase was in the commercial building and renovation numbers, which helps balance our residential and non-residential tax base.
- It was also a banner year for multi-family residential construction. Last year, 19 multi-family housing developments (representing nearly 100 units) received building permits, compared to 4 in 2015. This helps to increase the range of more affordable housing stock in the community.

- Speaking of affordable housing, the City approved two new affordable housing projects in 2016:
- We leveraged Provincial grant funding and partnered with Habitat for Humanity Red Deer Region to build two new duplexes in the Shepherd Heights neighborhood which, once complete, will provide safe and affordable housing for four local families.
- The City also partnered with the Bethany Group and Browood Developments to deliver the innovative Down Payment Assistance Program for first-time homeowners.

(PAUSE)

- We also continued with efforts to preserve our built heritage in 2016. There were three new municipal historical designations:
 - The Young Residence
 - Michener House
 - The Kanngiesser Building
- The Heritage Resources Committee also awarded two grants as part of the City's Heritage Management Program:
 - \$5000 to St. Andrews United Church
 - \$5000 to Michener House Museum

(PAUSE)

- Lacombe continues to cultivate a reputation as a regional cultural hub with a year-round arts and culture scene.
- In 2016, the Lacombe Arts Endowment Fund provided funding for Music in the Park and divvied up just under \$6000 for six different arts grants.
- Projects funded by the Lacombe Art Collection Committee through the City's One Percent for Art Policy included a bronze sculpture of a

police officer created for the new Lacombe Police Station, three steel pine cone sculptures in Mayor's Park and a number of artworks for the Gary Moe Auto Group Sportsplex.

(PAUSE)

- The new ball diamond at Michener Park was opened up to users in 2016.
- Parks staff installed trail walkways, basketball hoops, benches and playground equipment in the Elizabeth Park Phase 10 Reserve Area.
- The fenced area on the water reservoir at C&E Trail and Woodland Drive was stocked with sporting equipment and opened to the public.

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- A gift of 700 tulip bulbs was planted in Lest We Forget Park in spring 2016 to commemorate the lasting friendship between Canada and the Netherlands.
- In September we were honored to join the Rikubetsu Friendship Society in celebration the 30th Anniversary of the twinning of Lacombe and Rikubetsu.
- ECHO Lacombe Association, a newly-formed community economic development organization, announced funding support for the first project to qualify for its community granting program – the new Echo Energy Stage.
- The new outdoor stage will be located in the LMC courtyard and play host to the popular Music in the Park concert series, and serve as a feature backdrop for several community events.

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- The Lacombe Fire Department responded to 273 requests for service in 2016, a slightly higher than average year for the department.

- Engine 3 was placed into service in the second quarter and has exceeded the department's expectations with regard to ease of operations and maneuverability within the city.
- Please join me in applauding our volunteer firefighters for their efforts.

LEAD APPLAUSE

- It was also a busy year for the Lacombe Police Service, who responded to almost 4000 calls in 2016, which represents a three percent increase over 2015.
- In October, the LPS moved to its new home which includes a new local police dispatch centre and upgraded radio communications utilizing the Alberta First Responders Radio Network (AFRRCS), Lacombe is the first municipal police agency in Alberta to go on to the system.
- Thank you to the second oldest Municipal Police Force in Alberta for your service.

LEAD APPLAUSE

- Looking forward, we can expect 2017 to be a busy and productive year, as we start implementing planned initiatives, and a number of capital projects get underway.
- The 2017 Budget was approved last month, which allows the City to maintain current service levels. The 2017 property tax rate shows a 3.26 per cent increase.....Although we do not formerly set the tax rate until April due to the Provincial and Federal budgets not being released until then, which include our grant funding formulas and school tax requisitions. I'm sure there will be further savings found!
- The 2017 Operating Budget is balanced, with total revenues and expenses of 37.4 Million dollars, and includes nearly 1 Million dollars in funding allocations to external community service organizations, which is an increase of over four percent from 2016

- The 2017 Capital Budget is set at 22.2 Million dollars, spread through 34 projects. The majority of the costs are related to the following:
 - The Downtown Main Street Infrastructure Replacement Project, where the public has been invited to provide input in the pre-design stage, which revealed some general themes:
 - Pedestrian safety is a high priority downtown,
 - 50 Street should remain as a two-way street,
 - Parking downtown needs improvement, and any additional scope considerations for the Main Street program should prioritize functional enhancements over aesthetic improvements.
 - West Area Servicing Project, which includes the extension of water and sewer mains to the west area located in the north east sector of the intersection of the QEII and Highway 12 to facilitate further commercial development. The project would also allow for connection to city services by Lacombe County for our revenue sharing area on the west side of QEII.
 - Our 2017 Capital works program along with other infrastructure, buildings, equipment, vehicle and maintenance needs.
- Now, I want to take a couple minutes to highlight an “arms- length to the City of Lacombe” project, which, as the Chairman of the North Red Deer River Regional Wastewater Services Commission, I feel has enormous and lasting positive environmental, economic and socially responsible effects to our city.
- Construction has started on the regional wastewater transmission system to send wastewater from Lacombe and Blackfalds to the City of Red Deer Wastewater Treatment Plant, with subsequent discharge into the Red Deer River.
- The nearly 70 million dollar project will see The Federal Government allocating funding for approximately 50 percent of the overall project cost. The Alberta Government will provide an estimated 40 percent, and the Commission will contribute the remaining 10 percent.

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- Now, while we work to maintain and enhance our built infrastructure and lay the foundations for future growth through responsible planning, we will continue adding to the richness of our community by supporting the many community events that are uniquely Lacombe
- The City currently host five major festivals;
 - Lacombe Days
 - Encore Art Show and Sale
 - Lacombe and District Harvest Festival
 - Light Up the Night
 - Music in the Park
- These events attract many artists, performers and visitors to our community, which keeps us vibrant, creative, and inclusive.
- Of course, none of these events could be successful, or event take place, without the commitment and efforts of our volunteers, community organizations and service clubs, as well as the vital support from our local business community.
- I'd like to take a moment to thank all of you who engage with the community and contribute your time and talents to serve others. Your efforts and community spirit are truly appreciated.

LEAD APPLAUSE

- In closing...as your Mayor I am committed to working with Council and staff to help better the lives of our residents. I chose to enter public service for a chance to contribute and make a positive difference in our community.
- As I look around this room, I can see your energy, enthusiasm and skills, and that gives me confidence that we can all work together to meet and overcome any and all challenges that lie ahead, and continue to meet our goal; a **STRONG** and **PROSPEROUS** Lacombe!
- Thank you.