



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ATTN: NEWS EDITOR

Red Deer & District Community Foundation Releases 5th Vital Signs[®] Report

(October 4, 2011, Red Deer, AB) Red Deer's Vital Signs was launched today, along with 21 other communities across Canada. The fifth edition of the annual Red Deer & District Community Foundation publication was made public to an audience of community leaders with the overall goal of sparking important community conversations.

"We are so pleased to present the report to our community! In the last five years, we have been able to paint a picture of Red Deer and in some instances of Central Alberta, through the indicators in 12 areas that determine our overall quality of life", said Kristine Bugayong, Acting Operations Manager. "We are proud to be part of a growing number of Community Foundations across the country that have the desire to learn more about our community and to have that depth of understanding that could guide us in fulfilling our mandate as a catalyst, for action and positive change," said Bugayong.

Our community is showing some signs of recovery from the previous year's economic turmoil. "The economy was identified by our graders as one of the top 3 strengths of our community, together with green spaces and trail systems and recreation/active living", said Bugayong. When our community graders were asked if they could rate their overall wellbeing as high 68.5 percent either said "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree". When asked about their thoughts on our community's vitality and overall quality of life a majority of respondents felt that Red Deer is a healthy and vibrant community. A majority of respondents said that there is ample opportunity for volunteerism and that a majority of them volunteer on a regular basis.

On the other hand, our community graders also said that the top issue that needs our immediate attention is the issue of poverty. It is followed by crime/safety and third was social programs and services.

Other report highlights include:

- Our community's overall poverty rate, as measured by Low Income Measure (LIM), had no significant change since 2001.
- There has been no drastic increases in both our violent and property crime rate, although it has been consistently higher than the provincial and national averages.
- The total number of physicians per 100,000 population in the former David Thompson Health Region stayed consistent from 2005-2009, despite increase in population. The proportion of the population without a regular medical doctor has been increasing since 2008.
- The proportion of our population that have not completed high school has remained consistent at approximately 22 percent over the last 5 years.
- The unemployment rate for youth (15-24 years old) increased significantly between 2005- 2010.

- While our employment rate is higher than the national rate and provincial rate in 2010, it has somewhat decreased from the employment rate 5 years ago.
- Consumer bankruptcies increased 20 percent from year 2000, while business bankruptcies decreased 55.8 percent from the same period.
- In 2007, 6.6 percent of respondents to the Canadian Community Health Survey in the former David Thompson Health Region reported being moderately or severely food insecure.
- Our adult obesity rate has declined in 2010 (20.1 percent) from 2009 (20.9 percent). However, we are above the provincial and national average.
- Red Deer was named by fDi Magazine as one of the Top 10 Micro-cities of the Future for Quality of Life in North America.
- Red Deer was named by Alberta Venture Magazine as one of the 25 Best Communities to do Business in Western Canada.
- The City of Red Deer released the Environmental Master Plan.
- The Central Alberta Economic Partnership completed the study on the possibility of a Regional Transportation System.

This year, a panel of media personalities was invited to speak about their view of our community's overall quality of life. The event was set up in such that they could freely talk about their personal opinion, coming from people that tell the story of Red Deer and Central Alberta every day. Maureen McMurtrie, First Vice President of the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce Board also provided us with some insight with the strength of the local economy and what the future may look like.

Vital Signs® is an annual community check up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities, identifies significant trends and shares opportunities for action in at least 10 issue areas critical to quality of life and is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

The report will be available online at www.reddeersvitalsigns.ca and will be published on the October 5th issue of the Red Deer Advocate.

For more information about Vital Signs 2011 report or to schedule an interview, contact:

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