

Delburne Mayor helps form new Community Engagement Site

July 4, 2008: Mayor Bob Manning has joined an enthusiastic group of residents from the Delburne area to form a Council which will lead the development of the area's Community Engagement Site.

Delburne is the second location to launch the initiative, after Cremona became the first of 12 Community Engagement Sites (CES) last month. The sites will be formed throughout Central Alberta in communities served by the Community Learning Campus, providing a close-to-home location for people of all ages to access learning and business tools. Mayor Manning was part of a committee that was instrumental in launching Health Net (now referred to as Health Link) in the mid 1990s and sees the advantages this level of technology brings to residents.

"I was a member of the David Thompson Health Region Authority at the time and appointed to a committee by the Hon. Shirley McClellan, Minister of Health," said Manning. "The committee had membership from most health regions in the province, together with representatives from Alberta Health, Provincial Mental Health, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Alberta Cancer Board and the Alberta Medical Association, to set up Health Net. Mental Health had a small link in operation at the time where psychologists from Alberta Hospital could communicate with patients in Rocky Mountain House. The first link in the Health Region was with physicians in Sundre communicating with other professionals in Red Deer, Calgary or Edmonton

"Back then it was a big, cumbersome device – a large portable computer-type device with a camera. It would be stored in closets out of the way and there was certainly no dedicated space for it. We went through the telephone lines, not the SuperNet, so it was quite costly. But it proved to be a great facility for many things, and I believe the Community Engagement Site will take those networking advantages much further and open opportunities for everyone."

Some residents may use the CES to take a class for pleasure, while others might build their professional skills through post-secondary courses for credit. Many people will use the SuperNet technology to support business applications. The role of the CES Council will be to create a local priority of programming and an approach to services, so that all residents can best benefit from the array of learning and business opportunities provided through each CES.

"Energy personnel from this area travel to safety meetings, many of which could be facilitated through the Community Engagement Site to reduce the amount of travel. I know our seniors are finding it difficult to get transportation to medical appointments and the Site could provide the opportunity for some of those appointments to take place in our community through the network. Having college classes available to everyone, workshops to share farming information, holding teachers' workshops and other professional development opportunities – it is very advantageous for our residents," said Manning.

"I have been involved in these new technologies and have seen very definite benefits. The Delburne Community Engagement Site will be a great benefit for many people in our community."

The ten-member Delburne CES Council is looking to hire a part time Delburne CES Program Coordinator in August. For details on future Community Engagement Sites, visit www.communitylearningcampus.ca. This initiative was developed by South Central Rural Alliance and funded through Rural Alberta's Development Fund.

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