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Area municipalities think, plan regionally

Brendan Wood
Staff Writer
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Airdrie Echo — At its regular meeting March 20, Airdrie city council heard a presentation from Diane Berreth, Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) project manager of economic development, that provided the city with information on CRP's activities.

Berreth outlined the three cornerstones on which CRP is based – prosperity, the natural environment and municipal services – and provided information to council about current projects that flow from these principles. In regard to prosperity, Berreth referred to two projects aimed at boosting the region's economic profile. These included a regional asset assessment – an update to 8,700 business and employment records in the region, as well as an update of all the electronic files on the AlbertaFirst website. The former is geared toward building a development strategy based on up-to-date business information, while the latter is aimed at attracting workers and investment to the region via an online database.

"What this allows us to do is really look at what our region has from a business perspective and what we can build strategy around," Berreth said. "It's key that we maintain that information, because we will use that to analyze and develop strategy."

Focusing as well on the natural environment, CRP recently completed a study that suggested a need to develop a regional organic waste processing facility.

"Fifty per cent of the waste going into our landfills is not actually waste, but is a valuable resource," Berreth said.

Based on that information, CRP will complete a study this spring on the feasibility of such a facility, which would service the regional communities. As for regional municipal services, CRP has several other potential projects in the works, as well.

"CRP is looking at putting a variety of our maps into the global information system (GIS)," Berreth said, adding that such items as current watershed mapping, emergency address mapping projects, such future mapping projects as regional pathways and waste catchments could be included. Finally, Berreth outlined the CRP's 100-year vision for the region, Together 2105 – a regional strategy based on the need for continued sustainability in the region.

Airdrie economic development officer Kent Rupert applauded the plan and hailed it as a crucial step for the region in dealing with growth into the future.

"Together 2105 is an opportunity for everyone who lives in the region to work together to make sure we maintain a thriving economy, clean environment and high quality of life for future generations," Rupert said. The partnership, which is chaired by Airdrie Mayor Linda Bruce, will hold its annual general assembly in May, at which time these and other future projects will be further evaluated.

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