

For Immediate Release

April 27, 2017

Headline: *Region looks to the economic future*

Given the appreciation that both the ATCO Battle River Generating Station and Paintearth Mine are undergoing considerable transitions, the local governments within the region have created an Economic Opportunities Taskforce. The Economic Opportunities Taskforce was formed in 2016 and consists of representation from the County of Paintearth No. 18, Flagstaff County, the Towns of Castor and Coronation and the Villages of Forestburg and Halkirk. With the support of the Government of Canada and Government of Alberta, the Taskforce is focusing its immediate efforts to work with industry and citizens to gain a clearer picture of the short and long term impacts of the closure of the power generating station and the coal mine, as well as identify potential economic development opportunities for the region that will help the region successfully transition. *“It is critical that we work as a region to fully understand the impacts and inventory our collective assets that can assist us in ensuring we have a vibrant and sustainable future for our region”* says Peter Miller, Mayor Village of Forestburg.

In order to do this the Taskforce has engaged Urban Systems Ltd. to undertake a review and analysis of the social and economic impacts expected to accrue from the potential closures of the Battle River Generating Station and Paintearth Mine. From this base Urban Systems has also been asked to work with the communities in undertaking regional strengths and opportunity identification exercise that can be used as a foundation for transitioning the region forward. The team assembled by Urban Systems Ltd. brings to the table an unmatched base of both domestic and international experience and expertise in finance, economics, and planning. They are very familiar with the region and have proven successes in undertaking similar assignments. *“While the changes, the region is undergoing can be very intimidating, it is important to remember the region has many significant assets that it can build on”* stated Wayne Robert, Project Lead Urban Systems Ltd. Robert also points out *“it is very encouraging to see that both the Battle River Generating Station and Paintearth Mine are heavily engaged in the conversation and are committed to working with the region through the transition.”*

Over the next few months the team assembled by Urban Systems Ltd. will be working closely with the Economic Opportunities Taskforce. While the project will extend to mid-September 2017, some of the immediate steps will include a compilation and review of relevant socio-economic information; the preparation of an impact logic format to separate out specific impact categories; and collection of information on local assets and opportunities. Urban Systems Ltd understands very well that the effort they undertake will need to be inclusive and transparent; the investigations comprehensive; and the outputs realistic and relevant.

For this exercise to be successful it will require the input and participation of a broad spectrum of local citizens, business and service providers. Therefore, over the next two months various consultations will get underway, such as one on one interviews; public forums; and an on-line survey to assist the team in better understanding the realities of the region and the possibilities for a more prosperous and sustainable future.

Contact for more info:

Ken Van Luven, Ec Dev

Village of Forestburg

PO Box 210, Forestburg, AB, T0B 1N0

Tel: 780-582-3668 Fax: 780-582-2233



The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.