

Friday, December 12, 2014

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CRD 2014 Accomplishments – A Year in Review

Williams Lake, B.C. - Cariboo Regional District Chair Al Richmond presented the CRD's Year-End Address during today's regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting in Williams Lake. Below is the transcript of the Address.

"Members of the Board, Members of the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, I have the distinct pleasure of reviewing the Cariboo Regional District's key accomplishments and successes for 2014. Looking back over the past year, our region can be proud of its achievements. The CRD experienced many successes in 2014.

The year started with three sub-regional budget consultation meetings taking place in 100 Mile House, Quesnel and Williams Lake. During these meetings we presented the proposed 2014 budget to our residents to seek feedback from them, before adopting the budget at the end of March.

In May of 2014, the CRD attended the North Central Local Government Association Conference which was held in Fort St. John. Delegates and their partners were able to attend some great workshops, business sessions and of course some spectacular entertainment and social events. I would also like to take this opportunity to again thank the many volunteers from who dedicated their time and efforts to put on this conference. The hospitality which was offered to delegates and their partners was second to none.

On May 20, 2014, The Cariboo Regional District's (CRD) new Anahim Lake Airport terminal was officially opened. The terminal was built with support from our partners, the BC Government of British Columbia's Towns for Tomorrow program, the Government of Canada's Gas Tax Fund, the Northern Development Initiative Trust, the Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition and the CRD.

At the beginning of June, the Cariboo Regional District unveiled its new corporate website which is located at cariboord.ca.

The goal of the redesign was to modernize the look and feel, and make the website more useable, professional and adaptable. The CRD website was developed to provide information and interactivity for and with residents, visitors and the general public who live, work or play within the Cariboo Chilcotin. The budget for this project was \$7,500

In June, the CRD Board of Directors and staff travelled to Alexis Creek for the 2014 Board on the Road event. The traditional Board on the Road BBQ was put on in support of the Alexis Creek Community Association to raise funds for the 100 Centennial celebrations for the community of Alexis Creek.

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On June 17, The Cariboo Regional District's Chief Election Officer declared the results as official for the North Cariboo Arena Replacement Project Referendum. A total of 3,235 North Cariboo residents participated in the referendum through advance polls, mail ballots and general voting day.

During the month of July, the CRD unveiled a new online public mapping system on the CRD's corporate website. The new proprietary online mapping system, ***designed and built internally by CRD staff***, is an interactive tool which will allow residents and visitors a new way of locating existing facilities and landmarks within the region. It will also provide an opportunity to learn more about the Cariboo Regional District and the services it provides as a local government.

We participated in Community to Community forums this year with two of our First Nation Communities. In January we participated in a Community to Community forum with the Williams Lake Indian band and in October with the Tsilhqot'in First Nations as part of the first steps in strengthening our relationship, exploring sharing services and developing a MOU's with these communities. We look forward to continuing discussions in the coming year and the formalization of agreements between our communities. Discussions have taken place with the Canim Lake First nation with the goal of holding a Community to Community Forum with them in coming year.

August 4th brought a tragic event to the Cariboo with the breach of the tailings pond facility at Mount Polley Mines near Likely. Our Emergency Operations Centre was opened to provide assistance to residents and coordinate efforts to ensure public safety. Our EOC Web Site and Face Book page became the go to place for news media, agencies, and the public for up to date information on the during the early weeks of the event. Our staff and many volunteers worked tirelessly side by side to meet the needs of the people directly affected by the breach for many months. We were joined by representatives of many Provincial Ministries forming a formidable team committed to working through the challenges presented by this event and finding solutions to problems not experienced in past emergency events. We are most appreciative to Emergency Management BC for putting a representative in our EOC to work with our staff to ensure there were no road blocks in providing services to the people affected by the event.

While we were able to lift the local state of emergency last week put in place as a result of this event we recognize the impacts of this event will require continued monitoring for many years to come. As with the Fires of 2010, our staff is to be commended for their dedication to helping those in need and finding solutions to daily challenges as the presented themselves.

I would like to thank the Provincial Government for their partnership and support throughout this event. I believe both levels of governments clearly recognize the value of partnerships made during this event and look forward to building a stronger relationship with them in the coming year.

From September 22 to 26, the Cariboo Regional District Board of Directors attended the annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) convention and AGM which took place in Whistler, BC. Throughout the convention the CRD met with provincial ministers, attended workshops and spoke to CRD resolutions.

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During the conference, the CRD met with the Premier of BC, the Honourable Christy Clark, the Minister of Environment, The Honourable Mary Polak and staff from the Minister of Energy and Mines to discuss the next steps in the clean-up and recovery from the Mount Polley Mine Tailings Pond Breach.

Throughout the week, CRD Board members and staff also met with four provincial ministers including the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the Honourable Steve Thomson; the Minister of Health, the Honourable Terry Lake; the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Honourable Todd Stone; and the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Michael de Jong to discuss regional issues.

Throughout the fall months, the CRD unveiled four new wheelchair accessible trails throughout the region including Hallis Lake, Churn Creek, the Interlakes Low Mobility Trail and the 99 Mile Accessible Trail. The CRD's accessible trail network received accolades from Williams Lake's own Rick Hansen who took the time out of his busy schedule to tour both the Gavin Lake low Mobility Trail and the 99 Mile Accessible Trail. Rick gave both trails rave reviews and applauded the CRD for its efforts in making these facilities accessible to people of all abilities.

The Cariboo Regional District declared September 30 annually as Orange Shirt Day. The municipalities within the region, along with School District 27 and 28 have also made this same declaration to aide in the healing and reconciliation process and to create a better future for generations to come.

In 2014, the CRD successfully applied to a number of different provincial and federal funding programs such as the Building Canada Fund, the Towns for Tomorrow program, Northern Development Initiative Trust, the Community Tourism Opportunities program and UBCM's Fuel mitigation fund for a total of approximately \$1 million. The CRD also received approximately \$1.7 million from the Community Works Fund which focuses on green initiatives and energy efficiency projects.

So often we forget how far we have come, and the challenges and issues we have overcome, or resolved along the way. Part of the reason for this report is to remind you of our accomplishments, and to compliment you on your successes.

Creating new partnerships, enhancing services, undertaking capital projects, informing the public and responding to residents' needs is what building this region is all about. Our organization will continue to respond to community and residents' needs thereby achieving our goal of:

Building Communities Together

I would like to thank all the Board members and staff for your dedication perseverance and support throughout 2014. Thank you."

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