



the RURAL SPIRIT

Fall Issue, OCTOBER 2008

We don't expect you to wait by the phone but...

We do want to give you a heads up. You may be receiving a telephone call in the near future – likely some time in October. Please don't hang up when the person on the telephone tells you they want to ask you a few questions about seniors' housing on behalf of CDS.



Telephone Survey

CDS and the Rural Seniors Housing Initiative have contracted an independent market research firm to conduct a random telephone survey to help us make sure our housing project is headed in the right direction. Generally, what we want to find out is:

- the level of interest in the community for the project (are you interested in purchasing?)
- what the 55+ market is looking for in seniors' housing (what do you really want?)
- a ballpark of the perceived value of the product (what do you think it's worth to you?)

Your opinion counts. We want to build exactly what you're looking for at the right price.

Finally, if you ARE really interested in the project and want to stay informed about the project's progress or be the first to hear about available units, please provide the interviewer with your contact information.



Your opinion counts. We want to build exactly what you're looking for at the right price. We would also appreciate if you tell your friends not to hang up either if they get a call.

Thank-you.

CDS has new number

Now it will be a little easier to get in touch with us. CDS has its own phone number and listing.

We used to share a number with the Bearspaw Historical Society since our offices are located in the walk-out basement of the Bearspaw Historical School House No. 3851 across the street from the Lifestyle Centre. Drop by for a visit or contact us at:

Communities Development Society
253253 Bearspaw Road
Calgary, AB, T3L 2P7

Phone: 403 239-0646
Fax: 403 208-2590
Email: info@theruralway.ca
Website: www.theruralway.ca

CDS is in the process of building a new website we hope will serve as a community development tool. Right now, we have a brochure-style website up you can view at www.theruralway.ca.

The School House is a great space for small meetings and is available at very reasonable rates.





community led

The Rural Seniors Housing Action Group - clockwise from top left: Ben Kawaguchi, Geoff Elliot, Lori Kovacs, Ruth Hunt, Kay Smith, Gordon Robertson, Valerie Robertson, Ernie Domshy, Nipper Guest, Alan Bishop, Sara Crook, Elisa Hart, (Missing Phil Unland). Photo by Gwyn Butler.

Seniors housing initiative going strong

The Rural Seniors Housing Project is a community-led senior initiative with plans to develop a non-profit residential facility for seniors who prefer to age in their community while maintaining a tranquil rural lifestyle. Their aim is to develop an eco-agricultural community using sustainable building practices.

This group of dedicated residents have been meeting for three years. Over 6,000 volunteer hours have been contributed to the project from residents and other community and private sector contributors.

The action group was both amazed and delighted to receive a generous land donation to support the project from Ruth Hunt, a long-time local resident and rancher in the Lochend area north of Bears paw. It was just the shot in the arm needed to reinvigorate the project.

Generally things do tend to slow down over the summer months with people going on vacation and taking time to enjoy the sun. But quite a bit has been happening with the Rural Seniors Housing Initiative. Here are a few of the highlights since May...

New faces



Ben Kawaguchi

In May, Ben Kawaguchi joined us as our new Housing Project Manager. His role is to coordinate the project using his industry knowledge and expertise to guide the action group through the development process. He has been helping the group zero in on what the project should look like and what is feasible before making application to the MD of Rocky View for re-designation and sub-division.

It's really turning the process around with community input at the front end of the project."

Ben has years of experience in the housing industry and continues his involvement with Canadian Home Builders Association as Community School Liaison. He has had his own company, Rocky Mountain Technology & Management Group, since

1995 and served as the Executive Director for the Centre for Excellence in Home Building & Land Development from 2000 to 2007.

When asked about his interest in the project, Ben said, "I was excited by the community-based approach... the whole idea of the community initiating and leading the project and having the builder/developer build what they want. It's really turning the process around with commu-

nity input at the front end of the project."

Daniel Sax

Daniel Sax, a Land Analyst, also joined the action group in May. Birol Fisecki, CEO of Bordeaux Developments, donated 1.5 days a week of Daniel's time to work with the group on some of the technical issues related to land use and development.

Mr. Fisecki said, "I believe it's a fantastic initiative that will help to create a new model for community driven development initiatives. It will also help solve the question of 'what do rural municipalities do with an aging demographic?' As such, we have volunteered our time, energy and internal resources to the project, and have arranged for planning work to be done by our consultants, Urban Systems."

There's water in them thar hills!

Water was a huge concern and the action group wondered if there would be enough water to move ahead with the project on the donated land.

CDS had a groundwater availability assessment study completed which confirmed the likelihood of water in the area. The action group then decided it was important to have a test well drilled and contracted DenAlta to do the job.

As it turns out, Ernie Domshy, one of the members of the action group, is a skilled water-witcher and after a brief lesson, he had converted the most skeptical of the group to the scientific methodology and benefits of water witching.

The group had a wonderful time determining the best drilling spot on the land for the test well. And indeed, water was found at approximately 200 feet with a flow of 25 gallons/minute making it possible for the group to forge ahead. More tests will be needed to determine how many housing units can be supported.



Converted skeptic, Phil Unland



Celebrating water discovery - from left: Gwyn Butler, Elisa Hart, Max Smith, Ernie Domshy, Phil Unland

SUCCESS

Accomplishments

Competitive market analysis completed

Gwyn Butler, CDS project leader, completed a survey of the senior housing market in Calgary and area with special attention paid to regional centres. The survey examined the number of facilities, the number rooms available, unit square footage, rental rates or costs, amenities, care levels, cost of services and waiting times.

Survey results provided us with a clear picture of what is currently available for seniors and will help us determine the feasibility of our project. The results do confirm there is a high demand for seniors' housing options (independent to supportive) throughout the MD, with every indication that this demand will increase as the "boomers" age.



Daniel Sax, Land Analyst with Bordeaux Development presents 3 preliminary lot layout designs prepared by Urban Systems

Rough lot layout designs presented

Daniel Sax presented some high level preliminary lot layout designs to the group. The three drawings, prepared by Urban Systems, were based on an analysis of the topography, gas line, road access and water tests. All options included community gardens, pathways and building placement and orientation least disruptive to land and energy efficiencies.

Options included a single family plan, a multi-family plan and a mixed plan. The action group selected the mixed plan as the one that most closely represented their vision which included a fair amount of separation between buildings and cottages in order to create a homestead feel. This exercise helped narrow down group expectations and formed the basis for the first draft Proforma or ballpark cost estimate.

First Proforma

A first Proforma, which is often referred to as a "back of the envelope" estimate was conducted. Numbers were based on current market conditions for senior housing (rent/lease costs) and estimated construction costs for 2008. Our first look at the numbers suggest that the project could be feasible and we should proceed with further investigation.

"The seniors are amazing, and for them to start to see some tangible results after so much hard work is really great. It's exciting to help them get t to the next level of the project."

Daniel Sax

Market Research

In October, an independent market research firm will conduct a telephone interview to help us determine the potential size of the market, price points and key consumer expectations. Your participation will be much appreciated.

Second Proforma

Assuming that the market research supports the project and we have the critical information we need, our next step will be to do a more detailed Proforma which will provide us with the costs associated with the best housing options area residents told us they want and potential price (rent, lease or purchase).

Redevelopment Application

If we find the project is feasible based on the market research and the proforma, the next step will be to proceed to submission of the Redevelopment Application. This would require an Environmental Impact Study and a Conceptual Scheme for the project.



The Rural Seniors Housing Action Group has their work cut out for them, but they are making a difference in the community. Join and share your time and talents.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday morning, October 23, from 9-11 a.m. at the Bears paw Historical School House (across from Lifestyle Centre).

Our meetings are open to the public. Anyone who would like to attend is welcome. For more information call the CDS office at 403-239-0646.

Still many challenges ahead of us

Drew Hyndman, a planner at the MD Planner joined the action group for a guest presentation to go over the conceptual scheme process and re-designation and subdivision of land.

An Area Structure Plan (ASP) exists to guide development in higher density areas such as Springbank and Bears paw. However the proposed land for the project does fall outside the ASP. Fragmented development in agricultural areas is generally discouraged by the MD and would require the rezoning of agricultural land, a practice that has been frowned upon by residents in the past.

As a result, Drew stressed the need to align the short and long-term goals of the project with MD objectives for the creation of a sustainable community that fits the location and, that water, sewer, transportation and protection of agricultural land concerns are fully addressed. He also emphasized the need to clearly communicate the project with the public and continue to gather support.



A look at the Hunt land

Wilf and Ruth Hunt shared a dream of helping seniors and people with disabilities

Spectacular array of wildflowers

Wilf and Ruth Hunt bought their property in the 1946 because it was native grassland that could support a cattle operation. A quarter section of the land that the Hunts called the “hilly pasture” served as winter range for their cattle because of the protection the hills provided and the abundant grasses to sustain them. Ruth Hunt is turning a large portion of this land into a conservation area. She donated between 20 and 40 acres to CDS for the seniors’ eco-agricultural village, so that people like her, who love the grassland and want to continue to live in the country, do not have to move to a seniors facility in a town or city.

Sarah Crook (Nature Calgary) and Elisa Hart (CDS Board member) visited the Hunt land in May. Sarah recorded the following birds: blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, mallard, red-tailed hawk, Franklin’s gull, magpie, and tree swallow. They heard woodpeckers and a grouse of some type. The din of Boreal chorus frogs was heard near the wetlands. A white-tailed deer was seen, and lots of moose droppings. An abundance of crocuses were a welcome sign of spring.

In July, Elisa and husband Chris Shank saw a spectacular array of wildflowers, and noted the remarkable diversity of plants that make up this native grassland.

Visits to the Hunt land were made in May and July to photograph it and to see the type of wildlife that it supports. We hope you enjoy the images of this beautiful land.

All nature photos provided by Elisa Hart





CDS Board (from left) Elisa Hart–Secretary & Acting Treasurer, Rob Butler–Director, Norm Zimmerman–Director, Geoff Elliott–Director, Sue Wood–Chair, Peter Žeglen–Vice Chair, Natasha Richardson–Director (missing Jean Prince–past Chair)

New CDS board chair

CDS is very pleased to announce that Sue Wood has agreed to step into the position of Chair following the dedicated efforts of our past chair, Jean Prince.

Sue is a long-time resident of Rocky View. She lived in the Springbank community for 26 years where she and her husband Tom raised their three children. Now retired, they live in Bragg Creek along with Sue's father who moved from Ontario three years ago. Sue says they all enjoy the nature in their own backyard, just one of the perks of living in a rural area.

Sue has over 20 years of experience

with volunteers and has seen, firsthand, the positive impact they have on their communities. She was the Manager of Volunteer Resources at the Calgary General Hospital/Peter Lougheed Centre for 13 years, leading 500 volunteers in 35 programs.

She ran her own consulting business providing training and facilitation services to the non-profit sector for board governance, strategic planning and volunteer management. Sue has also served on several boards.

When asked about her interest in working with CDS, Sue said, "Well, I believe volunteerism is the cornerstone of community development. I

have had the good fortune to volunteer nationally and internationally and am now motivated to give back to my own community. CDS offers that opportunity and provides the chance to work with a dynamic, progressive-thinking and proactive board and staff."

The CDS Board meets every two months. This past year the Board has been hard at work on the strategic plan and in providing overall policy direction.

If you are interested in community development strategies and wish to join this vibrant, active group, please contact us.

Please donate!

CDS has a lot of work and some big decisions ahead of us. We're excited. As a community developer, we only support projects that address community issues residents have said are important to them. We need your support to keep the housing initiative going and ensure it remains community-led.



Ruth Hunt's land donation of is a donation to all of us in this community – to the people who have lived and made a home here, some for years, some for generations.

Consider investing your time, talent or money in a project that will improve of the quality of life

Invest in your own community

right here in your own community. Our goal is raise \$75,000 from the community. We can then double that money through provincial grants.

In Alberta you receive a 50% tax credit on your charitable donations and your hard earned dollars will stay in Alberta rather than going to Ottawa.

Contact CDS for more information.

Communities Development Society (CDS)

What we do

CDS supports grassroots community development in the rural communities in the western MD of Rocky View.

So what specifically, you ask, does CDS do? Great question!

We'll spare you the details of our process but suffice it to say, that if you really want to roll up your sleeves and make a positive change in an area of concern to residents, we should talk!

In today's world "getting things done" has become more complicated and involves a large number of stakeholders and resources. What we do is help you to find the information, discover the resources, make the connections, organize the project, and achieve the outcomes that will make your community a better place. You do the needed work! We provide the needed support!

Sounds exciting doesn't it? Well, it is! Let's get something started!

Vision

Resilient, connected rural communities

Mission

We assist rural communities to engage and connect for an enhanced quality of life.

Funding

CDS is proudly supported by the following:

Ruth Hunt, Alberta Lottery Fund - The Community Initiatives Program, Anonymous Donor, Bearspaw Lions' Club, Bordeaux Developments, The Calgary Foundation, Community Futures Centre West, M.D. of Rocky View No. 44 FCSS (Family & Community Support Services), The Government of Canada's New Horizon for Seniors Program, The Family Office, Western Economic Diversification, generous donations from local residents and hours and hours of volunteer time.

Values & Beliefs

We value fairness, integrity, accountability, equality, opportunity, open mindedness, choice, empowerment, participation, innovation, and continuous learning.

CDS uses an asset-based community development approach in assisting communities to address issues of concern to them. In doing so we believe:

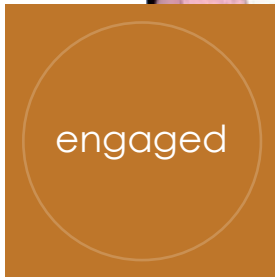
- that identifying, and working with the strengths that exist in a community is the most effective way to develop sustainable solutions to community issues
- that community participation, relationship building, and leadership results in more connected, engaged, and empowered communities
- in using participatory processes for conducting consultation and research
- in fostering a "sense of place" through culture, history and geography



"Quite simply, positive reactions often need a catalyst. Change generally needs an instigator. Projects usually need an integrator."



CDS team members - from left - Elaine Grodaes, Janice Christianson, Lori Kovacs, Gwyn Butler



Bears paw and District Community Fair Association volunteers accepts award from Reeve Lois Habberfied, MD Rocky View.

Volunteer community group donates prize money

The Bears paw and District Community Fair Association were recognized for their volunteer community involvement with an award at the Bears paw Lion's Club Pioneer Volunteer Appreciation Tea last April.

CDS is very pleased to announce that the volunteer group has donated its \$500 prize winnings to the Rural Seniors Housing Initiative with a request that the funds be put towards some aspect of horticulture. Thanks so much for your generosity! It will be put to good use.

The Lion's Club honored Ruth Hunt with the Legacy Award for her contribution to the community. Ruth donated 20 to 40 acres of her land north of Highway 567 at the end off Bears paw Road to facilitate the building of the Rural Senior's Housing Project.

CDS also had the opportunity to showcase the Rural Seniors Housing Project progress with a set of display boards at the Pioneer Volunteer Appreciation Tea.



Ruth Hunt accepts Legacy Award from Ted Morton, MLA & Minister of Sustainable Resource Development

CDS partners with University of Calgary

At CDS, we believe in great partnerships and once again, we have joined forces with the University of Calgary. In August, Dr. Edna Einsiedel of the Faculty of Communication and Culture contacted CDS with a request for student research projects for the 2008 September semester.

Innovative Technologies

Students, Sara Solvey and Bobby Naicker, confirmed they will research Innovative Technologies in Waste Water Management for Small Rural Developments. They will review

the costs and benefits of available systems that minimize the impact of waste water disposal; ways the seniors' housing project may reduce their energy footprint.

Social Enterprise

Social enterprises are fast emerging as an alternate vehicle for service delivery. Essentially they are viable businesses set up to tackle a social or environmental need. What makes them different than a traditional for-profit business is that all profits are reinvested to further the mission for

positive change.

Lydia Ng and Jocelyn Grant will research how other non-profits are using social enterprise to create a self-sustaining model that feeds back into the community and stimulates local economic development. Some considerations they may pursue include financing, sustainability, human resources, etc.

We look forward to a presentation of their findings in December.

Mark your calendar - Community Visioning

Bears paw residents can play an important role in defining the future of their community by participating in the Imagine Bears paw process spearheaded by Hopeton Loudon, MD Councillor.

The Bears paw community is facing unprecedented growth. As a result of this - and provincial and municipal government pressures resulting from the new provincial land use framework, the Calgary Regional Partnership and the new Bears paw Area Structure Plan - our community will likely undergo a dramatic transformation over the next several years. If residents don't do their part in shaping and defining their community, others will do it for them.

The first meeting was held September 25th at the Lions Hall starting at 7 pm. Over 100 people showed up to meet with MD planner Chris Wolfe, who is leading the Area Structure Plan/Community Development Strategy.

A Community Development Strategy outlines the overall settlement pattern and infrastructure system of an area. It does this by establishing what sorts of landscape types are appropriate in which locations and how they should interconnect across the community. Across a landscape, there are areas that function as centers, districts, corridors and preserves. The function of the strategy is to establish the boundaries of these distinct types of places and describe the sort of character they will have.

It is the goal of the MD Administration to have a final version of the Bears paw Community Development Strategy brought before Council in June, in a form worthy of public and professional acclaim. To do this the MD has developed a process, with award winning urban planning designer Micheal Van Hausen, which fully integrates feedback, input and participation with Bears paw residents. This process includes:

- October 22 - Discover Bears paw Conversation Café
- October 29/20 - Technical Workshop involving 10 people selected from municipal and community stakeholders.
- November 21 - Draft Bears paw Community Development Strategy
- Early December - Bears paw Choices forum - Bears paw resident workshop.

Better together

On October 15, CDS is hosting a fall forum for non-profits and community groups in the Bears paw area. All interested groups are invited to a potluck breakfast meeting from 9-11 am at the Bears paw Historical School House.

This initiative's major goals are to:

1. Raise community awareness about local organizations and the work they do
2. Expand existing networks among organizations
3. Identify strengths and gaps in local services
4. Provide a base for collective community visioning.

Imagine Bears paw

CDS will be playing a role in the Imagine Bears paw process. We will be forming sub-committees around important issues (i.e. youth, seniors, open green space, historical and cultural preservation, etc.) to develop strategic actions plans that will feed into the vision and the ASP.

To stay informed about the process and learn how you can be involved, visit www.mybears paw.ca.



Over 100 people showed up at the first meeting.

Community Leadership Forum

CDS focuses on identifying and using strengths that already exist in communities to address local social issues and improve community life. We aim to engage, organize and mobilize individual and community talents, skills and assets using participatory processes.

Calling all boomers...and beyond

Rural Seniors form regional advisory council

A Rural Seniors Advisory Council has been formed to inform and connect western Rocky View seniors. The council will share their knowledge and skill through the planning and leading of regular meetings, researching and identifying issues and developing strategies to address these issues.

Speaker Series

This regional council hopes to reach out to isolated seniors with opportunities for communication, education and involvement in their communities. They have applied for funding from "New Horizons for Seniors" to develop a rural speaker series that focuses on the specific areas of interest local seniors have said are important to them such as health care, transportation, safety and culture.

Newsletter

Also, a regional seniors' newsletter is being planned to better inform rural seniors of resources and programs that are already available in Calgary and area and what supports need to be in place in the rural areas to keep seniors in their own communities longer.

When seniors are able to remain in the community they built, the whole community benefits. Their knowledge of the area history, their love of the land, their wisdom gained through a lifetime of experience and their community participation helps keep the community rooted, vibrant and adds to its sense of identity.



Join us

If you are interested in aging issues and would like to get involved, please contact Val at 403 217-5329. Meetings are held in various locations throughout the western MD. The next meeting is yet to be set.

Good news travels fast

Presentation Request

Good news travels fast. CDS and The Rural Seniors Housing Action Group were asked to present to the SE Rocky View Community Services in Chestermere. At present, they are gathering ideas to form a plan of action around seniors housing in the Chestermere area.

Community Program Coordinator, Sherri Standish, said, I am sure you are aware of the demographics and the inevitable "explosion" in the numbers of older adults that will be living here in 10-15 years down the road. It's important to have services ready for the enlarged proportion of senior community members." The meeting took place on Wednesday, October 1 in the Chestermere Municipal Building.



Cochrane and Area Heritage Association will hold November art sale

Upcoming Events

Seniors Conferences

October 24 - Friday

Boomers and Beyond:
Capturing the Energy & Expertise of
People Aged 50+
Mount Royal College, Calgary
Cost: \$110
Contact: Calgary Family Services
403 269-9888

November 12 - Wednesday

2008 Positive Aging Conference
Web cast - conference in Minnesota
Calgary, 8 am to 4 pm
Cost: \$60
Contact: Gwyn Butler
403 239-0646

Art and Bake Sale

November 1-2

On November 1-2, the Cochrane and Area Heritage Association are holding a craft and art fair/bake sale at the recently opened Perrenoud Ranche Art Centre located on Weedon Trail north of Cochrane.

The volunteer-run association leases the building and has painstakingly restored parts of this historic house donated by the Perrenoud family to the provincial government. Come explore the century-old building and enjoy the art and baked goods of local artists. For more information call 403 851-0549.