



PRESS RELEASE

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2018 Ratepayer Meetings Wind Up

Special Areas held the last public ratepayer meeting for the 2018 season in Hanna this week, with ratepayers from Special Area No. 2 providing feedback and speaking to their concerns. Over the past five weeks, representatives from administration and locally elected Advisory Councillors have travelled over 1,200 kilometers throughout the region, visiting with ratepayers and listening to their feedback on how the Special Areas is doing.

Annual ratepayer meetings have been a part of how ratepayers connect since the early days of the Special Areas and remain key to how the public participates in municipal decision-making. Every year, representatives from administration and locally elected Advisory Councillors host a public meeting in each subdivision. As a part of these public meetings, senior representatives from administration provide reports directly to ratepayers on prior and current year activities, addressing any issues raised. Ratepayers regularly make motions on actions they want to see undertaken, giving direct feedback to the locally elected Advisory Council to consider. Motions from ratepayer meetings are then reviewed at an Advisory Council meeting which takes place each fall.

Although each ratepayer meeting had issues as diverse as the individuals attending them, this year some feedback was consistent throughout the Special Areas. Ratepayers wanted to talk about regional challenges, including how to best support coal-affected communities and mitigate potential negative impacts. Advocacy work the Special Areas is doing as a member of the Hanna Climate Change Taskforce was highlighted, with potential industry partnerships and innovative economic development projects discussed. Another topic consistently raised was Special Area's role as a public land manager, with policies around cultivation leases, community pastures, projects on public lands all addressed. The role of the Special Areas in directing effective economic development - from investment into regional projects to specific policies targeting business attraction and incentives - was brought up throughout the region and remains a top concern for many ratepayers.

In support of continued public participation with municipal decision-making, copies of presentations and ratepayer meeting minutes will be posted on the Special Areas website.

For more information, contact:

Maeghan Chostner, Communications
Special Areas Board
(403) 854-5600
Maeghan.chostner@specialareas.ab.ca