



March 2009 Newsletter

Alderman Diane Colley-Urquhart

Diane on HMCS Calgary with the deployment of the Canadian Forces on their peacekeeping mission. Diane was instrumental in bringing forward the Military Leave Policy for the City of Calgary with Mayor Bronconnier. This policy is best practice in Canada.

Economy and the City of Calgary

I am pleased that the City Manager, Owen Tobert, has sent a clear message to city employees about the impacts the current global economic downturn could have on city hall.

In his memo, *Market Volatility Planning*, the City has been told to plan for the possible fallout from the down-turning global economy.

Calgary is not immune to the current global economic malaise. City Manager Tobert has requested that the General Managers of each of the City's business units increase their oversight and direct approval in key areas to ensure that as much flexibility is available. These areas include:

- Review capital spending priorities;
- Look for opportunities to constrain discretionary spending;
- Monitor changes in revenues;
- Monitor hiring and the number of vacancies; and
- Look for ways to reduce spending on out-of-city travel, conference, and meals.

It is wise, that during this time of global economic uncertainty, that we maximize our flexibility so that we can mitigate risk to the City of Calgary, Calgarians and City employees. Furthermore, it is prudent that we ensure that we develop and have a contingency plan in place for, even if we never use it, during these uncertain times.

Council Pay Increase

Many Ward 13 residents and Calgarians have contacted me to express their concerns with Council's decision to accept a 5.5% pay increase.

A 5.5% hike in pay would bring Aldermanic pay up from \$101,277 to \$106,341 per year (including car allowance). That is an increase of \$5,064 for 2009.

While some Calgarians are not receiving a pay increase this year, others have had their salaries rolled back or been laid off. I strongly believe Aldermanic salary increases should be frozen this year to send a message to other City employees and demonstrate that Council understands the serious state of the global economy.

In past years, as well as in 2009, I will **not** vote for **nor** will I accept a salary increase. I will also not donate the \$5,064 to a charity and get a tax receipt as a benefit. These are taxpayer dollars. As I have done in the past, at years end, I will write a cheque back to the City of Calgary for the increase given to Council.

Telework Calgary

In October 2006, I brought forward a Notice of Motion on the Telework Initiative that was unanimously passed by Council. It was to support a partnership between the City of Calgary, the Haskayne School of Business, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Climate Change Central and other private corporations to develop a telework strategy for Calgary.

In May 2007, the City of Calgary launched a 4 month pilot project. Over the course of the telework pilot, 100 employees teleworked from home a total of 1,828 days. Employees participating in the pilot program worked from home an average of two days per week.

During the four month pilot, participants saved 6,656 commuter trips and reduced vehicle kilometers travelled by 80,487 kilometers. In turn, the resulted in a reduction of 18,366 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions as well as 1,286 kilograms of other particulate pollutants.

I am pleased to announce that on 2009 January 8, Canada's Transport Minister, John Baird, through the federal government's **ecoMOBILITY Program**, awarded nearly \$1 million in grant funding, over three years to Calgary Economic Development, to implement the regional telework program. Of the nearly \$3 million awarded to 14 municipalities across Canada, Calgary received, by far, the largest grant. Calgary will continue to be a Canadian leader in promoting innovative alternative programs such as telework.

As always, you can contact my office regarding this or any other civic matter at 268-1624, by email at dcolley@calgary.ca. Alternatively, you can contact '311.'