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Mayor steps down as partnership chair

By Darlene Casten
Staff reporter

The Calgary Regional Partnership has just begun, but Okotoks Mayor Bill McAlpine's term as chair of the organization has come to an end.

McAlpine spent three terms as the top official of the partnership, which is made up of 15 member communities. Last week the partner members voted in Airdrie Mayor Linda Bruce as the chair for the next year.

Town councillors and administrators from the Towns of Black Diamond, Turner Valley, Okotoks and the MD of Foothills belong to the partnership.

The foothills will continue to have representation amongst the partnership's top elected officials. MD of Foothills Councillor Ron Laycraft, a Millarville resident, was named vice-chair of the organization.

Completing a mapping project that will coordinate emergency services is a top priority over the next year, said Laycraft.

"I am working diligently on having seamless emergency services," Laycraft said.

The partnership received its non-profit status last spring and began the process of developing the organization's strategies and business plans. A three-year business plan that focuses on municipal services, sustainable environments and prosperity was accepted at the fall AGM.

Ongoing projects include emergency response, transportation, watershed management, waste management and economic development.

Working with the City of Calgary will also be a top priority.

"Calgary sneezes and we have an earthquake," Laycraft said. "This partnership is the one good way our areas are going to grow in an orderly fashion."

Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier said the city would not discuss individual issues through the regional partnership, but issues such as economic development and environment will be.

McAlpine will continue in an advisory position as the past chair.

"(Okotoks) will definitely continue to be involved," he said, adding that local projects such as converting the Saddlebrook facility into a film production set could be addressed through the partnership. Water conservation is another issue facing users of the Sheep River that will be discussed by members.

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