

# W Rocky View WEEKLY Y

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## Water servicing should be negotiated, minister says

*Enrique Massot*

Issues relating to growth as well as water and wastewater servicing would be best addressed with a regional and collaborative approach, a provincial minister told the members of the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) gathered in Priddis on Friday.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs Rob Renner pointed out to disagreements between municipalities on issues of servicing.

"I noticed recently a story on the Calgary Herald that some discussions are underway on regional water," she said. "If everybody is committed ... working together, often times, not only solves the collective problems, but in many cases is the best solution to individual problems as well."

Rocky View Reeve Al Schule welcomed the words of the minister and expressed support for ongoing initiatives of the CRP.

"It is a huge step in the right direction," he said.

However, he told the Rocky View Weekly since the group is not a level of government, its resolutions are not mandatory and require a collaborative approach of all the players to be successful.

"I hope the province realizes that for growth, the water licences have to be shared equally," he said. "Some municipalities have licences they will probably never use, while others are short."

Relationships between the City of Calgary and the Municipal District of Rocky View, both CRP members, have been shaky over water and sewer servicing, after the city turned down Rocky View requests for servicing for the Springbank area, and more recently for a subdivision in Elbow Valley. Last year, Bronconnier told the Rocky View Weekly that he did not favour acreage development in what the city considers its growth corridors, and reaffirmed the concept of uni-city.

Rocky View meanwhile has launched a series of initiatives to build its own water and sewage treatment systems, which started last year with a sewage line that will service Rancher's Beef and other developments in the Balzac area, with a treatment plant in Langdon.

It is also working on building a water pipeline from the Bow River south of Langdon, to service commercial,

industrial and residential areas in north and east Rocky View.

However, licences for water withdrawal from the Bow River have not been granted by Alberta Environment. In the meantime, the M.D. has secured an extension of the services of Rocky View Water Co-op to service Rancher's Beef, and is in talks with the Kneehill Regional Water Commission, which has built a rural-urban servicing line providing water from the Red Deer River, treated in the Town of Drumheller that is already servicing Irricana and Beiseker, in northeast Rocky View.

The City of Calgary possesses withdrawal water licences that largely exceed the needs of its present population. Meanwhile, negotiations on annexation of a 50-year land supply of Rocky View land to the city have been progressing with glacial speed since October 2002.

Schule said all jurisdictions, including the city, would benefit of having a regional approach to servicing.

"We have to accept sharing, and we have to learn to grow together," he said.



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