



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE: REGIONAL LEADERS REVIEW DUAL CALL-OUT FIRE SERVICES MODEL

MLA Getson applauds strengthened collaboration between Lac Ste. Anne County Fire Services and Onway Regional Fire Services.

Sangudo, Alberta, Monday, July 20, 2020 – Lac Ste. Anne County recently met with adjacent municipal officials to review the integrated fire services model that exists between Lac Ste. Anne County Fire Services and Onway Regional Fire Services operated by Northwest Fire Rescue. This unique model leverages the infrastructure and capacity of these public and private-sector contingents to provide comprehensive, collaborative and timely fire services to the greater Lac Ste. Anne region.

Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland MLA Shane Getson was in attendance for the review, and expressed interest in sharing the ongoing successes of the County's hybrid support model with other regions in the province. He suggested that the model that could fill the gap in areas where industry has the ability to augment services and support.

"We're lucky in our area to have a hybrid model of service and coverage when it comes to fire fighting and rescue services," stated MLA Getson. "I was pleased to be part of a coordination meeting recently to review the coverage and interface between the two groups, and the representatives from the communities they serve."

"After a little over a year with a new dispatch and coverage procedure I was also pleased to see now that there is enough information to perform a lessons learned review, and to tweak the system as required to continue to improve on efficiencies, and to maintain or improve services because of it."

During the review, MLA Getson commended the municipal leaders on their progress, stating: **"we need you, and our community is better off because of the work that you are performing and the cooperation you are showing to develop this innovative model."**

The dual call-out agreement between Lac Ste. Anne County Fire Services and Northwest Fire Rescue (the Town of Onway's private-sector contractor) is a derivative of a standard mutual aid model. Under this agreement, both departments are simultaneously notified when a critical event occurs; resources are then coordinated based upon the crews and apparatus closest to the scene. By contrast, under a standard mutual aid agreement, the decision to engage outside resources would be the purview of the host municipality's fire department.

Collective Approval of Collaborative Model

“Intermunicipal collaboration can be tricky at the best of times,” shared Lac Ste. Anne County Reeve Joe Blakeman. “We have had challenges and rough patches along the way. However, thanks to the perseverance, cooperation and respect of all involved, we’ve created a viable, resourceful fire services model that distributes resources in ways that meet the demands of a wider segment of the Lac Ste. Anne County region — both today and years into the future.”

Judy Tracy, Mayor of the Town of Onoway, expressed pride in the continued collaborative work of Onoway Regional Fire and Lac Ste. Anne County Fire Services. “The highways in the region have become safer to travel since the establishment of a dual call out system,” shared Mayor Tracy. “The Fire Chiefs from both departments have overcome much in order to establish a cohesive working environment for all highways calls. While the system may still need some tweaking, it is working and that is good news for all who travel on the highways.”

Other municipal leaders present at the review echoed the sentiments of Reeve Blakeman and Mayor Tracy. Bernie Poulin, Mayor of Silver Sands and representative of the the Summer Villages Lac Ste. Anne County East (SVLSACE), applauded the County’s approval on dual call-outs on the region’s highways. “Our residents now have superior response times helping ensure their future quality of life,” he stated.

“Alberta Beach is very proud to be working in collaboration with our municipal neighbours on this very important issue,” added Alberta Beach Mayor Jim Benedict. “The dual call out system has improved response times, saving lives and delivering cost-sharing efficiencies. We would like to Thank the County for having faith in our fire service, and taking the huge step of entering into this dual call-out agreement.”

The County looks forward to building upon the successes of this unified framework, and continuing to strengthen the collaborative potential between Lac Ste. Anne County Fire Services and Onoway Regional Fire Rescue with the shared goal of servicing and safeguarding the community at large.

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