



Mayor's Monthly Message

January 2023

It was a pleasure to host students from St. Joseph School in Coaldale and Piikani Nation Secondary High as part of Inside Education's "Energy Innovation Day". Students toured Stirling's ground mount array, inspected changes we are making at the pool with solar preheating of water as well as high efficiency boilers to help save on operating costs.

Our grade 8 to 12 visitors also spent time at the Community Centre to take part in hands on activities related to renewable sources of energy and hear from several local experts. It was exciting to see these future leaders explore the challenges and trade-offs associated with the different types energy we all consume.



Stirling's position as one of the first electrically net zero (for municipal purposes) communities in Canada combined with our efforts to build a community-owned energy marketer continues to capture the interest of others. We were fortunate to host the Council and Administration from Paintearth County late last year. Paintearth has since joined the Ridge Utilities Marketing Associate program. I was also invited to present our story to the Southern Alberta Council of Public Affairs also known as SACPA this month. You can watch the broadcast of that presentation here: https://youtu.be/02_2zJ3JNpl

The Village's solar installation helps provide a modest reduction in the total greenhouse gas emissions we produce from electrical use in our municipal facilities. It's about the same as taking 41 cars off the road. The biggest driver for past Councils has been the potential for financial savings. The Village had an electrical bill of about \$31,000 in 2017 when power prices were at 6 ¢/kWh. Our total electrical bill in 2022, with much higher prices, was a **credit** of \$7,300 which includes the costs of capital associated with our system. We've taken a cost and turned it into a revenue stream. This improvement of almost \$40,000 each year, can now be re-invested into programs and services for our community.



Council completed the rezoning of a former residential lot at 225 4 Avenue this month to create a new commercially zoned lot across from the post office. Commercial development in a community of our size is a slow process but Council remains committed to support sustainable economic development.



This month also saw the Stirling Fire Department present their year in review. The dedicated professionals of our volunteer department continue to handle increasing call volumes. With increasing wait times for ambulances, the Stirling Fire Department also provides a critical medical first response to bridge the gap for delays in EMS responses.

Council approved the purchase of a new-to-us rescue pumper that will replace our existing engine 2. Council appreciates the due diligence shown by the Fire Department in researching available used equipment on the market to best meet our community's needs while at the same time balancing our tight budget constraints.

We were excited to learn that Stirling will play host to the Girls 1A Basketball Provincial Championship from March 16-18. We are thrilled to welcome players, coaches and parents from across the province. Keep an eye on the Stirling School's social media feeds and website for more details on volunteer opportunities and sponsorship packages. Let's show the rest of Alberta what Laker pride is all about!



Trevor Lewington

"People in small towns, much more than in cities, share a destiny." — Richard Russo