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Background Notes from the Mayor's Desk - October 27, 2016

Congratulations to the Sundre and District Chamber of Commerce on their annual awards evening, held October 21st to honour and celebrate business in our community. Over 100 people attended the evening, which saw more than 125 anonymous community nominations in various categories, including businesses with under 10 employees, businesses with 11-20 employees, businesses with over 21 employees, individual employee awards, Farm Family of the Year Award, a Chamber President's Award, and a new Youth Entrepreneur Under 30 Award presented and sponsored by our MLA, Jason Nixon.

The guest speaker for the evening was Steven Muth, the President of the High River Chamber of Commerce. He spoke about the challenges that High River has faced after the 2013 flood, the rebuilding of their downtown business district, and he drew parallels with what Sundre is facing with the proposed Alberta Transportation pilot project for Highway 27 through Sundre. He challenged those in attendance to "own" the redevelopment of the downtown core and to be positive and optimistic about the project and the future of our community.

This event honoured "community small businesses", which includes the incredibly diverse and critical farm and ranch agricultural sector we all benefit from. Farm families were nominated and recognized for the high risk businesses they are, and for the "give back to the community" attitudes that farm families have contributed to Sundre since our pioneer days. This truly was a community event honouring all those entrepreneurs that make our community the place in which we all want to live, work and play, and the amazing "give back to the community" attitude we enjoy from all businesses in Sundre and District.

There was an evident "youth" theme this year at the event. Students from Sundre High School helped in preparations for the meal and volunteer students helped in the evening clearing away tables. Students provided background music for the crowd during and after supper. There were youth entrepreneurs nominated for the Youth Entrepreneur Under 30 Award as young as 8 years old. And notably, 50/50 tickets were sold to begin a first ever Chamber of Commerce Scholarship to a Sundre High School student looking to a future in business after post-secondary education.

The sponsorship for this year expanded to include all our local financial institutions: Alberta Treasury Branch, Bank of Montreal and Mountain View Credit Union. Plus, Mountain View County joined the Town of Sundre in sponsorship, as well, this year. In addition to the recognized sponsors, more than 20 individuals and businesses, students and volunteers were recognized with special thanks. Without all those volunteers coming together, this amazing evening of celebration could not have come together.

Thank you to all Chamber of Commerce members from Sundre and District, those who were nominated, the award winners, the sponsors, the volunteers, all who attended and to everyone who decided to honour small businesses in our community. Through the economic challenges we all face, it would be easy to wallow in the trap of negativity. Together, we are resilient, positive, optimistic and committed to our community and our way of life. Congratulations on a celebration of who we are :)

As always, please call me (403-559-7352) if you want to discuss this, or any other issue.

Terry Leslie, Mayor
Town of Sundre