



Remembrance Day ceremonies will take place at the Legion Hall next Saturday. Come out and pay your respects to those who have served and sacrificed for our country over the past 109 years. If you are unable to attend, pause at 11 am for 2 minutes of reflection on what these people have done for our country.

I learned on Friday that Dr. Raheem Dhanani will be ending his practice here in Bow Island, at the end of January. I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Dhanani for his service to our community and his role in our citizens' healthcare. We have been fortunate to have had a physician of his caliber as part of our local healthcare team. Many thanks to Dr. Dhanani and his family and I wish them all the best in the future.

More on local healthcare. Over the past several months I have witnessed, at various times, the challenges being faced by our Health Centre due to staff shortages. Somehow, they have avoided any closures, but I have seen staff working double shifts or giving up days off to cover shifts. Local management is working hard to recruit and fill the various positions. They are faced with a similar roadblock that many of our businesses have and that is housing. The Town is working hard to find solutions to the housing shortage, but it will take some time. One idea to help fill some of these nursing positions, even on a temporary basis, is to see if there are people in town willing to billet any of these folks. Some candidates don't have transportation so commuting from the city is not an option and some are apprehensive about commuting in the winter. AHS has their name on the door, but this is **our** Health Centre, and this could be another way for the community to support it, which of course benefits the community. Contact the site manager, Angie, if you think you may be interested. They are also in need of volunteers at the hospital, especially in Long-term Care for visiting and various activities.

From Day 1 AHS employees have often been frustrated by the bureaucracy and lack of leadership at various levels. This frustration is undoubtedly behind the decisions of many experienced staff in the whole system to quit or become casual employees. Premier Smith has been saying the government wants to see decentralization of decision-making within AHS and more of a regional approach. I hope they follow through in a way that doesn't create too much upheaval and in fact empowers front line staff and local management to make good decisions for the benefit of everyone in the system.

Thank you to Capital Power who have awarded the Town a \$20,000 grant to plant trees in the new recreation area in Westview. We are waiting for word on a number of other grant applications, including federal money to support the new housing development. Our goal is to begin engaging developers and builders before spring but need to get the funding pieces in place. The demand for rental spaces and affordable housing keeps increasing and has to be addressed for us to move ahead. At a recent economic forum held at the Medicine Hat College, we heard that there are 6000 unfilled jobs in southern Alberta and a key reason is this lack of housing.

As advertised last month Council recently approved increases to the local access fees charged to Fortis and Atco for having their lines in and on Town alleys and roadways. While this will result in combined monthly increases to residents and businesses of about \$20, it will also be paid by non-tax paying properties such as the schools, hospital and government buildings. This is the first increase in quite a few years and Council may target a specific area in the budget for the additional funds.

Public Works have pretty well wrapped up this year's water line replacement projects. Paving was delayed, waiting for the house to be moved in on 8th Avenue. The contractor has said they will be here this week, but I think that will be weather dependent. If winter closes in too soon, it will mean even more paving next year. Budget discussions have begun and various projects are being looked at for 2024. The contractor that will be installing the new pool liner has been here getting things prepared for the installation this coming spring. Other than the paving holdup, the crew has had a very successful summer season and are now preparing for winter operations. Thank you to all our staff for their efforts this past very busy summer.

Once again, please pause to remember on the 11th. *Lest We Forget*

Mayor Gordon Reynolds