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Brazeau County puts growth plans in place for better service delivery

Drayton Valley, Alberta, July 8, 2014 — Brazeau County hired Zap Municipal Consulting Inc. to conduct a service capacity review of the organization. This review was intended to assist the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the senior management team to make decisions on how to best match human and other organizational resources to the service levels required by the community and desired by Council.

Due to an expanding population within Brazeau County, a high demand for municipal services and a desire to remain as a strong municipality moving forward, it was determined necessary to review the County's organizational structure as it relates to the provision of municipal services. A SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was conducted as a component of this initiative to determine whether the County is providing the right services, at adequate levels, with the proper personnel, for its residents. Findings of the SWOT Analysis were based on a review of the County's approved Organizational Charts, the County's 2014-2015 Approved Annual Budget, including the 2014 Service Delivery Review document, as well as findings based on input from a total of 21 municipal staff who were interviewed as part of this process.

Reeve Pat Vos states "The results of our service capacity review confirmed our hunch that the existing work load placed on our people far exceeds existing capacity. For example, the number of pending applications in our Planning and Development department already exceeds the total number received in all of 2013 and the timeliness of approving these applications is critical to maximize the good weather days for the construction season."

Key Strategic Recommendation

In order to improve service delivery, the Consultant has made recommendations that involve the hiring of 9 new positions, of which 8 would be full time equivalent positions as well as 1 full time term position. These include hires in the departments of Planning and Development, Community Services and Corporate Services.

“The vision and commitment that we, Council and Administration, have to move this County forward is to strategically increase our capacity. We do not expect this to be a short or quick process with the global competition for skilled people.” says Reeve Pat Vos.

Comparable Municipalities

The Consultant provided data that illustrated staffing of rural municipalities with equalized assessments similar to Brazeau County. Furthermore, these municipalities all have larger populations, focus on resource based economies, and are delivering a wide range of services. Within this comparison group, Brazeau County is on the “low end” with respect to the number of full time equivalent positions. The average number of employees within this group is much higher (15 positions) than the County. The data also noted that 3 of the municipalities with smaller workforces than the County do not provide the same level of services (i.e. does not have an in-house road construction crew).

Plans to move forward with the report recommendations will commence immediately.